

3 WAYS TO CHOOSE FULFILLMENT OVER VALIDATION

KHARISSA FORTE

INSTAGRAM: @kharissaforte | graceandgrind.co

When who you are aligns with what you do, that's when you've found your sweet spot. I realized this truth after spending my twenties trying to fit a mold in which who I was and what I was doing weren't aligned. By the time I was 30, I was paralyzed by potential and far from my purpose. It took me three years to figure it out; you find your sweet spot by seeking fulfillment instead of chasing validation.

1. UNDERSTAND YOUR TRUE IDENTITY

Is it just me or does it seem as if society pressures us to have life figured out by the time we're 18? You go to college, pick a "promising" major and wind up with a job you hate. Before you know it, 20 years have flown by and—BOOM!—hello, mid-life crisis! What kind of life is that? Don't worry. This doesn't have to be your story.

SEEK FULFILLMENT: *Instead of letting what you do shape who you are, allow who you are to shape what you do. As a result, you'll be too focused on living out your calling to worry about meeting other people's expectations for your life.*

2. CHECK YOUR EGO AND INNER CHILD

Contrary to popular belief, your Ego and Inner Child do actually serve a purpose. The Ego aims to protect and please. If something triggers you, Ego steps in. Pleasure sensors not tickled? Ego shifts your attention to something more entertaining and deserving of your time. The Inner Child reminds you of your dreams and desires. Doesn't sound so bad, right? Maybe it's not, until they take over and drive every decision you make. This, my dear, is the making of a narcissist.

SEEK FULFILLMENT: *Ego and Inner Child are flames. Untamed, they can destroy lives—particularly yours. With these two calling the shots, you'll find yourself frantically trying to impress others and maintain an image. Keep them in check and they'll comfort you like a warm bonfire. Your true self is in control.*

3. RECOGNIZE THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN CONTENTMENT AND COMPLACENCY

At the core of complacency is a burned-out, worn-down woman who's tired of feeling overwhelmed and undervalued. Chasing validation will do this to you. There comes a point in time when you'll grow tired of jumping around exclaiming, "Look at me! See what I can do? Applaud me!" (Sit down, Inner Child.) Here's the thing: real recognizes real. Don't be the girl who people smile at face-to-face and roll their eyes at behind her back. When this girl wises up, she's destined to crash into a pit of complacency.

SEEK FULFILLMENT: *To be content is to strive for the next milestone without compromising gratitude for where you are right now. Authenticity is the catalyst for contentment, and it's what allows you to create genuine connections with people who can help you fully execute your reason for being.*

By seeking a life rooted in fulfillment, you reclaim your power, purpose and peace of mind. When everything is said and done, validation will be the least of your concerns. Whether or not you lived a fulfilled life is all that will matter.

Kharissa is a writer and certified health coach in Kansas City whose work helps women fully and freely be themselves.