

MY STORY



I've been an overachiever my whole life: a workaholic who was always looking for what was next. I used to wear "busy" on my forehead as if it were some kind of badge of honor. I had one heck of a "to do" list and I loved checking the items off. Each check gave me this sense of accomplishment. Despite checking off item after item, though, my list never shrank. I was on a hamster wheel going around and around and that wheel only sped up instead of slowing down.

In my drive to succeed, I became consumed by worry; always taking care of everyone else and everything else before myself. I didn't see it at the time, but it came with a heavy price. Today, I realize all those lists and the constant need to schedule myself to the ultimate limit was a means of distraction; a way to avoid other issues in my life. Ouch. It's hard to own what you own.

I DIDN'T SEE IT AT THE TIME, BUT
IT CAME WITH A HEAVY PRICE.



As the days, weeks, months, and years passed, I barely noticed, so caught up in the hustle and bustle of life. This is how a typical day might look. The alarm goes off, I hit snooze a few times, so that I run out of time to work-out. When I get up, I shower, get the kids up, and make sure they are ready: feed them breakfast (though I don't have time to eat myself), get their things ready for the day, and speed out of the house to the car. A mile down the road, realize something (or someone) had been forgotten, so drive back, grab basketball shoes, hop back in the car to drop off at multiple schools, and then frantically drive to the office in time for 8 AM meeting. Once I get to work, I've got a series of back-to-back meetings that necessitate skipping lunch.

By the time 5 o'clock rolls around, I run out the door (already running late) to pick up the kids from school, drive through to get them dinner before taking them to their sports practices and games, academic activities, etc. and hurry them home afterward. Then we rush through their homework, get them ready for bed, and tuck them in. After that, there's laundry to start and fold, dishes to wash from earlier in the day, meals to prep for tomorrow, e-mails (both personal and professional) to answer. Finally at around 1 AM, I crash, only to wake up a few hours later to reach out and hit the snooze button and repeat the same day.

Do you feel me?

*IT WAS A SUNDAY MORNING AROUND
10 AM. WHEN SHE SPOKE THOSE
WORDS “MOM, SOMETHING REALLY
BAD HAPPENED LAST NIGHT,”*



When we live our life like this, in constant chaos and turmoil, it's impossible to find clarity or depth. So, we live on the surface and survive. It's hard to find time to take care of ourselves so that in moments that matter, we aren't able to show up in the way we need to or as the best version of who we truly are, affecting both personal and professional success.

Because we aren't taking care of ourselves, we become more and more unhealthy. We burn out. I was buried under emotions - ready to explode at any minute. This is how I was living my life. Then one day, I got a phone call from my 24-year-old daughter that changed everything. In that moment, all of the noise and chaos went away.

It was a Sunday morning around 10 AM. When she spoke those words “Mom, something really bad happened last night,” it was as if the whole universe stopped. I felt alone and scared. I didn't have a plan for this and I always had a plan. I could fix anything, but not this.

Up until that moment, I believed that I was a positive person, even when things got difficult. But this was different: my world went dark. I literally felt the darkness cover my life the moment that call came in. It was the first time in my life that I literally shut my life down. I hit PAUSE.

In a moment of clarity, I just hit pause.

Nothing else mattered.

I knew in that second, this was a moment I could not miss. I didn't know what or why, but I knew in my soul that it was a moment that mattered. It felt different. My internal voice was screaming that she deserved my complete focus in that moment. Looking back, I was trying to make up for the thousand other times I didn't give her my focus. The times I missed basketball games because of work or skipped bedtime rituals to spend time on my laptop – those moments came crashing into my mind. I knew I had to be fully and wholly present.

That Sunday morning, my daughter, Courtney, crashed into my arms and I cradled her - a shattered mess. She was reeling from the actions of her boyfriend the night before. He turned out to be a bad person. And, as the next few days unraveled, I learned about my daughter's severe addiction to drugs and alcohol. I held her in my arms as she hit her rock bottom. Her anchor had been stuck in a very dark place for too long.

As I sat there, a part of me went into shock and became overwhelmed with guilt – the guilt of a mother who felt she'd failed her child. Another part felt this surge of warmth and somehow, I knew I was being given a chance to do things differently. My history with my children is that of enablement and this was my chance to show up in a different way than I had in the past. With a new mindset of empowerment, I made a decision to stop the cycle. I knew I'd have a lot of hard work to do in order to change the trajectory of not only my daughter's life, but mine as well.



We spent the week locked up in the house. Lots of crying and laughing, talking and research. We dug in. Nothing else mattered. I have a strong history of enabling and I wanted so bad to "fix" it. To tell her what she needed to do next and then probably do it all for her. Instead of fixing it for her, like I had too many times before, I stood as a strong support system as she worked through her past and decided the fate of her future. As she made decisions about what came next, I was by her side empowering her to dig deep, stay centered, and find clarity. This was her journey, not mine.

I will never forget the day a week later when I drove my daughter to the airport with a one-way ticket to Arizona. I didn't know what she was entering into. She had decided to try a 30-day rehab program. At that moment, I didn't have the answers when I'd always had the answers in the past. At least I thought I did. As I watched her go up the escalator to her gate, I surrendered and handed it all over to God. And I prayed. HARD. And I trusted the professionals at that rehab facility with her life. It was the longest 30 days of my life, and hers.

Today, I am happy to report she is almost four years sober, and I gush with pride in her strength, her beauty, and her all-out grit. It was hard work, and she did every bit of it on her own.

They say in every struggle, there is a lesson. This was a hard one for me. I hadn't always shown up like I needed to for those that depended on me the most. I missed signs my daughter was in trouble. As I look back, the signs were there for years and I missed them because I was on this wheel - trying to do all and be it all for everyone. The tough lesson I learned was to get clear, slow down, and practice mindful leadership. Because I was so scattered, I had no clarity, no priority, and I was just living and existing day to day with no anchor to hold me in one place. My lesson was that my job wasn't to fix, my job was to be her anchor in those moments that mattered. To stand strong at her side as she fixed it.

Leading in today's environment requires a different skillset with a new set of tools centered on mindful leadership and consciousness. It starts with the ability to manage ourselves in this newly connected and constantly changing world. It requires discipline to manage the hamster wheel from a place of clarity. When you have clarity of your true intentions, you won't miss the moments that matter.

How do you show up? For yourself? Your team? Your clients? How do you show up for your family and friends? In good times, showing up with a positive attitude and good, solid decision-making is easy. In times of conflict, chaos, or tragedy – the moments that truly matter – how do you manage your reactions and choices? Choosing how to show up in these moments paves the path through your life: your career successes, your relationships with your family, and the connections you form with friends.



I was guilty of standing before the mirror in the morning and thinking about my day to come and saying horrible things to myself like, "This day is going to suck," "You are such an idiot!" etc. I'd never say those things to anyone else. Never. I've learned I wasn't showing up for myself, so how could I possibly lead others? Yet I had colleagues and clients depending on me to help them to show up and grow their businesses. I was letting my family down because when I was communicating with them, I was stressed and angry and not coming from a place of love and centeredness.

Showing up is about conscious choice and discipline has to be a part of the equation. How one shows up during conflict will make the difference between a good leader and a great leader.

There is power in the ability to pause before reacting. In the moment, we often let emotions lead to how we react, and the result is less than ideal. The time to pause is at that moment immediately following a situation and before responding. By choosing to train our brains to manage that pause and think about our responses, we create more balanced and productive outcomes that strengthen relationships instead of allowing our immediate emotional responses to leave a path of destruction.

HOW YOU LEAD YOURSELF SETS THE STAGE FOR EVERY OTHER RELATIONSHIP YOU HAVE.



And it's not just noisy outside. It's plenty noisy inside of you as well! Did you know on average we have 70,000 thoughts per day? Here's a shocking fact: 80% of those daily thoughts are negative. That's 56,000 negative thoughts per day. How scary is that? How do we combat all of these inputs and the mass of negativity to stay positive and productive? Intention.

Leading from the inside out means consistently and intentionally practicing the pause in everything you do. The pause is so powerful! Learning to pause makes it possible to differentiate yourself from others; your reaction is your choice. Bottom line. As a leader, it all starts with you. Emotions lead us to react in the moment. I am inviting you to stop. Pause and respond from a place of empathy and caring. If you can't lead yourself in these times, how can you possibly lead others?

How you lead yourself sets the stage for every other relationship you have, both personally and professionally, regardless of income, title or rank. It also sets the stage for the level of success you are willing and allowing yourself to have. It is difficult to identify your dreams and work to reach them when you are living in a negative- mindset thinking you've got it and know it all. If this is you, you don't get it. You don't know it all. No one does. We all have room to grow.

Today, Courtney runs a successful spiritual practice called Crystal Clear Connections. She is sober, happy, and thriving. She found her anchor. Herself. Believing in self was the key. Loving yourself anchors you to your true authentic essence and allows you to become who you are meant to be.

THE ANCHOR IS YOU!



I found the key. The anchor was me. The stronger I get in loving and believing in myself, the more I am anchored in love and connectedness back to myself as the source. I am the creator of my life. You are the creator of your life. The amazing fact is that it doesn't matter how old you are, what your body type is, the emotional baggage you carry with you, or your past experiences.

Right now, right here, you can decide. You can choose to show up different. You can choose to get clear on who you want to be, and then build your life around becoming that person. Day by day, step by step. It's a choice. You can continue to enable the life that is unhappy and maybe toxic, or empower a life of joy and fulfillment.

Once you make the choice, there are many resources for you to help you succeed, including ME! We all get stuck. In those moments, it's easy to feel alone. You are not alone.

There is a full life waiting to be lived. A life waiting for you to decide it's time to let go and commit. You are the anchor of your life.

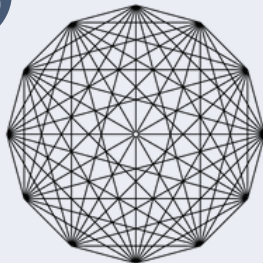
You can use that anchor to keep you in a life you don't love OR you can use the anchor to find your center and rise up and find joy and success.

Take your power back. Create your best life! What are you waiting for?

The anchor is YOU! STEP IN!

INNER WORK JOURNEY SPIRITUAL JOURNEY

CONTACT US



CRYSTAL CLEAR CONNECTIONS



Tina Paulus-Krause

SPEAKER | TRAINER | COACH

