

## Semiannual Inspiration: Your Lessons of 2012

Greetings to family, friends, and colleagues around the world!

The new year is upon us! I am writing today, as promised, to share your lessons learned in 2012, in the hopes that they will help you grow in 2013!

Thank you so much to the nearly 25 of you from all over the world who shared what is in your hearts and on your minds. Without further ado, here are the lessons, in alphabetical order by first name of the author!

### 2012 READER LESSONS

- Do something scary that you thought you couldn't do! A friend of mine emailed me a few months ago saying he was signing up for the Spartan Sprint in Massachusetts. It's a 3.5 mile obstacle course. The videos looked scary and physically hard, but they also looked like fun. I was tired, muddy, and bleeding... and it was awesome! I had never pushed myself to do something like that before, and I just felt so accomplished. You really can do anything you put your mind to! And now I'm signed up for the next Spartan Race in Fenway Park. Now I want to push myself to do more scary and fun things that I have avoided in the past.... bring it! **Christina in Boston, MA USA**
- My 2012 lessons: learning to be my own best friend, being absolutely true to myself. As a natural giver, it's important to include oneself in the gift of intangible gifts: i.e. – kindness, formidable faith, forgiveness. Not to be drawn in and influenced by anyone who is negative by choice, I choose to remain neutral. Also to genuinely enjoy the differences that are innate in each of us, realizing that this is what makes life so interesting. **Cynne in Philadelphia, PA, USA**
- The most important lesson I learned in 2012 is to "trust your instincts" the minute you realize you are not in the right place or position remove yourself from that situation. A job or anything else for that matter is not worth you losing who you are. **Dawn in PA**
- Be who you are! There is so much pressure in our world, society, and at work to conform and act as others think we should. Get to know yourself and daily celebrate the unique gifts and talents given to you by God. Discover new things about yourself! Like a diamond...the more facets, the more brilliance! Remember to let your mind "go to recess" as least once a day. Finally, find a place to "be" that includes rest for your soul! **Faith in Media, PA USA**
- We will all have some setbacks in life. Many times, they are actually no one else's fault but your own. When you do have that setback, you have to first recognize that there was something that you did or did not do that led to the setback. The next step is the most important part --- MOVE ON to the solution and take action on it! **Farzin in Washington, DC USA**
- Finally I left the country that I was born and raised and started a whole new chapter of my life in the UK with postgraduate study. Since I came here, my brand-new life has been full of wonder, despair, joy, love, betray, and even bigger wonder- such a Shakespearean chapter. We wish for lots of things every day, expecting some things to be done or some burden to pass without wracking our soul. Wherever you live and whatever you do, we know very well through our lives that our wishes do not come true all the time. However, if we tweak it a little bit and think literally how wonder-full life is, we can truly appreciate what we have now. Even yesterday's sigh becomes today's cheer. Let's love our lives, be thankful for what we have now. **Haein in Sheffield, UK**
- If you really live in the "now" you can't actually be unhappy. Unhappiness usually comes from living in the past or being afraid of the future; so, mindfulness throughout the day is the goal! (start with one small thing... like brushing your teeth mindfully or eating an apple mindfully, it can change the way

you see the world!). Also, go into silence for a while. For example, at the beginning of meetings, we go into silence for about 2-3 minutes – it's mind-blowing! I wish I could "go into silence" every time I start with a new activity, and sometimes in between. **Inga in Wurzburg, Germany**

- Accentuate the positive, eliminate the negative. Now, that is much easier said than done. And I've only actually come to follow it in the last ten days or so. I realized that I spend way too much of my time focused on the negative things in my life - less than desirable working conditions, poor health, financial disorganization. I'm finally learning to let the little things go and focus on the more important things in life. I've only got a few months left in Korea, and I plan to make the most of them. Of course, it's much easier to complain and moan and think about how unfair life can be. I'm finally making an effort to find my happiness, and trying to leave all of that other stuff behind. It's challenging, but well worth it! **Irene in Gwangju, South Korea**
- It seems obvious, but just because others don't recognize a particular positive effect we have on their life, doesn't negate that effect. If others notice, that's wonderful, but in this hustle and bustle world people rarely do. Acknowledge the kindnesses that you do and move on. Else you endanger the source of that kindness. **Jan in Philadelphia, PA USA**
- After almost eight years of working in Higher Education I decided it was time for a change and in 2012 I got a new job! It is still hard to pinpoint why I wanted something new; I loved what I did, I was good at it, and let's be honest - in this economy, there could not have been a worse time to try to find a new job. When I was contemplating looking for something new, one of my friends said to me: "**The grass isn't always greener, but sometimes you just need different grass**". This is my lesson of 2012...It is not always going to be the best change or the right change, but sometimes you just need a change! **Jody in Chesterbrook, PA USA**
- My lesson learned for 2012 is to take things slowly. This year has been dominated by drastic changes to my personal life. These changes were too numerous and far-reaching to be taken on at once, though I tried. They were mostly positive changes, fortunately, but they were also overwhelming me. I would not say I failed at any of them; rather, I would say it was a learning process where I realized I simply cannot push myself too hard. And sometimes I have to understand my limitations and accept myself where I am. It sounds simple in writing, but in reality it's no small feat. In the past year, I came to realize change had to start from within, one thing at a time and will not come easily. Patience, is what I am learning; patience with myself. **Jon in Philadelphia, PA USA**
- Surround yourself with greatness. Pick friends and acquaintances whom you look up to. **Josh in Hartford, CT USA**
- When you think you've pushed yourself far enough, you're probably just starting. In my previous job at Yonsei University in Seoul, Korea, I thought I worked hard- and I believed I was pushing myself to the limits of my capabilities- but in tackling the last year of my last job I realize how far that was from the truth: with each month I've been challenged to push myself further mentally and physically than the last. While that may not sound like a great thing- for me it has been, as it has caused me to dig deeper than I thought possible and reassess what I am capable of in this life. **Joshua, All Over Asia**
- The first lesson is to stop trying to make things into what I want them to be, and instead go after what it is I am looking for. I found myself continually trying to change jobs into what I wanted them to be rather than finding the job I wanted. I think this goes for relationships as well. Stop trying to make people something they are not and rather surround yourself with people who have the qualities you want. Another very important lesson I learned is that no one is going to make things happen for me and that I alone need to make things happen. This allowed me to be more transparent and open in my professional relationships by vocalizing what I wanted and seizing every opportunity to achieve it. All in all I have come to a deeper level of self awareness, what I want out of life, and what I need to do to create my own happiness. **Kat in Philadelphia, PA USA**

- A good friend shared a quote recently that stuck with me. "We are human beings, not human doings. What are you being right now?" This has been a powerful call to me over the past few months, and a new way I'm working to measure my life. I will be a good friend, coach, partner, brother, and son. Of course, my actions will help me be that person, but I tend to get caught up in all of things I "have to do" (my "to do" list). Instead, I'm trying to look at that list and realize what these things add up to: to what I am being. This view is helping me realize my priorities in life and bring them more into focus. **Kevin in Wayne, PA**
- The only person you can truly depend on is yourself. If you are not on your own team, no one else can be either. Even when people love you, the only way they can get direction on how to make you happy is from you - and that comes from knowing yourself. Also, life is too short! **Laura in Hartford, CT USA**
- There is nothing more precious than family. Cherish every minute...because they all pass way too quickly. The other is something I've always believed, but this year it really manifested itself in powerful ways. A positive attitude is a powerful thing. If something seems to be wrong – take a look in the mirror and figure out what you are doing to contribute to the wrongness. **Lauren in Lehigh Valley, PA USA**
- The most important lesson I've learned this year, particularly after a professional journey to South Africa, is that we are more similar than dissimilar in our drive to improve ourselves, our families, our countries, and our world. **Linda, Global Citizen**
- My lesson for this year is to trust my intuition--to listen to what that mixed up world in the back of my brain is saying even if it's not in words and I don't understand it. Usually it makes perfect sense years later. Also, my second lesson is that I can't fix everyone and everything. **Marjorie in Philadelphia, PA USA**
- Here's what I have learned as 2012 comes to a close: Gratitude and Passion. I was laid off from my position after working at an organization for close to 9 years. I learned how incredibly important it is to be grateful every day for the experience I got while there and the opportunity now to do more of the work I enjoy in the future. I make sure I say or write down everyday what work I am grateful for, so I can allow new opportunities for that type of work to come into my life now and in the future. I also learned to follow my passions when it come to work and career path. I continue to take a look at what work inspires me and gives me a sense of helping others and tie that in with gratitude. Instead of doing what I have done in the past and continuing the same cycle, I am focusing on the work that gives me the most joy and say "Thank you!" every day for it. I am still in search mode, but am beginning to see opportunities presented to me that reflect regular mindfulness about "Gratitude & Passion". **Mike in Lansdale, PA USA**
- Shatter excuses. I encountered much adversity as I chased my goals this year. I was encouraged by one of my favorite quotes: "Anyone can give up, it's the easiest thing in the world to do. But to hold it together when everyone would understand if you fell apart, that's true strength." I'm plunging right into 2013 with new goals ahead of me and all excuses behind me. **Monique in Philadelphia, PA USA**
- I think the most important lesson I'm learning this year: to trust the truth of my experience. To trust the wisdom of my body, which is so difficult for someone like me who spends so much time in her head. To listen to what's rising in the moment and honor it instead of fighting against it all the time. **Shelah in Staunton, VA USA**
- Lesson 1: Make the decision already! For me, the big lesson is the power of making a decision. For so many of us, we linger ... we fence-sit ... we can become complacent. We all know that not making a decision IS making a decision. Yet, we sometimes need a little push to finally make the decision (even when we know in our heart, it's the right thing.) What is amazing is how energy changes once

the decision is made --- and how it changes exponentially once you're "all in" --- fully committed to the decision. Lesson 2: Let it go! Another big lesson is the freedom of letting go. There are several big things I've either had to let go of, or loosen up on in 2012. I won't lie to you – I still grieve the losses. Yet, by letting go of the things that are holding me back, it has opened me up to things that are much healthier for me, and will give me joy. I see 2013 as a very joy-filled year for me! **Theresa in North Wales, PA USA**

- Sometimes it is better to go around the walls that appear in my life than always try and go through them. I guess what I mean by that is, sometimes there is more than one way to find a solution. You cannot always take the most direct route to get to your destination, sometimes you have to take a few detours along the way. **Trevor in Phoenixville, PA USA**

## CONCLUSION

Thank you to all of our lesson authors. We appreciate that you took the time to reflect deeply on your lessons this year and lovingly share them for us.

If you need me, you know I am always here to help you. Please reach out via my blog, LinkedIn, Twitter, or email. I love being connected to you and your journey.

Jon and I wish you all a joyful, peaceful year, wherever your journey takes you.

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PPS – Previous semiannual inspirational messages dating back to June 2008 can be found at <http://brianfishbone.typepad.com/becoming-the-blog/semiannual-inspirational-messages.html>.