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itsjustyou *YOU* sletter

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Typical Raina: puts "write newsletter" at the top of her to-do list and procrastinates the process until the last moment. I do enjoy writing these newsletters so I had to take a moment to reflect on why I push it off. Fear? Fear of what? Digging deep? Sharing the deep? I've fallen in love with this writing process but it tends to bring up a lot of emotions. Especially this one newsletter.

January brings a fresh start, do you feel it? Most of December for me was spent reflecting. The first half of the month was pretty chill as we prepped, mentally and physically, for our East Coast road trip for the holidays. We packed up my Ford Explorer, thankful for the third row, and attached the rooftop cargo box knowing we'd be needing the extra space. Two dogs, two teenagers, and a boyfriend. Here we go.

Night one was spent in Kansas City, home sweet home but just one sleep. We left for Nashville the next day for night number two, I love

that city. I had memories of our giant "Super Workout" at my companies annual event from, gosh, 4-5 years ago? We literally had thousands of coaches lined down Broadway street for a series of live workouts with our trainers. It brought tears to your eyes to see it. We left for Charlotte, NC and stayed for two days, visiting Chad's brother & his fiancée and their new home.

Our final destination was Richmond, VA where Chad & his family are from. His family still lives there in their childhood home - it's so cozy and warm. It's like out of a movie - with the photos on the wall, all the memories still in their place. Being there feels good, different but good. Over the next week, we shopped, we ate, we celebrated. There was laughing, some happy tears, amazing conversation, and joy. His parents set up scavenger hunts in the park, we walked through the Botanic Gardens to see all of the holiday lights, and we sat around the bonfire with wine, just catching up.

As beautiful as the trip was, there was something missing - a gap - a hole. I tried so hard to shake the feeling of uneasiness to be present and in the moment and mostly, I was.

LOST IN TRANSITION

It hit me on Christmas Eve.

We had a beautiful dinner with Chad's family and said our "see you tomorrows" as we headed back to our hotel to sleep. Our plans were to come back over in our Christmas pjs the the next morning to open presents on Christmas Day. I said goodnight to the girls who stayed in an adjoined room and I started to organize a mini-hotel Christmas that the girls & I could do on our own.

Memories started flooding in: from the day my girls were born, we set holiday traditions with our family - Both sides, mine & my ex - we come from very close families so the holidays were a time where we all got together. We spent Christmas eve at our Aunt's home and Uncle always made a big piece of meat, which he'd smoked outside. You could smell it as soon as you parked the car - the best smell. We'd always get there around noon so we could catch up with cousins & family that lived out of state. There was a giant tree in the living room and so many presents stacked under it for the gift exchange. We would start eating at noon, as soon as the dips and other appetizers were set out. We'd patiently wait for dinner but mostly we looked forward to the homemade Red Velvet cake our aunt would make. After the gift exchange, we'd snatch up the sleepy kids and head to my (now ex) in-laws home to spend the night. Santa always came to Mimi's house. We'd wake them up enough to organize cookies & milk for Santa then shuffle them off to bed so the adults could eat cookies & drink the milk, intentionally leaving the cookie crumbs that *Santa* left and an oatmeal trail from the reindeer -

obviously. My ex, in-laws and myself would be up for the next couple hours organizing what Santa left while talking about Christmas Eve dinner - you know, the family gossip. The next morning would come early, I don't remember

the girls ever sleeping past 7am on Christmas morning. They'd explode out of their bunk beds and into our bed, giddy, knowing Santa had *for sure* come. We would make the way upstairs in our pjs and I would patiently wait for the best coffee in the world (my ex-father in law makes the best cup). One at a time, we'd take turns opening presents. My in-laws, the kids, brothers and their kids - we all just took turns being fully present to see the gifts each of us got. Mid-morning we'd pull out the monkey bread and start munching while the kids created chaos with all the gifts they opened. Dexter was a Christmas present in 2014, I still tear up thinking about McKenzie as she saw him in the little basket for the first time. She cried - "can we keep him?!" and didn't let him go for a several hours.

So I sat there in our hotel room, thinking about all of the memories we had created over the past several years as I filled out little Christmas cards from me to my daughters. I grabbed a small little wooden tree to set inside their room on the table when they woke up, along with some small gifts for them to open in the hotel on Christmas morning. No giant tree, no family surrounding us, no smoked meat smell - and right there, I felt tears well up in my eyes ((and currently holding them in as I write this)) knowing that those memories are just that - memories. I wanted so much to smell the smells that carried me through my 20's while raising my babies. I wanted to hear their laughs and playful screams again as they tried to sneak back upstairs on Christmas Eve, hoping to catch us moving presents around. I wanted to see their impatient bodies shuffling on the floor in front of the Christmas tree as they had to watch everyone else open presents, waiting their turn on Christmas morning. All the things I used to watch carelessly were now the things I'd

give anything to experience one more time. Wiping the tears off my cheeks, I smiled and told myself it was okay. Those memories will stay with us as we shift into new ones - and that's what I promised them on this Christmas day.



NOW - Before you start feeling bad for me I need to stop you from thinking I had this awful holiday experience. I didn't - it was beautiful. Part of me hates that I just shared that piece of the story because I don't want to seem ungrateful or appreciative of the family we've grown *into* over the last few years since I divorced my ex. The truth is, I couldn't think of a better family to spend the holidays with, since things had to shift, than the Harvey's. You saw as I shared a bit on my social media - they are *family*. Rock solid... That's new for me. Did you see the "scavenger hunt" they put together? The newly engaged brother & fiancée are literally the cutest - and their puppies are too.

While I had to let go of some of the traditions

back with her grandparents. She kept saying on the entire drive: "I can't wait to smell mimi's house..."

You remember that, don't you? Grandma's house - smell? I do. I could pick it out of a smell line-up. The memories start to flood in if you think about it for too long. We sent the kids off with grandma & grandpa and ordered room service from the hotel restaurant - steak & sweet potatoes. I sat there missing the girls, hoping they were having a good time, hoping this "day" would be enough to heal some of the sadness of what we all used to be.

No one really preps you for post-divorce. The *post-post*. You know, where you don't miss your ex but you mourn the memories. I guess it happens as people grow apart, you do the best to keep it together & stay in



we had previously around the holidays, I welcomed many new ones.

After the holiday, we started our trek back West with the a pit-stop in West Virginia on night one and St. Louis on night two, Kansas City being the goal. I grew up about 3 hours South of Kansas City in a super small town. All of my family still lives in the area and my ex's family lives in Kansas City. I promised Bella that we would make it to family, in KC, by her birthday on the 28th. Do you know someone with a "holiday" birthday? You know, the one that always gets the short end of the stick. I always thought I did a good job of keeping her birthday & Christmas separate so she can have a deserved celebration, and while the others have been pretty easy, this road trip promise was hard (stressful) to keep. We made it - on the 28th - and it was well worth the stress to see her

a strong mental head-space for your kids. You work daily to give them the best, what you didn't have, protecting them as best as you can from any more pain and in the process, everything around you changes. Your daily activities, your thoughts, your habits, you start to create a new life. The things that interested you before no longer bring you joy so you start to realize some of what needs to be shed. Sometimes it's people, sometimes it's things and some times - it's both. For me, the things were easy. I sold everything in "our" home as quickly as I could and left that house without thinking twice, ridding those memories goodbye.

For me, it's the people. Some we miss, some we don't - but all played a role in the person we are today. Each left a mark in some way, leaving ME a little bit bigger and stronger than I was before they arrived.

On a mentorship call several months ago, a peer that I look up to shared that she had just started a hobby, something that was completely different and unrelated to her day job and something that made her completely disconnect. Those of us in my line of work struggle with the urge to be completely plugged in at all times. Our job is fun, it's based on social media, it's easy to get lost. I started to think - what could I do or implement more of to get that? I wanted that feeling of complete disconnection. The inability to think about anything but what was in front of me, mind and body-busy. I closed my eyes and just started to think about times when I've felt that.

I thought back to September 2016 - a girls trip with some of my best friends. We went to Breckenridge and went horseback riding through the mountains. PEACE.

I thought back to my childhood, I was 10-11 years old. My uncle had a farm that we lived close to and I remember sneaking under the fence to pet all of the horses. Massive beings compared to me. We'd ride through trails in the woods like follow the leader, I'd wear an ear to ear smile. JOY.

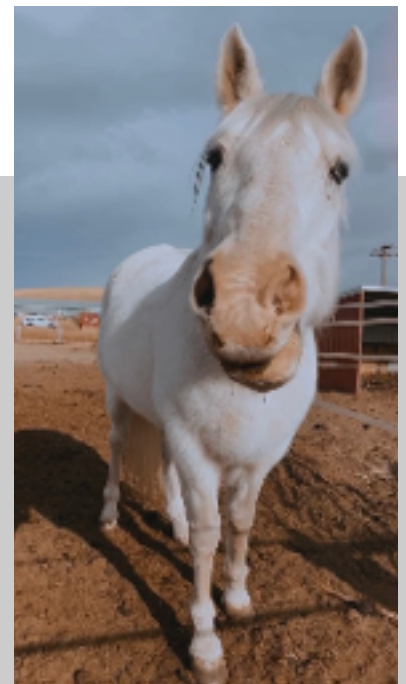
I thought about the taking the boys on car rides with windows down since we've moved. Our new area is pretty rural, we'd drive passing by ranch after ranch with big signs. HOME.

I made a phone call and signed up for lessons the same day. I felt it - I've felt it every week since. 18 weeks later: I've been doing riding lessons consistently and have fallen *back* in love with the smells, the views, the feelings that I get from stepping foot in that barn. Week one, I showed up with my bubbly energy expecting to "follow the leader" on a horse like I always have - luckily that's not what I got.

My trainer is an energy-man. He's a firm believer that with horses, there needs to be an energy that I carry and a relationship that needs to be developed to *really* become good. I didn't want to play follow the leader - I wanted to become good. We'd start with ground work, learning how to speak to them with my body language and how I carry myself. I remember coming home from lessons, giddy to share with Chad that I literally made a horse stop, backup, trot, and more, all with my body language. Quickly, I realized that these lessons weren't going to be what I *expected* - they were going to be so much more than that. Here I was, healing from my own personal journey through 2020-2021 (like you've read) and deep down, I needed to find confidence in myself again. I needed to carry myself differently, "shoulders back and head up" - like Ali always says. "Remember who the F you are and what you've done" - like my mentor always says.

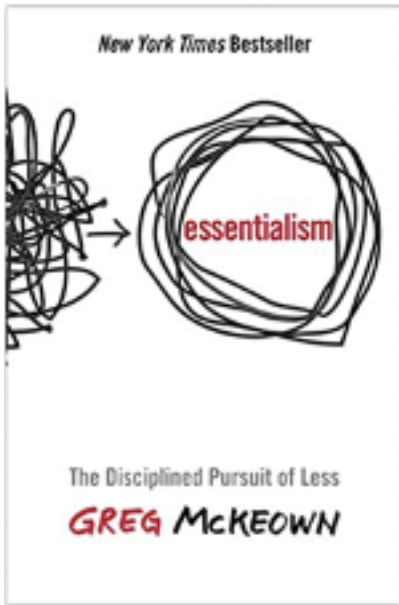
I got more than a lesson - I got an energy shift. Week after week, I relearned. I became a student again, humbly admitting to not being the expert, and making it a goal to just *listen & learn*. I've fallen in love with the process of relearning & realigning. Letting go of old thoughts and habits that never served me to begin with, they only hardened me.

I never thought it would take a 900lb majestic unicorn-beast named Paladin to help me slow down, readjust, relearn, and realign. But, he did. (that's him)



ALIGNMENT

MUST READ.



I've recommended this book to almost all of my one on one coaching clients in December/Jan so far. There are probably quite a few people who would benefit from reading this book but for me - a recovering workaholic, a people pleaser, a busy-is-better-than-rest mindset, releasing the only-the-weak-slow-down-thought process - it tested me. What if I only did what was essential of me? My job title & description, nothing more. What if I stopped trying to do more and simply became intentional about doing less. I used to think this would be the beginning of the end, when things started to slip away because of my slow down and with this book - quickly realized how much more productive I could become when I stopped trying to do it all. What would happen if you delegated the things that didn't need your personal touch? What would happen if you stopped saying yes to the extra work your boss is throwing your way? What would happen if you shifted and made your sole focus, only what is essential?

I'm reminded: I CAN DO ANYTHING, but not everything.

WORK WITH ME.



Yes and yes. Can I share a little about what I do for those of you who are new or unsure of what I even do for a living? Someone actually asked me the other day: do you have a normal 9-5? I kind of laughed to myself because clearly it doesn't look like I have a job or I'm not doing a good job of sharing the details of it.

Fitness has been my love for almost 9 years now and that's still my main focus, business-wise. I run online wellness groups, every month, for anyone looking to gain control of their health. I set people up with workouts, meal plans/recipes, and daily check ins/support to help them reach their personal health goals.

Part two - I mentor those that fall in love with the journey of fitness/wellness to turn that excitement into a business where they get to pay it forward, creating their own groups & helping their own circle of friends/family hit their goals. This is where the majority of my energy goes as I've mentored hundreds of people to build businesses. My team, the energy, the commitment - *this* business is what really shifted my life.

And lastly, in February 2021 I became a Certified Life Coach. Since doing so, hundreds of you have trusted me and started one of my courses or have signed up to do my personal coaching. My first course was created with my groups in mind - teaching people how to eat with intention to heal and my second is a 30-day journaling course that literally is my heart and vulnerable soul. I offer 45-minute single life coaching sessions and have many clients who have committed to working with me for a full month (or two) until the tools & lessons become *easy*.

And so, yes. When you commit to working with me, I'll get to know you, what you enjoy/dislike, what your goals are, short term & long term, what's working now and what isn't - etc. to help you clear the noise/chaos to transition into a routine that feels good. If you've never felt that, it's an energy, a clarity, a shift - releasing what doesn't fit while working to figure out what does. I'll walk you through it.