Cultural Daily

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A Second or Third Act – Another Chance | Part 1

Lisa Bowers · Wednesday, October 4th, 2017

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What could be more hopeful to someone who is at what was “retirement age” a couple of generations ago than new opportunities for fulfillment and achievement? All it takes is a pivot, a refocus, or a call to action.

Joe Biden’s remarks at @Mashable’s 2016 Social Good Conference demonstrated that hope. Mr. Biden’s tireless globetrotting on behalf of the Cancer Moonshot Taskforce in order to radically change the nature and transparency of cancer research is impressive. But I was struck by this 30-plus-year public servant embarking on a completely new initiative at a time that another 73-year-old might have retired.

Mr. Biden’s shift from the world of politics to that of the medical establishment got me thinking about how many of us stick with the status quo versus exploring where we want to be, if only . . .

If only we made a different choice. We make many choices early on, choices that shape our days and habits and routines. For some, the decisions that got them to where they are now are enough to keep them content. For others, they are not – even if those decisions have led them to the White House.

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Enter the possibility of a pivot.

Pivoting

A segment on TODAY’s “Starting Over TODAY” series this summer was entitled “From Paris to Oyster Farmer[i].” The piece was about Abigail Carroll, who left a relationship with a French count, a career of stock trading, and a life in Paris to become a self-employed oyster farmer in

Maine. Abigail pivoted from European affluence to blue-collar entrepreneurship.

After leaving France, Ms. Carroll returned to Maine to write a business plan for an oyster farm with a friend. Many business plans never get executed. This one did, leading Ms. Carroll to a life of oyster farming. Ms. Carroll acknowledges this new life's hardships and struggles but affirms that at the end of even the hardest of days, she feels an unbridled joy.

Ending a rough day with feelings of accomplishment and happiness isn't a reality for many in the modern workforce. What happens if the choices that you made in your youth no longer fulfill you? If Abigail Carroll can go from being a 1-percenter in finance to a fulfilled oyster farmer wading through sea grass[ii], you too can reset.

> "Don't waste mental energy asking if you can do something. Just do it. You may surprise yourself." – Roz Savage

Despite the sense of purpose that can come from just taking action, resetting one's path can be daunting. There's a chance that nothing could come of it and that the sacrifices made are in vain. What if what one thought was the right path turns out to be the wrong one? What if one experiences criticism, a lack of support, and general disapproval after a pivot? If the risks are big, so are the rewards. Not only for the person resetting but for who or what inspires them to do so.

Answering an Urgent Call

In a January 17, 2017 address about The Cancer Moonshot[iii], Joe Biden said he was unwilling to postpone. What was he unwilling to postpone? Trying to end cancer. That sense of urgency can be the driving force behind the desire to shift focus.

Roz Savage felt this call in her 30's. She was unhappy with the direction her life was taking. So she decided to leave the life and job she knew and row across the Atlantic Ocean. Ms. Savage writes, "First, I realized that my job, although it paid me well, was not making me happy. One day, I sat down and wrote two versions of my own obituary: the one I wanted to have and the one I was heading for if I carried on my current path. My job was … taking me … toward a life of tedium and obligation rather than one of freedom and fulfillment. Second, I experienced an environmental epiphany, and developed a burning need to challenge people to think about the way we are treating the planet."[iv]

Ms. Savage's feats have been described by Sir Richard Branson as "heroic, epic, inspiring, historic." As the first (and so far only) woman to row solo across the world's "Big Three" oceans, the Atlantic, Pacific, and Indian, Roz turned ordinary thoughts like any of us might have into something extraordinary.

In a world in which politics seems more prevalent – and necessary – than ever before, many first-time activists are answering a call by letting their voices be heard. Roxanne Jones, the founder of Boomer Haiku, passionately exhorts, "Flex your activist muscles. Push back, call out, speak up,

vote, run for office, volunteer, march in peaceful protests. Just don't remain silent or complacent in the face of the hate-mongering that threatens to destroy our democracy."[v]

The call to action is as varied as people are. It could mean volunteering in the community or challenging an ocean, as Ms. Savage did. [highlight]A wealth of opportunities for self-fulfillment, touching other lives or creating a better world lie before each of us.[/highlight]

Come back soon to read part two of "A Second or Third Act – Another Chance"

[i] *TODAY Show*. Nbc. New York, 4 July 2017. Television.

[ii] Carroll, Abigail. *THE OYSTER MANUAL: AN ACCIDENTAL OYSTER FARMER'S GUIDE TO SURVIVAL (BOOK IN PROGRESS)*. N.p.: n.p., 2017. Print (see: https://www.abigailcarroll.com/).

[iii] Biden, Joe. "Remarks by Vice President Joe Biden on The Cancer Moonshot." World Economic Forum. Switzerland, Davos. 17 Jan. 2017. *Remarks by Vice President Joe Biden on The Cancer Moonshot*. Web. 6 Sept. 2017. <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2017/01/17/remarks-vice-president-joe-biden-cancer-moonshot>

[iv] Savage, Roz. "Why I Quit My Job and Rowed Across 3 Oceans." *Free Career Advice*. The Muse, 07 May 2012. Web. 14 Sept. 2017. <https://www.themuse.com/advice/why-i-quit-my-job-and-rowed-across-3-oceans>

[v] Jones, Roxanne. "If You Could Have a Superpower, What Would It Be?" *Boomer Haiku*. Bangor Daily News, 27 Jan. 2017. Web. 13 Sept. 2017. <http://boomerhaiku.bangordailynews.com/2017/01/27/home/if-you-could-have-a-superpower-what-would-it-be/>

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