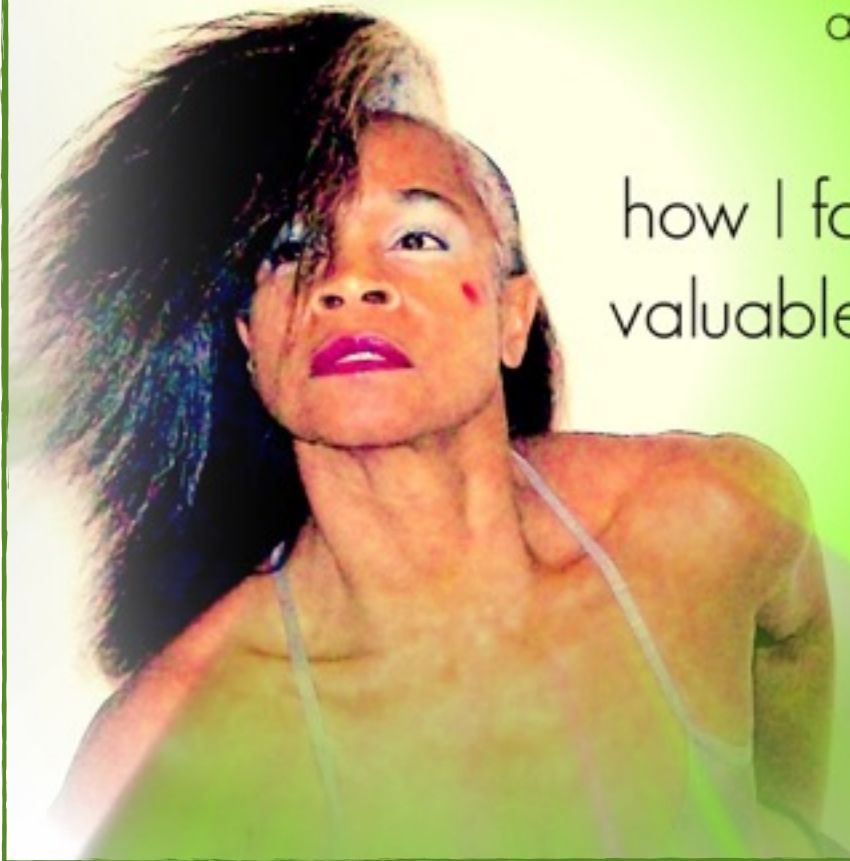


Where the HELL is Happiness?

an ebook

how I found the most
valuable thing I'd lost



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I boarded the campus bus.
One of my college buddies, already onboard, shot me an odd look.

"What in the hell are you smiling about, Michelle?"

"Huh?"
I truly didn't understand why she was asking me that.
"I don't know," I replied. I didn't realize I was smiling.

It was my typical facial expression.

I was known around campus as the girl who smiled all the time.

I suppose it was because I was happy.

I was a dreamer back in those days. Perhaps considered naive.
I simply believed **life** would support me to achieve what I wanted over the rainbows.

And often it did.

I used to declare my dreams in my journals, visualize them every day, then act like
I KNEW they would come true.

In those days you seriously might have thought I had a personal genie who heard my
dreams and moved heaven and the stars to fulfill the many things I boldly hoped for,
visualized, and declared.

EXCEPT

One day, my genie disappeared.

And I lost my happy.



Here are some clues to finding It
AGAIN.

When I lost
my happiness
I also lost hope
of finding it again.

I was convinced happiness belonged to
young people who hadn't
swallowed the sour taste of real-life yet.

For many of my adult years
my least favorite
question was

ARE YOU HAPPY?

UGH!

Who's happy? I thought.

Happiness was fleeting.

It tended to come and go,

but mostly it would

GO.

Still, there was a small part inside
that longed to feel the kind of happiness that
used to COME and stay with me.

I yearned to get caught smiling
for no reason again.



Where did I misplace happy?

Why did it elude me?

I was side-tracked, disrupted along the way.

I checked through my life-notes to see
if I'd missed something.

Happy was a treasure of great value.

I wanted it back.





I found this in my life-notes.

☑ Use your journal.



I turned to my journal for answers during the
DON'T ASK ME IF I'M HAPPY years.

My journals held the records of my life:
the stuff I felt,
the stuff I wanted,
the stuff that hadn't gone my way,
the challenging stuff I couldn't confront,
the stuff I did confront,
my pains and my pleasures.

I found the thief of my happiness written
in those lines:

I harbored discontentment
about all the stuff
I wanted
but didn't have yet.

I didn't fully appreciate all the stuff
I did have,
like talents and skills, discipline and courage,
the wisdom to uphold boundaries,
my level of resiliency.

I decided I'd
stop focusing on
what I'd lost,
failed at,
didn't like, and
didn't have.



And instead I chose to
FULLY APPRECIATE what I did have.
I also decided it's better to **create** life using my imagination,
the way I used to as a kid.

I returned to the “naive” belief of my youth:

Everything is POSSIBLE

☑ Now I use my journal to write about possibilities.


And happy made its appearance again.



A watercolor splash in shades of pink, red, and purple on a light green background. The splash is abstract and organic, with various brushstrokes and colors blending together. The text is written in a black, cursive script over the top part of the splash.

write your story

*Use your journal every day to remind yourself
who you are and who you can be!*

A faded version of the watercolor splash seen in the first image, located below the main card. It has the same color palette of pink, red, and purple on a light green background, but with much lower opacity.



I found my happy a few other ways, too.






The second life-note:

- ☑ We are influenced by the company we keep.

I modified the kind of folks I keep close.





**DON'T TAKE ADVICE
FROM ANYONE
WHO'S MORE SCARED
THAN YOU**





BE MINDFUL WHO YOU SHARE YOUR STORY WITH

**DON'T COMMISERATE OVER YOUR LOSSES
UNLESS YOU'RE WILLING TO SPARK A STRATEGY
FOR EACH OTHER'S NEXT VICTORY**



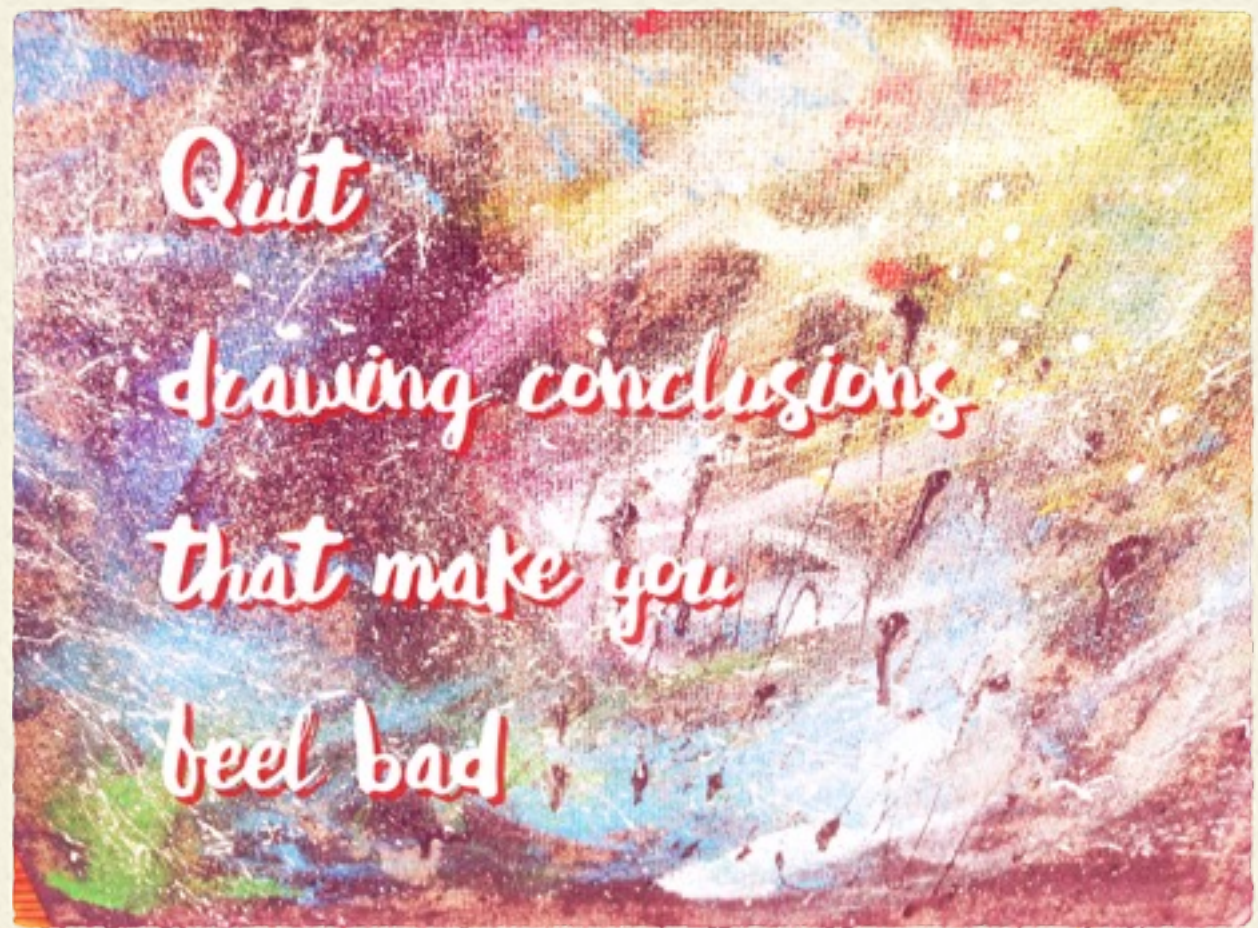
Also written in my life-notes I found this:

☑ Draw conclusions about your life experiences
that support you.

Believe life is on your side.

☑ And once in a while, go on a NO COMPLAINING DIET.





It is imperative to discontinue drawing FINAL conclusions about how difficult or unfair experiences will **without a doubt** be.

Doing this only makes us feel defeated and unable to wrangle the faith. We do this because we feel worried, scared, and helpless about the uncertainty.

But an uncertain outcome could bode well for us, couldn't it? So why marinate in the worst possible premeditated scenario?

Inner strength and innovation can be birthed from adversity.

Sometimes we need to travel the badlands to learn a course-correction that will heal vital parts of us, enhancing our lives in the end.

Better to employ courage and imagine a more promising outcome.

STOP COMPLAINING AND SOLVE THE PROBLEM.

THE SOLUTION IS EITHER
TRY AGAIN
OR
TRY SOMETHING ELSE.

SP

SP

LESS COMPLAINING

Constant complaining is like digging a hole of dissatisfaction around your feet.

Once you fall all the way in, you can see nothing but darkness.

Constant complaining is creative death.

Once you're buried by the **complaints**, you lose access to the part of your imagination that can see possible opportunities.

Imagine how you might feel if you drew
this conclusion

::

In this moment,
I am grateful for my life.
So I believe, in some way, this
experience will expand my life
and take me where I want to go.

Is there, perhaps, an opportunity for my
soul's growth that I might be missing?



And instead of asking the helpless questions

WHY ME?

WHY ARE THINGS SO UNFAIR?

Ask God, the Universe, your Wise Self
the questions you ACTUALLY WANT ANSWERED!

What do I love about this right now?
What opportunity is trying to make its presence right now?
How can I grow stronger, healthier, more creative, more faithful...
right now?

what do you LOVE about your life today?

ask the questions that will shape the life you desire

ask the questions that will shape the life you desire



The fourth life-note is OBVIOUSLY...

☑ Appreciate everything.



I'm not surprised anymore
when folks ask me
why do I smile so much.

Here are my life-notes.

Feel free to use them to find your happiness!



Look for your SELF
in your journal.

Draw conclusions that
support you.



Constant complaining is a sign of
great fear.

Go on a complaining diet.

Spend time with courageous people.



Appreciate EVERYTHING.

My **happy** was written using my
life-notes—4 good ones.

And I vow to keep paying
attention to them whenever I feel
my happiness start to wane.

Join me.

Michelle Bernard.

I LOve coffee all day, soaking my feet in a salt bath at night,
and sunny Mondays.

I'm never gonna retire
(Do you see the root word there? It's TIRED!).
I'd rather live my life making muscles,
meaning, books, and clay jewelry.

I write in my journal every morning at 6:30.

I pray everyday when I hit a pocket of quiet.

I'm grateful I've survived the disastrous days of my life, because they've shown me
what I want.

And I appreciate all my triumphs, because they've helped me trust myself.

I am a warrior.
I bet you are, too.

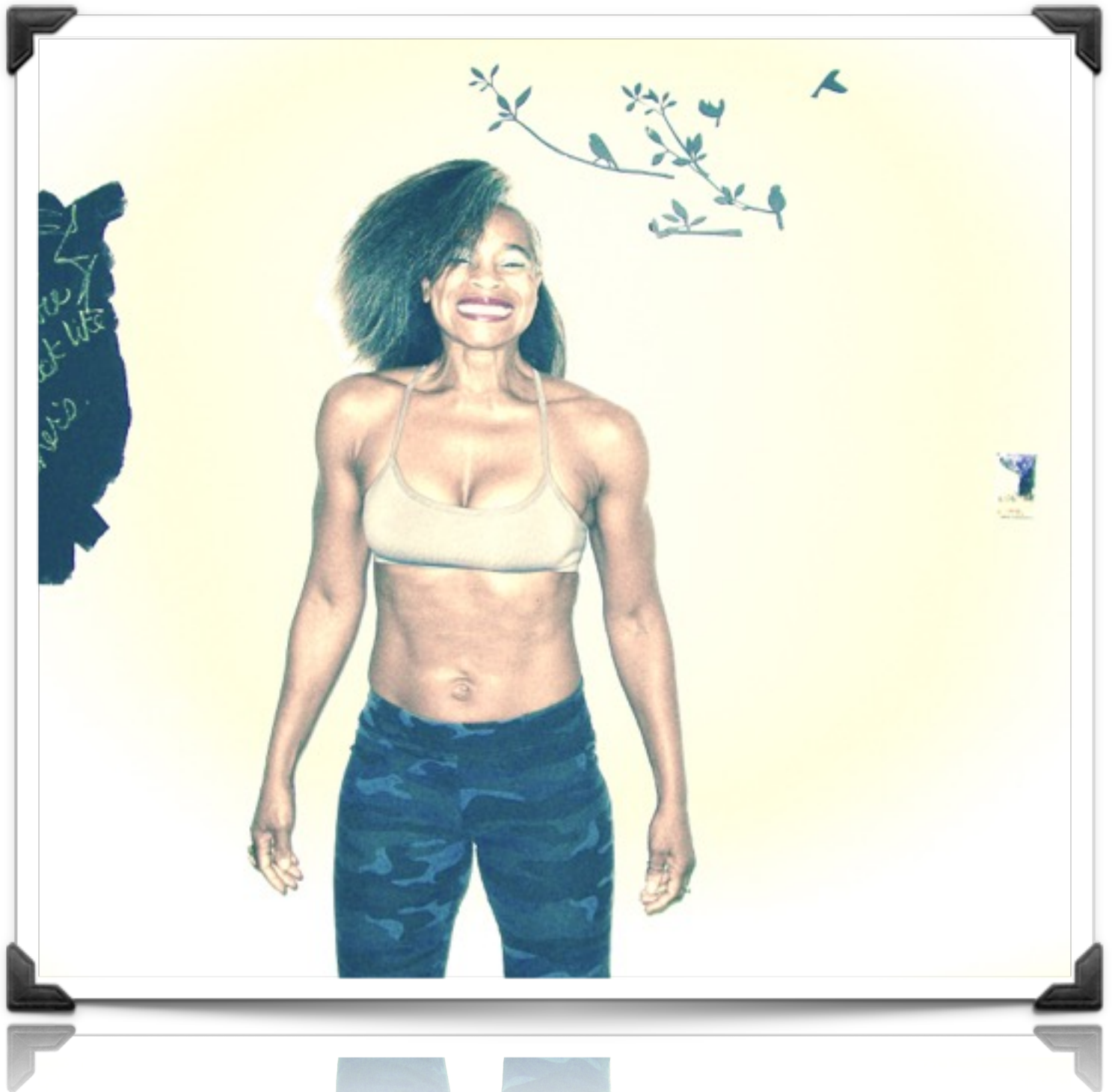


ACE AFAA E-RYT certified Wellness Choreographer.

Author, Speaker, clay Jewelry Artist,
paint splasher, spiritual lion, and pollinator of energy
wherever I roam.

And I am grateful everyday for my creative mind and its
bounty of faith that can make the seemingly impossible
POSSIBLE.





Can't stop smiling.