

# New Journeys. New Beginnings.

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Pema Chodron has written a classic book on Buddhist teachings titled, *When Things Fall Apart*. It took me years of struggles, trying to hold my life together before I could even take a peek at what she had to say. When I did garner the courage to look, I learned Pema offers a fascinating reflection on what we often view as our crumbling lives.

*"... the truth is things don't really get solved. They come together and they fall apart. They come together again and fall apart again. It's just like that. The healing comes from letting there be room for all of this to happen: room for grief, for relief, for misery, for joy."*

I have witnessed this profoundly in my own life; have experienced the mysterious mingling of grief and joy all in the same moment as I stood among the rubble and yet knew in all my heart that something even more beautiful would arise. It seems I am once again presented with the opportunity to learn from this continuous cycle.

I returned just six short weeks ago from a fulfilling summer in Europe with what I believed to be a new way of working for myself and with my team. Enthused in a way I had never before experienced, I couldn't wait to gather everyone for input. At the same time, Aaron was also returning from her own journey to Europe, and a very special one indeed. During her travels, Aaron began and embraced her own new chapter and way of being... And in no small part by getting married! When we met to share our summer experiences and discuss the future, I soon learned that Aaron's future may not include working at my practice and that she was ready for challenges beyond what I could offer. Thank you, Pema. For I must admit it was truly a moment of

grief and joy. Joy for all that would lie ahead for Aaron. Grief for the fact I would miss her dearly.



The practice I have today has been handcrafted over the years by holding my personal vision lightly, remaining open, and discerning the guidance I've received. I have watched with awe as it has been shaped just as in the famous quote from the Alchemist,

*"And when you want something all of the universe conspires in helping you to achieve it."*

One of the greatest gifts in this process and to my practice was the arrival of Aaron Thompson 4.5 years ago, introduced to me by my longtime graphic designer Christine Terrell, who believed Aaron would be the perfect fit for the direction I wanted to go. She could not have been more correct as Aaron and I have grown not only a business, but together as a team. Aaron quickly created a position for herself well beyond the 10 hours a week of clerical tasks. I am shaking my head in disbelief at the young woman whom I first met and who she has become today. I've tried always to meet Aaron's caution in moving forward with encouragement and confidence in her abilities, and soon she embodied that herself.

Over the years, I have proudly watched Aaron take more

ownership in her work as it became ours together. I remember the moment in a team meeting when Aaron first referred to our plans using the pronoun "we", rather than "*Lauren's practice.*" That's when I knew she truly saw herself as part of a team and not merely doing my work.

Aaron has learned first hand how start-ups are created, and how they evolve from the ground up, and now, as we move into the period of refining the fruits of these past years of labor, it seems only fitting she pass the baton to someone new.

Aaron, supported by the magnificent creative work of Christine Terrell, has brought my method to life for clients, the interested public, and now practitioners that I train. Over the course of the past years, she has seen me through three complete reiterations of my training curriculum, countless versions of new client welcome packets, at least five website updates, two published books, four logo changes, several office rearrangements, the masterful visioning of our weekly Take 5, monthly client and practitioner newsletters, a continuing blog that now has over 1200 entries and has single-handedly managed the office four summers in a row while I was away in Europe! In Aaron's time alone, she has supported me through seeing hundreds of clients, training over 50 practitioners, and growing our mailing list subscribership from 25 to nearly 700 readers. All of which she has done on top of the tireless, thankless task of managing our quirky office calico, Ruby.



Through this time, in which her hours increased, so did her deep commitment to the mission of this practice and the clients and customers we serve. Aaron also became my most trusted confidant and (ever so occasionally) stepped up to the daunting task of informing me when my new idea-of-the-week made absolutely no sense whatsoever.

And so, in all of this, I have to say I am not surprised by Aaron's decision because the person Aaron has become is no doubt ready for new journeys, new challenges, and new experiences. As one of her biggest fans, I applaud her self awareness and the courage she drew upon to take action.

Aaron, being Aaron, has assured me she will see all of us here and my practice through to a smooth transition. But we all know how once an idea is put into motion, it gains a timing all its own. So don't wait to express your own best wishes for Aaron's new beginning!

It is with my own bagful of mixed emotions (the greatest of which is gratitude), **I do formally announce Aaron's departure from my practice in the near future and that we have opened the search for new office staff.** Naturally, being who I am, I have taken this opportunity to revise, with Aaron's support, some of our client care processes and growing list of daily tasks. It is our main goal that none, or at least very few, should affect our steadfast clients any more than our ever-rotating arrangement of office furniture & artwork.

I invite and encourage all of you to help us spread the word that we are now accepting resumes for a Part Time Client Care Assistant. (Full details in the downloadable file.) All inquiries may be sent to [Office@LaurenHubele.com](mailto:Office@LaurenHubele.com).

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# **Living Creatively: Courage Part II**

## ***Living Creatively: Courage Part II***

*“When someone makes a decision he is really diving into a strong current that will carry him places he has never dreamed of when he first made that decision.”*

*– Paulo Coelho, The Alchemist*



Often we are faced with decisions and the answers that speak from your core of being defy all logic. The day I began listening to that voice was the day I began living creatively and with courage. It took the first forty years of my life to discover the magic in doing just that. Today I'd like to share two connected stories of decisions I made on the spot. The first no doubt carried me into the stream of an entirely new life. The second has yet to play out.

Eight years ago, on the advice of my physician, I walked in the Austin Shambhala Center for the first time. The entire left side of my face was still immobile, frozen in pain from recent reconstructive surgery, and bandaged with gauze and tape from the corner of my eye to my chin. I was there in search of a path that might circumvent the full-body fear that beckoned me daily to run with all my heart and soul from own life, the one which involved recurring cancer.

There in the entry way table lay a beautifully designed brochure advertising the Shambhala Mountain Center in Colorado. Four words jumped out at me: Courageous Women Facing Cancer. Feeling qualified for two out of three of the prerequisites, I picked it up to read further.

It was scheduled for two months away, coincided with the first days of the school year, and at the time I had a very reluctant soon to be second grader. My logic screamed at me to put it down, but my heart said otherwise. Once home, I discussed the possibility with Joachim who said he would agree for me to go to all the way to Tibet if I could just stop weeping! And so, with the click of a mouse I was registered and before long I would dive into this current, having not the least idea where I might be carried.

A dear friend also facing recurring cancer agreed to join me. To give you a clear picture of my emotional and mental state at the time I asked her what was to become a classic question, "You don't think we are going to have to sit in a circle and talk about our cancer do you?" Wiser than me by leaps and bounds, she smiled a knowing smile and said, "Surely not."

Well, in case you have any doubt, we did talk about cancer and so much more. It was there in that week that I could finally look cancer straight in the eye and recognize I had several choices as to how I would live out all my days to come, whether they be short in number or stretch on for years. It was there that I committed to thriving rather than surviving. And while I could not even begin to imagine where this journey would lead, I knew my heart must serve as my guide.



Fast forward eight richly textured years and I'm in the Pyrenees, spending a week restoring and preparing for a full year of projects and work that lie ahead. Each day I would walk the ridge and watch the sunrise and ask for a path that would allow me to be as productive as possible, but also kind and gentle to myself and those around me. There was now a new fear I had produced in my life of late and that fear was that if I wasn't hard enough on myself, driving myself to ultimate productivity each day, then I would not be able to achieve all I was called to create in this lifetime.

The good thing was, I had discovered I did not particularly care for this driven person and likely those around me felt the same. □ But how could I do things differently? How could I open my heart of loving kindness to myself and still share what I knew needed to be delivered?

On the last morning of our time in the Pyrenees, I committed to make this change with no road map in sight, only a request to the Universe for guidance. The next morning in my email inbox was an invitation to join meditation teacher extraordinaire Susan Piver for an Open Heart Project five day retreat at the Shambhala Mountain Center. I read these opening lines,



*So, you're a spiritual seeker. A creative person. Someone who wants to bring more goodness into the world.*

*But the path, it often seems unclear. Solitary. A little uncertain.*

*How are you supposed to find the time to explore your spirituality, creativity, and destiny when you have so much to do?*

*How is it that we spend so much time working and so little time rejoicing?*

*What if you could put daily life on hold, let go of to-do lists, responsibilities, and electronic devices, and gather in a beautiful spot with friends to explore and celebrate your true self? Turns out, you can.*

Done. Decision made.

And so I joined 30 others from across the country for five full days of meditation and spiritual talks. The common wish was to gain the tools needed to move through this world of suffering with stabilized open hearts. For those five days I truly, and probably for my first time as an adult, completely disconnected, knowing all would be well. Showing up and not being responsible for anything but sitting on my cushion at 7am was pretty gosh darn freeing. Each day, I was able to allow myself to rest deeper in the vastness of being, rather than doing.



Hiking to the stupa with this beautiful group of beings brought to mind the frightened and fragmented person I was eight years ago. This time, rather than seeking the courage to face cancer, I sought the courage to move through life with self-compassion and kindness and still bring forward the work I am called to do, with joy.



I'll be keeping you posted on how this goes!

In parting let me share the words of my meditation instructor, retreat leader, and NYT Bestselling author, Susan Piver,

*"The more I was able to own and proclaim my tenderness, the more badass I became."*

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## **Living Creatively: Courage**

Let me ask you this question: If you could put your fears aside, what would you be doing differently right now in your life? Would it be a new career path, a change in how or with whom you spend your time, a new routine for starting each day, or would you learn a new skill set? Whatever comes up, that

thing that popped into your head before you quickly discounted it for being ridiculous or impossible is probably exactly what you need to take note of.

You know deep in your heart that you were born with a unique gift and it may just be possible that you haven't allowed yourself to deliver it completely. What prevents this from happening for most of us is **fear**. Our voice of fear can quickly and easily drown out any whisper of courage, but that's not how it has to be.

When we operate out of a place of fear, rather than living courageously, there will always be a reason to withhold our gift. Nelson Mandela, one of the most courageous figures of my lifetime once said, "*I learned that courage was not the absence of fear, but the triumph over it.*" Trust me on this. If you are waiting around for the fear to go away, it won't. What we all must learn to do is push through our discomfort and take action.



This applies to the big things in our lives for sure, but also to the everyday opportunities that allow us to practice courage. Standing up for someone being ridiculed, offering help to a stranger, choosing not to spend our time socializing with people who do not align with our values. These are simple but profound acts of courage.

I am so fortunate in my work to interact with individuals who have chosen to turn down the volume of their fears and work

from a place of courage. With that effort, they are able to live life creatively, fulfilling their dreams and eventually delivering their unique gift to the world.

Let me share a few stories of individuals who have chosen to triumph over their fear.

- A bright young female executive has dedicated her time and efforts to the success of the startup she is employed by. From her growing exhaustion, she becomes aware of the lack of respect and recognition for her contributions by her male superiors. As she gains clarity, she chooses to resign, take a year off to travel, and returns to start her own company.
- A middle aged man walks away from the pace and pressure of the tech world to create a more meaningful life. Along the way he rediscovers his passion for woodworking, studies to become a health coach, and falls in love.
- A young mother, fed up with a lifetime of battling chronic illness, completely revamps the eating habits of her family of seven. In the process she discovers her own courage and determination and turns around her health as well as the health and well being of her whole family
- Two Hispanic middle aged sisters decide there is a better path to health than they witness from their peers. They shed the cultural norms they were raised with, fully embraced a plant-based diet, commit to daily exercise and meditation, and look younger each time I see them!

These individuals are on their way. They have dialed down the volume of their fears and tapped into courage. They were willing, for one reason or another, to listen to their inner calling and, because of their courage, they are living creatively. That my friends is what we all must do. Some days are a little easier than others, but courage prevails.

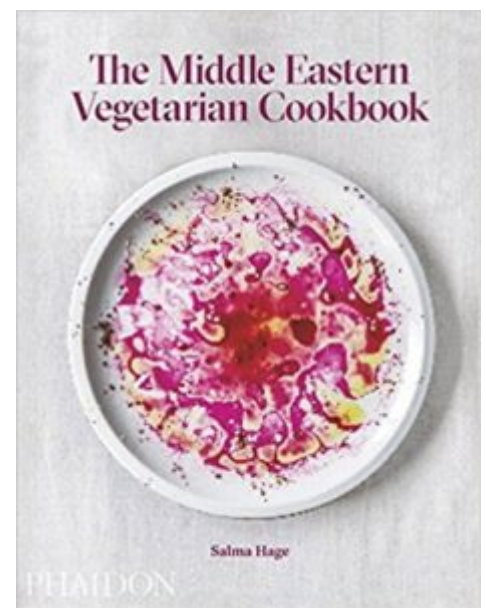
*“Creative Living is a path for the brave.”*

-Elizabeth Gilbert

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## Fall Smoothie!

In search of new fall recipes, I ordered Salma Hage's, *The Middle Eastern Vegetarian Cookbook*.



Having thoroughly enjoyed my time spent pouring over recipes, I certainly located some winners. And now I am looking forward to some cooler temps (in Austin that means under 100 degrees) in order to test and share my favorites.

As a sneak preview, you might want to try Hage's **Date Tahini & Cinnamon Smoothie**. I've been a fan of date, banana, and raw cacao smoothies for some time so the tahini and cinnamon sounded tempting. No reason to wait for a cold front for this recipe!

And here is the truth... The first one was so good, I had to make a second. ☐



This is what you'll need:

- 1 cup almond milk or milk of choice (I used coconut)
- 2 sliced and frozen ripe (but not overripe) bananas
- $\frac{1}{4}$  cup tahini
- 4 Medjool dates, pitted and torn into pieces
- 1 drop real vanilla extract
- $\frac{1}{2}$  tsp cinnamon
- Optional garnishes: pinch of cinnamon and/or sesame seeds

Blend until smooth and enjoy!!

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# Heroic Pet Efforts

*Heroic Pet Efforts*



Wherever in the world you may be reading this, you have most certainly been touched emotionally by the horrific unfolding of news since Hurricane Harvey made landfall on the Texas coast. The enormity of it all continues to be more than overwhelming. So many stories and so much love, all at this critical time when we Americans have been questioning whether or not compassion still existed in our country. Austinites, who remained well out of harm's way, have been granted a tremendous opportunity to give of themselves these past days to make a difference. Austin's Mayor Adler opened the door and heart of our city for incoming evacuees and they have been well received.

Today I want to spotlight the work of one amazing animal rescue organization that will get my donations until the end

of my days. Austin Pets Alive! fully staged and staffed an impromptu tent shelter in a Katy, Texas parking lot, 30 minutes from downtown Houston, and began receiving animals early last week. Staff and volunteers from the Austin based program received hundreds of animals by the end of the first day and over the course of five more days rescued over 1700 animals. By Thursday, a call was put out for Austinites to shuttle these Houston area rescues to APA! headquarters downtown if medical care was needed or to a donated warehouse in north Austin where they would be screened and matched with foster homes.



The fact that this whole operation was orchestrated literally overnight and Facebook served as a their means of communicating specific needs was astounding. Shuttles continued into the weekend when I was fortunate enough to make a rescue run with my daughter Meghan.

Not sure of how many or what exactly we'd be transporting back, we filled her SUV with supplies and animal crates and had a bit fun with our imaginations on the two hour trip. Approaching Katy, it wasn't hard to miss APA!'s tent city and we soon found ourselves in line with a fleet of cars, trucks, and vans all up for whatever cargo needed a ride to safety. We inched our way forward over the next hour and watched kennel after kennel be dispersed by hardworking volunteers. As we



pulled forward into position and confirmed our destination was Austin, we were told we'd be transporting just one dog. Yes, just one, but she was in distress and in desperate need of a/c and a peaceful ride to receive medical care. They brought her over in a crate and loaded up one very worried golden hound mix with the saddest eyes I've ever seen. Needless to say, over the next two hours she stole our hearts and by the time Austin's skyline was in view we knew she'd eventually be coming home with me.



When we approached the APA! headquarters, we joined in another long queue of cars being sorted according to needs by the young volunteers. We were directed to the building that was housing pets needing medical care. If I wasn't already impressed with APA!, what we observed next was astounding. After some communications between volunteers, a vet tech and assistant came right out to us. Due to the heat, overcrowding in the buildings, and condition of our sweet rescue, they agreed to do all they needed from the air conditioned comfort of Meghan's car. And so, for the next 45 minutes, they went through their tests and checks allowing, who we would soon call Grace, to stay put and as relaxed as possible. Three things were determined: she was old, exhausted, and had infected ears. Other than that, all our gal needed was a bath, dinner, some peace and quiet, and love. That was exactly what Grace received, in addition to some Gemmotherapy and a Homeopathic remedy for trauma.

After 48 hours, I can safely say the only condition this ol' gal is suffering from is heartbreak and I can't even begin to imagine the story she could tell. However, this morning, for the first time since meeting Grace, the rescue hound from Houston greeted me with what I know now as her "happiness bay" and a wagging tail. For now, she's got a safe place to be until APA!'s reuniting efforts are in full force and maybe, just maybe we can find the someone on the other side of her heartache.



APA!'s work is still going strong as they shift support to include Beaumont, TX. This organization is doing an incredible job of helping pets find their way to safety and into foster homes with the aid of like minded rescue groups from across the country. If you'd like to help their work today, I know they would appreciate whatever amount you can give.

*"I do not at all understand the mystery of grace – only that it meets us where we are but does not leave us where it found us."*

– Anne Lamott

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# Big Magic, Elizabeth Gilbert

*Book Review: Big Magic, Elizabeth Gilbert*



Each morning while staying in the Pyrenees, I would wake ahead of the family and hike up the ridge crest trail near our holiday home. There, I would find a sitting spot and, along with nature awakening around me, welcome the day ahead. I would breathe in the cool, fresh mountain air scented with dewy grasses and wildflowers, experiencing with a sense of awe the expansiveness of possible opportunities and adventures each day offered. And there, with the a 360 degree view of endless mountains, I would ask myself,

*“How might I live my life in such a way to remain this open each and every day?*

*In doing so, how might I push myself to the edge of my discomfort and live even more courageously than I ever have before?”*

Knowing my mountain top experience would be short lived as our days in the Pyrenees came to a close, I went in search of some

tangible guidance for my quest. Books and real live mentors have been generous to me in this lifetime so I did a little searching. It wasn't long before I came across *Big Magic* by Elizabeth Gilbert, the famed author of *Eat, Pray, Love*. It wasn't her subsequent books that convinced me as I had failed to gain any connection with her more recent works. Rather, what hooked me on *Big Magic* was that within the sample chapter I downloaded, Gilbert put forth a similar question to mine, but worded in a much more direct fashion:

*“Do you have the courage to bring forth the treasures hidden within you?”*

That answer, my friends, was exactly what I wanted to know for myself. The courage I sought and that we all are called to seek is what it takes to live out the lives we were born to live. Gilbert echoes my spiritual belief that this question must be posed to all of humanity, not just the “gifted” for we **all** are gifted. Each and every soul is created with a unique treasure that can only be brought forth with courage and a few other attributes to support it is safely delivered. Just imagine all of the suffering that could be resolved if even half of us believed this to be true and acted upon it.

Gilbert cleverly organizes the book around precisely the tools needed to live in such a way and, beyond courage, those include:

- Enchantment
- Permission
- Persistence
- Trust
- Divinity

With each chapter she offers up real life examples and includes personal struggles of her own as well. No doubt a deep topic, Gilbert is able to remain both light and focused in her approach. The map she creates is so clear and

profoundly in alignment with my personal experience that I am drawn to use it as a guide for a future blog series on Creative Living.

While *Big Magic* can easily be a weekend read, I found myself slowing down and savoring each chapter, in no hurry to let go of the imagery and awareness it created. Groundbreaking not because she reveals shocking truths, but for just the opposite reason. The words of *Big Magic* absolutely affirm the knowingness and truths we all have hidden within ourselves that must be summoned with courage and more to release.