

From ‘What’s wrong?’ to ‘What’s happened?’

Reflections on my Process Experience

I’ve always known about recurring negative behaviors in my personal and professional life—but I never took time to understand them. When they’d pop up, I’d find a way to rationalize the failure, from a relationship going awry to a job not working out. Time after time, the same issues would arise and I’d be at a loss for words. It would send me into a deep shame/blame spiral, creeping into every corner and crevice of my life.

Before the process, this shame/blame I’d inflict on myself drove my feelings of unworthiness of love and belonging. I was guarded, felt like a fraud (the classic imposter syndrome). I was unable to be vulnerable, to let love in, to bring people closer so they could understand the real Julio (and my intentions). I had a big wall up, and I wasn’t letting anyone in.

Carving out time to be with my thoughts, to fully participate in the process, to cultivate a relationship with my body, intellect, emotional self, and spiritual self has changed the way I see the world. Most importantly: it’s changed the way I see my Mom, Dad and myself.

This is a reflection of my week of stillness. A time for me to slow down, show up, and listen. A chance for me to explore: Who am I? Where did I come from? Where am I going? What am I here for?

My Mother

My Mother was born into a family of struggle: daily exposure to drugs, abuse, sexual harassment, and violence. To climb above the rubble, her emotional child reacted and rebelled against many of the patterns she was exposed to. I learned from Mom that I needed to control every situation—nitpick over every detail in order to achieve perfection. And no matter how hard I tried, it was often not good enough. She’d be critical, impatient, impulsive, and lash out—all in an effort to achieve perfection. Mom did this to prevent me from seeing the hardship and struggle she felt as a child; she was determined to do everything in her power to create a better life for me.

These patterns have held me back in my personal life. When it comes to love, this illusion of finding the ‘perfect person’ had kept me in a vicious cycle for more than 9 years. Once I got too close to someone, I’d find reasons to dislike them. I’d pick out any possible flaw to prevent getting attached. I’d critique, judge, and attempt to change the person to fit my mold. I became OCD / obsessive over controlling the situation (and the individual) that I’d squander all the joy and gifts of imperfection that make up a relationship.

These patterns have held me back in my professional life. The push to control a situation, check the boxes and execute, start doing things regardless of ownership—all with the urgency to ‘make things right.’ I overwhelmed myself with tasks, taking on more than I could chew to claim my worthiness. When my fear of failure rushed in, I’d go manic to control the agenda, the people, the process—because if it wasn’t done right, I’d be to blame. And when

something did go wrong, I was the first to bitch and complain (the classic “I told you so”), which would spread like a wildfire, siphoning all the positive oxygen from the room / with colleagues.

Mom’s top 25 patterns:

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| 1. Catastrophe / the sky is falling | 9. Perfectionistic | 19. Nothing I do is ever enough |
| 2. Not good enough / unworthy | 10. Impatient | 20. Put others needs ahead of my own |
| 3. Overwork to please others | 11. Need for order | 21. Tobacco / prescription drugs |
| 4. Controlling | 12. Abandonment | 22. OCD / obsessive |
| 5. Need to be right | 13. Fear of being trapped | 23. Value partners needs over my own |
| 6. Nitpicking | 14. Impulsive | 24. Attract needy / wounded partners |
| 7. Lash out verbally | 15. Seeking outside validation | 25. Fear of poverty |
| 8. Critical of self / others | 16. Preoccupied | |
| | 17. Overwhelmed | |
| | 18. Deny anger | |

My Father

My Father moved to the US from Ecuador at 10-years old. Joined by 4 siblings and both parents, he was transported to an entirely new culture with little to no guidance. My Dad was never close to his father, kept a distance from the family, and saw money as he key to success. So he hustled to learn English, get a job, find his way in America. His resentment towards the family for not giving him the love and support he needed made him dismiss the family, putting himself above the rest—an arrogance that would set him up to be the “successful” one. He’d selectively listen to what was important, belittling what wasn’t. He’d lie and cheat and steal to have his way. He led by controlling, passing judgement, being critical, demanding, and disrespecting anyone—especially me, who was often in power struggle with him. My Dad lashed out verbally and physically after coming out to him as a teenager, deepening my fear of loss and abandonment after he permanently kicked me out of the household

These patterns have held me back in my personal life. I cheated and raged in my first relationship when I didn’t get my way. I remember thinking that I’d need to “lock up my emotions and throw away the key” because I was embarrassed at what had become of me. I noticed a lot of my father’s behavior, I just wouldn’t admit it. I’d focus on the negative with people in my life, always first to point out if a relationship was bound to fail, if a friend was gaining too much weight, if my mom was not making a proper left turn. The classic: point one finger and there’s three fingers pointing back. I’d compulsively lie to get my way, and I’d abandon people who caught on and didn’t give me what I needed. I was always on the attack, choosing selectively to obey rules, being vindictive if people came for me, and disrespecting those in my way.

These patterns have held me back in my professional life. When I experienced authority figures as my Dad (transference), I'd challenge, judge, and struggle with them to "feel them out." If I wasn't impressed or inspired, I'd enter a vicious cycle to build a case and challenge the authority. There was so much pent up anger towards my Dad's neglect that I took on visceral reactions each time I'd experience transference with a senior leader—kind of scary to look back on this after doing the Process! It was 100% transference with every manager I've had a difficult time with. Two huge vicious cycles at work stem from these patterns: (1) I've taken jobs for status / money / affirmation that I'm worthy but not because I really wanted to do them and (2) I've challenged authority when experiencing transference with my managers.

Dad's top 25 patterns:

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| 1. Abandonment | 10. Intimidating / | 18. Jealous / envy |
| 2. Stonewalling | threatening / | 19. Bossy / demanding |
| 3. Affairs / secrets | bullying | 20. Criticizing / put |
| 4. Compulsive lying | 11. Focus on negative | others down |
| 5. Immature | 12. Superior / | 21. Disrespectful |
| 6. Vindictive | self-righteous | 22. Withhold love and |
| 7. Raging / | 13. Money is | appreciation |
| aggressive | everything | 23. Oblivious to |
| 8. Arrogant | 14. Denial | problems |
| 9. Lash out verbally | 15. Controlling | 24. Strings attached to |
| and physically | 16. Judgemental | what I do for you |
| | 17. Unreliable | 25. It's your fault |

Top-level learnings about my patterns

I have over 130 negative love patterns (and counting!) Though after spending a few weeks with them, these main themes arise worth sharing. There are vicious cycles with other patterns that stem from these high-level issues:

- 1. I feared loss, I feared abandonment.** From the devastation of my parents ugly divorce to being rejected by my Father, I became hugely afraid of loss and of being left behind.
- 2. I wanted to be seen and be heard.** My parents never cared about my report card or gave me loving attention, because 'I would figure it out.' But I needed the attention—I wanted to be seen and recognized. I wanted to be significant in their eyes, and I wasn't.
- 3. I never let anyone too close. I always had an exit strategy.** Seeing how much hurt and pain was caused by the divorce, I built a huge wall and refused to allow the emotional devastation to happen to me by allowing love in! I didn't want to be a victim.
- 4. I had power struggles with authority.** If I saw someone in higher power as weak, insincere, or disingenuous (like my father), I built a case against that individual which made for difficult working relationships.

My top patterns:

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| 1. Disrespectful | 8. Needs to be seen /
needed | 17. Numbing with
drugs / alcohol |
| 2. Controlling | 9. Focus on negative | 18. Gossip / tell secrets |
| 3. Indecisive | 10. Needy / clingy | 19. Confrontational |
| 4. Fear of
abandonment | 11. Jealous / envy | 20. Combative |
| 5. Fear of loss | 12. Lying | 21. Power struggle |
| 6. Negative self talk /
not good enough | 13. Aggressive | 22. Stubborn |
| 7. Seek outside
validation | 14. Intimidating | 23. Rationalize failure |
| | 15. Gossiping | 24. Self-important |
| | 16. Don't let love in /
protecting myself | 25. Want to be seen |

My takeaways

1. A mistake is our best teacher.

Mistakes are part of the path. Turn your wounds into wisdom, because any day you learn a lesson is a great day.

2. My spiritual GPS is compassionate, kind, and always present.

Cultivate a relationship with that inner voice, that persistent knowing. All the answers are already inside.

3. When you point a finger, there's three fingers pointing back.

We blame when we're uncomfortable or in pain. And we judge in areas where we're vulnerable to shame. We pick people who are doing worse than we're doing. We anxiously seek validation that "at least we are better than you."

4. Knowing is easier than feeling.

Our intellect has run our world. Love and care for your intellect, but pursue balance via quad check. Understand that it's a balance between your intellect, body, spirit, and emotion.

5. Self-compassion means being kind to yourself.

How we treat ourselves is the most important, because we can't love people more than we love ourselves. Talk to yourself the way you'd talk to others. We can't extend compassion to other people beyond what we extend to ourselves.

6. Love is the most important human experience.

There is no prerequisite for love and belonging. In the absence of love and belonging, there is always suffering.

7. Vulnerability is our most accurate measure of courage.

Vulnerability is the center of difficult emotion. But it's also the birthplace of every positive emotion that we need in life. You can't get to vulnerability without walking through courage.

8. You cannot do this alone.

You cannot do vulnerability alone. We have to have people around us who we can look at and be honest and real with each other. It's being "all in." It's much more courageous than holding your life close to your chest and not letting people see you.

9. You have to open up all those places we shut down as a kid.

We shut down things that make us vulnerable—because it hurts too much. We may be safe, but we're miserable. So we have to open up to the feeling, to the risk.

10. Joy is the most difficult emotion we experience.

We are afraid to soften into it and feel it because we're waiting for the other shoe to drop. Uncertainty is like a torture chamber. Vulnerability is uncomfortable. Joy is foreboding.

11. The key to more joy = practice gratitude.

Especially in those moments of vulnerability, remind yourself to be grateful.

12. Where there is perfectionism, there is always shame.

Perfectionism is not healthy striving, it's all about external validity: if I look perfect, live perfect, do it all perfect—I can avoid shame, blame, criticism. But you can't totally escape judgement and criticism.

13. When in doubt, check in with yourself.

Go to your state of being. Check in with your spiritual self. Smile everywhere in your body, observe what is happening. And proceed with love, kindness, compassion. That's the highest form of human intelligence.

14. Make the shift from self to service.

The key to realizing a dream: focus on service, not success.

15. Follow your bliss.

Pay attention to those moments when you're lit up, when time flies by. When you're in that field of joyful expression, which is generally in contribution and being in service of some kind. "What can I give" versus "what can I get?" What makes you happy? What makes you alive?

What I still need to sort through

- What's the big idea of my life? What is it supposed to be?
- Everybody has a calling. Figure out why you are here and go about the business of doing it.
- Who do you want to be? How can you allow who you want to be to thrive in all aspects of your life?
- Think higher, feel deeper.
- My sweetness is a strength--I found my flow at the play session of the Process. How do I tap into that? It was a proud moment for me and one of the highlights of my experience. How do I capitalize on what happened that Wednesday night? People noticed my skills; embrace that. Take it. Do great things with it.

My vows, my desires, my claims, my next steps

1. Notice, express, and respect my feelings.
2. Acknowledge my sweetness as a strength.
3. Let love in.
4. Cultivate compassion for myself and for others.
5. Notice when I experience transference, which happens often in the workplace.
6. Recycle my dirty dozen at least once a week.
7. Quad check every day.
8. Stay connected to my Hoffman friends
9. Take the right road; catch myself from the left. From the dark side.

My heart's desire / what I really want

- I want to be seen, heard, acknowledged, recognized
- I want to put down the wall and be open to love.
- I want to be grateful
- I want to focus on the positive / see the good in people and situations
- I want to be decisive
- I want to be trusting
- I want to be courageous
- I want to be loving
- I want to be humble
- I want to be honest
- I want to be good enough
- I want to be worthy of love and belonging
- I want to show love

- I want to show empathy
- I want be be compassionate

