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Sheri Fella: Embrace your infinite power to choose

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IN THE WORKPLACE

I recently took time away from work. This was not time away where you check email when you have a minute and you tell yourself you're doing it because you don't want to be overwhelmed when you get back. This was the kind of time off where I completely severed ties with my email and my calendar, that anxiety-inducing exercise of going completely off the grid.

The timing of this break was not the best professionally or personally, but I could feel I needed it. I craved it, I dreamed about it, and it whispered to me until I realized it was necessary.

I kept trying to tell myself that I “can't be away” right now because of my client work, that I “should” wait so I could help my family through an upcoming event, and that I “have to” take care of a hundred other things first. Every time I make a choice that is for me, I have to listen to that inner litany of “should haves” (my inner judger) and “have tos” (my inner victim). They're persistent, aren't they?

But finally, I dropped all the judgment and victimhood, and I chose me. I realized that, by making the choice to take the time I needed, I was enriching myself, my life and all the people I touch. When I actively choose myself, I am always rewarded with more energy, clearer thinking, broader passion for my work, and deeper gratitude for my life. I also feel greater confidence in the abundance around me and firm clarity in the priorities that matter most.

While I was away, I noticed that a theme kept emerging in my daily reflections—the power of choice. I do not do anything I don't choose to do. I am always choosing; I am just not always factoring in myself as a priority in the decision. I always have a choice in any situation—even choosing not to decide is a choice.

I also noticed the language I used around choice—“have to,” “can't,” “shouldn't.” I decided I needed to reframe the language I was using in my decision-making: “get to” versus “have to,” “want to” instead of “should.”

In the normal chaos of the day, I find I can easily slip into a pattern of disempowerment for myself, whether that is through harsh judgment or telling myself I am a victim with no choice. I notice the voices most when I am tired or overwhelmed. It is in those moments when the voices are the loudest that slowing down helps—because the disempowerment is not real, and it is harder for me to notice it and make a different, more conscious choice when I am going at full speed.

What are your voices telling you? What are the stories your inner judger and inner victim are telling you? Is there a pattern to what your voices are demanding? I wonder if shifting your language would help shift your energy. I get to go to work. I get to pick up my kids from school. I want to help my neighbor. I get to take time for myself.

Full disclosure: I felt overwhelmed on re-entry from my break. But, instead of waking at 5 a.m. and starting the Herculean task of powering through my email, I woke up at 5 a.m. and meditated to set my intention for the day. My stress level remained low, and I felt an ease about the day despite the fact that it was a long one.

There is infinite power in choice. I chose to set my intention for the day rather than letting my day set it for me. I chose stillness over speed. Even when the choices are about big or hard things, slowing down to be intentional helps me tap into all the power I have to focus on that choice.

My latest choice might make some of you nervous. I committed to giving myself one day a week off the grid and a day each week with no schedule. And I didn't even ask the inner judge and the inner victim what they thought. •

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