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# START ADAPTING TO THE NEW NORMAL

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Hello, my friends. I have a great topic today.

Today, I want to really talk about how we can start adapting to the new normal because I don't know about you, but I'm getting a little COVID-19 fatigue here. I am ready to get on with it and stop staying stuck in the drama of it. I'm ready to get going. I know there's still a lot to sort out. I know it's not figured out. I know there's still a lot of uncertainty ahead of us.

But I'm just ready to stop getting wrapped up in the what-ifs, the how-comes, the woe-is-me, and all those dramas of it, and just start adapting to living my life again, whatever that looks like in this new normal world. I'm just ready to get on with it. I'm sick of the news. I am tired of starting every conversation with my friends about how people are handling it and all the bad things that are happening out there. I'm just tired of the drama in total, particularly, the news.

I just left a comment on someone's post on LinkedIn because there's a lot of talk out there about how we should not be driving businesses and businesses that are advertising right now, it's like the wrong time to do stuff. And I'm like, no. It's good. It's okay to continue to work, to market, to drive business, and to do whatever it is you mean to do. Have fun. Anybody who tells you that you should stop doing stuff., it's just perpetuating the idea that life needs to stop. And we need to figure out how to move forward.

My personal line in all of that, as a consumer and as a business owner, is when companies are making money off the back of perpetuating fear, that's when I draw my line. And the news is the worst. They are the worst offenders. The words they use are all about amplifying the drama and the what-ifs they're constantly speculating. Oh, if this happens, then the worst here, and if this happens, then the worst there. No wonder people are sucked into it.

I have to tell you, I have stopped watching the news. Now, I just look at my news alerts, look at the headlines and if there's something that I need to do differently or be aware of, then that's it. If you're someone who needs to watch the news, I get it. But I recommend to you highly that if you're watching the news, like for an hour, spend


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an hour doing something that's not dramatic. Not about COVID-19, more inspirational, moving forward, podcasts like this one, whatever it is.

Because it's time to move forward. Life does not need to stop. We simply need to adapt to the circumstances that are being thrown at us. And I know that this feels like this constant barrage of circumstances being thrown at us and all these things that we don't know what to do with. We're like, I haven't dealt with this before.

I heard this great idea in another podcast that I listened to from another coach and she said, *This is just like a crisis like any other crisis. It just got a fancy outfit and a fur coat, or something like that.* I don't know what the coat was for. I would not buy that coat. But you get what I'm saying. It's just like we're all going through this at the same time. This is just a really fancy, brand-new type of crisis that we're all trying to deal with.

So here's what I have to offer you. I want to give you three empowering questions, if you keep asking yourself these questions, these are going to help you adapt to your new normal. I call them empowering questions versus disempowering questions because right now we are stuck in this cycle of disempowering questions. And we're asking ourselves things like, *How long will this last? Will I get sick? I don't know what to do. I can't go to the store and I can't live my life. What if this never ends?*

There's all these questions we're asking ourselves that are disempowering. They're taking our power away. And when you are stuck in a cycle of asking yourself disempowering questions, what do you think the results are that you get from disempowering questions when you don't have your power? What are the types of actions and feelings that you're going to get from that?

Here's a little secret: When you think of disempowering things, your results are disempowered. Your results come from a victim state, versus being at the cause of your life, you become the effect of your life. If you constantly are thinking, *what if I get sick,* then you're someone who's going to just focus on head down, in a corner writing and out. You go into a protective state, versus if you ask yourself a more empowering question.

What if you just asked yourself, *How can I live my best life today? How can I show up at my best today*? Something like that. Just switch it around and it will create a whole different type of feeling and actions that have come from that. You're going to get a much better result by really focusing on empowering questions. So I really want to give you these three empowering questions that you can actually just put on stickies and ask yourself every day.

But don't get me wrong, I know that there are things that we still need to do. We need to keep social distancing, we still need to be careful about what we do, and we need to protect other people by respecting the distance, washing our hands, and doing all these things.

My mother lives with us so I'm really extra cautious about making sure that I don't pass it on to her. Because she's older than me, and she may not be able to fight it as well as I can. Who knows? I really don't. We really don't know all the stuff that's going on with this virus. So we're just doing the best we can.

The other thing that I'm really focused on is doing what I can to help myself cope and show up at my best, and help other people cope and show up at their best because there are still really big tragedies out there. People are losing loved ones without even seeing them. A girlfriend of mine just lost her dad. She didn't get to see him and


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her mother is in a home and she can't even comfort her mother. These are tragedies, real tragedies. Parents trapped in long-term care facilities and people losing their jobs.

If you're in the US and you've lost your job, that means you lose your health insurance. That's scary. Kind of makes me happy to be in Canada right now. Seriously, my American friends, if this doesn't convince you that you need universal health care and you need to vote for universal health care, I don't know what's going to help convince you of that. I'm just saying, I'm happy to be in Canada where that's one worry I don't have to worry about. I know that if I'm sick, I go to the hospital, and they help me. No bill. Love that.

I also want to offer you the idea that even though there are real tragedies happening out there, I don't want to diminish that there are real tragedies happening every day. There are still more people dying today not from COVID-19, than there are dying from COVID-19. Does that even come across? Does that even track what I'm saying? What I'm saying is that even before COVID-19, 150,000 people died every day in the world. And that did not stop us from living the lives that we want to live. We just weren't thinking about it. We weren't aware of it.

We lived in this sense of false certainty that our lives were going to be okay. We had this false sense of security that our lives were just going to be okay, and everything is going to take along the way it always has. But that's never been true. Anything could have happened to us, we just weren't thinking about it. Now with COVID-19, we're thinking about it all the time. It's everywhere. Our lives are impacted. And things are so different, that it makes sense, that it's on our minds, and everybody around the world is thinking the same thing.

So there is this worldwide drama happening. And I get it. But here's something I want you to think about. There is an old Buddhist saying that I shared in my membership this week, and we talked about it, which was *pain is inevitable but suffering is optional.* This is how life works. There are dramatic experiences, there are tough things we have to deal with. We have to deal with health crises, divorce, the death of loved ones, job losses, human atrocities, bad bosses, and structural changes at work.

All these things happen that cause crises in our lives. And even though some of the ones I just listed are huge, and some of them on that same list feel small; when they're happening to us, we feel like we're in crises. So pain is inevitable. It's going to happen but you do not have to suffer. You can feel it. This isn't about happiness and sunshine. Feel your feelings. You can feel the pain. In the death of a loved one, there is pain involved, there is grief involved. Feel that feeling. Nothing is wrong with that. Have compassion for yourself for feeling that feeling.

But what you do, and the actions you take coming out of the feeling are all optional to you. So when we have crises in our lives, regardless of what the crises are, we move on, we figure out how to roll, and we always end up figuring out and moving on, regardless of what the crises are. We not only figure out how to survive the crises, but we always figure out how to move through them. We figure out how to thrive. We come out as better more experienced human beings than we were before it happened to us, before we lost our job, before we got a divorce, before we went through a health crisis and came out on the other end healthy.

Even if we came out on the other end slightly less healthy than we were going in, we went through an experience that we know how to handle. We learn so much from that experience. You see that with people who go through a 'tragic accident.' Let's say they become paralyzed. That's a big crisis for people. Of course, it is. And you see some people who rise above like they rebuild their lives in their new normal and they thrive. They figure it out.


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They come around and figure it out. That's what leaders do. The people who figure out how to thrive are the ones who always come out on top right. It's like Darwin's theory of natural selection. The ones who adapt, survive.

I'm working with two universities right now, putting programs together for their staff, and working with their learning and development departments. And I have to say, both departments have gone through so much change. Both departments have said to me, that everything that was on their plan this year has been parked and they are full focus on what's going on with our staff right now. Both departments have amazing energy.

They are ready to help their team. They are ready to help their team with their mental health and with their physical health. They're ready to help their team continue moving forward and they want their teams to stop suffering. They want to help their teams get focused on what's in front of them. They don't even know each other because I actually recommended that they meet one of them.

Both departments are running a series of webinars with different speakers to help encourage their teams to cope, to keep moving forward, and to adapt to the new normal. Why do you think they're doing that? Is it because they have businesses to run? Maybe probably a little bit. As HR professionals, especially in learning and development, they're hired to teach, nudge, and nurture their people to be their best. So essentially, that's what they're doing here. Because when people are their best, they're performing the best for the organization.

But honestly, also, what I'm seeing is that they are seeing their people suffer, and they want their people to have a sense of normalcy. A new sense of normalcy as quickly as possible. Because guess what, we don't know when this is going to be over. Every day, the news is saying something different. I stopped listening. Do you know when it's going to be over? When it's over. In the meantime, I'm getting on with it. I'm going on with my life.

That's what I'm doing in my business and in my membership program. I am really focused on teaching my students, and my clients to manage their minds through crisis. But we can't live in crisis mode forever. At one point, it's time to move forward. But that's the beauty of humanity. That's the experience of life. We have love joy, pain, grief, happiness, frustration, anger, and fun. It's all good. It's all part of the experience of our time here.

Sometimes there are hurdles, maybe we have some pain, and maybe we choose to suffer or struggle. And then we adapt, we figure it out, and we move on. So, I am ready to start thriving. And I want to help you thrive in this new normal. I want to help you adapt, find your way, and create your new normal starting now. That's what I want to help you with today.

I'm going to give you three questions, three empowering questions to ask yourself every day to help you move from just being in survival mode into a thriving mode, and creating your new normal, getting on with life. And I recommend sticking these questions everywhere. I've got them at the bottom of my computer screen on my desktop so I can just see them in the morning.

By the way, I use this idea of empowering questions all the time. I'm going to talk about questions for the new normal, but you can ask yourself empowering questions for anything you want to change your perspective on. So here's one for you.

Let's say you have a difficult boss relationship. What disempowering questions are you asking yourself versus what empowering questions could you ask? So you can be saying to yourself, a disempowering question might


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be, why don't they like me? Why is this so hard? Versus an empowering question which is, How is this boss the perfect boss for me today? How can I focus on how my boss adds value to the team today? So these are all things that you can change your perspective just by asking yourself questions.

And the great part about this with questions Is your brain loves answering questions. If you're having trouble changing your thoughts in your mind, then just ask yourself these empowering questions because your brain automatically responds to that much much easier than you trying to figure out different thoughts to think. Ask yourself empowering questions.

So here's the first one. Are you ready? The first empowering question is two words. *What's working?* So quite often, we look for what's missing. Again, that is actually how our brain works. The cerebellum, which by the way, in Latin means '*little brain*.' I call my cerebellum, my baby brain or my caveman brain. And your caveman brain is wired that way. It's about survival. That's what it wants to focus on – survival. Part of survival is figuring out what's missing, and where the problems are in our surroundings, so we can stay safe.

That served us as humanity for many, many years. Thousands of years. We don't need to think that way anymore. We don't have to focus on what's missing, even though that is the natural tendency of our brain. Look for evidence of what working. Focus on that, and ask yourself that question every morning or 10 times a day. What is working with this situation? You are what you believe. And your brain looks for evidence of that.

Back to that boss thing. If you believe your boss is a jerk, then your brain is going to constantly look for evidence of that. Look for what's missing in your boss that reinforces that they're a jerk. That's what you're looking for. But if you ask yourself empowering questions about your boss like, what value does my boss add to the team? What's working with my boss? Then you're going to look for evidence of that. If you think work is crazy, you're going to be looking for evidence of that. But if you think your job is to help people, then that's what you're going to be looking for.

My suggestion to you is that you focus on asking yourself a question. What's working in this situation? The minute you think, you start going to what's missing in your head. Snap and trigger yourself into what's working. And if it makes it easier, you can change the question to What evidence am I looking for? Or where is there evidence of what's working? Make it work for yourself. And you already know how to do this, because it's exactly what you do. When you take sides in an argument, your brain is constantly looking for evidence of why what you believe is true.

In the US, if you're a Democrat or Republican, and you're talking about the same issue, you are constantly looking for evidence. Let's say, Trump says something in a press conference, and you're a big Trump supporter, then you are going to be looking for evidence of why what he said is the right thing versus perhaps a Democrat might be looking for why what he said is a lie or the wrong thing, or whatever you believe about that situation.

Same thing with going to the movies. Did you like the last Avengers movie? Maybe you think that the Marvel Universe is negatively impacting the movie industry. Can you tell if I just signed up for the Disney Channel trial offer? I've been in the Marvel Universe for days. It's been tough. Tough for my husband, great for me. If you like or dislike a movie, or have an opinion about something like that, like the one my husband and I are always debating is Paris or London. I'm a London girl, he's a Paris guy. Which one is better?


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When you are taking sides in an argument, you're constantly looking for evidence of why what you believe is the right thing. When you decide to look for what's working in a situation, right away when you start to find evidence, it reinforces to your brain that this is okay, that what's happening is good, and you start to believe different things.

What is working in your situation right now? Whatever situation you're looking at. What is working with you working from home? What is working with you in helping your kids with their homework? What is working with you spending more time with your spouse, and you probably ever have in the longest time? What is working with you losing your job? That's a tough one. It feels really tough, but what could work in that situation for you? How do you want to think about it?

Now you could say, *Someone in my family is really sick. I don't want to talk about what's working in that scenario.* Okay, I understand that. But you could say, Look, they're sick, and what's working in this situation is they have good care. I'm not saying avoid feeling grief or avoid feeling sad about the situation with someone who might be sick in your family or a loved one. But you can still choose to focus in some way on what's working. That's the very first question. *What is working* in this scenario and the scenario that you're dealing with? Ask yourself what's working.

Second question. How you can ask *how can you help*? You can say, *How can I help? How can I be of service?* When you come from a place of giving and generosity, good things always happen. Always. Figure out how you can support the people around you. Help them if they want help. Help them with their mindset, help them with their homework. Don't think about necessarily what's in it for you. And you can do small things. For instance, stopping by your neighbors on the way to the grocery store.

I was driving to the grocery store and my neighbor was out on her porch. I pulled over, got out of the car, and didn't get too close. When I said, *Hey, Catherine, I'm going to the grocery. Can I get you anything?* And she said, *You know what, I really want fresh-cut tulips.* You got it, girl. I went and brought her some fresh-cut tulips. I just put it on her porch. She wasn't there. I just walk up to the porch and put them on the porch. That was something good I could do. If she wanted more, I would've bought more for her.

Same thing, I have a new neighbor across the street. There was a new building across the street. The owner put up a new cottage and they're renting it out. These people came in. Long-term renters. The actual address for the cottage hadn't been registered with Canada Post, Amazon, or Google and all that stuff so they couldn't actually order anything to their house. I'm like, no problem, use my address. I didn't expect anything and I just gave them my address. They're getting packages all the time. You know what it's like when you first move into a place. You don't know what you need and what you don't need and now they can't go out and get it so ordering is important.

I walked out on my porch the other day, and I had this huge pot of hydrangeas from my neighbor. Wasn't that beautiful? Spreading the love, right? Do something nice for other people. Think about how you can help other people and support other people. Another thing you can do is really thank that woman at the grocery store who's checking out your groceries. She is putting her butt on the line. Yes, she needs a job. Yes, she needs to get paid. I totally get that. But she's putting herself in a high-risk situation right now. So thank her for that. Make sure you do that.


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Even after this is over, remember what they did. If you can, volunteer. Help other people. If you're healthy and you think you can handle it, help. Even at work, there are so many changes going on and a lot of people can't handle it. How can you help them? How can you be a leader? How can you show them that it's okay to move on? Just with your attitude. How can you help your boss who's probably got a lot on their shoulders right now? How can you help your colleagues? How can you help your industry? Think about these things, little things that you can do to be of service, and ask yourself how you can help other people today. That's the second question.

The First one is *what's working?* The second question is, *how can you help?* Then the third question is, *how can I do this?* How can I do this? I know these are very generic, very simple questions because you can customize them for whatever situation that you're dealing with. How can I do this in a very solutions-oriented, forward-thinking question?

Quite often the brain wants to go to *why you can't do something, why it's going to be too hard*, *why it's too much of a risk,* or *why it's never worked before.* We've been doing this for 10 years. We've tried to do this, but it's never worked. How can we make it work? We can't have this meeting, we're going to have to postpone it. How can we make it work in the new world that we're living in? You're seeing it all the time. We are now Zooming with our friends. I'm having a Zoom coffee with my girlfriends this afternoon.

I reached out to my hairstylist and my colorist because my roots are coming in and I bought a box color and it's totally the wrong color. I sent her pictures of my roots, which I know is not perfect, but it is what it is. Aveda has decided that they will sell color. They'll premix your formula and they'll sell you color and you could do it yourself. It's better than buying a box right now. In my mind, that's what I wanted. I think Aveda is great for doing this. They're trying to figure out how to build their business right now. I get it. And I think it's okay. They're not doing it on the back of fear, they're trying to figure out how to build their business in the new normal. Totally fine.

I think companies that are doing that and people that are doing that are still finding ways to have fun in this world, still finding ways to grow their business in this new normal, are the ones that are helping us figure out how to move on. I got $5,000 in new business last week, just by reaching out and asking how I can help or how can I do this in this new normal. You can't go to the gym, adapt. I hear people going Peloton, I'm running outside. I pulled out all my DVDs from the late 90s and early 2000s, and I'm doing my workout at home. No problem.

We can do this. People are adapting. And you can, too. You just need to ask yourself, *How can I?* How can I do this? I'm always reminded that it's not the smartest person in the room who's the most successful, it's the one who never gives up. It's the one who learns to adapt. It's the one who continuously takes action until they figure it out.

A couple of weeks ago, I don't know exactly what the date is because things are moving around right now as I'm trying to adapt to helping people. But I just interviewed this gentleman called Momo Bertrand. I interviewed him because he did this post on LinkedIn about how he applied for 500 jobs in the field he wanted to work in before he got the one that he wanted. It's a big job. He is the Digital Marketing Officer at the UN.

By the way, when he started his job in January, they sent him to Italy, and he's pretty much been quarantined since then. He's been in his house in Italy since then. But the guy got his dream job. And I asked him how he did that. He said, *I have a mantra: Why not me?* Like someone's going to have that job, why can't it be me? I just got to


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figure this out. And he never gave up. He took massive action and kept going until he got what he wanted. And I love that. *Why not me?* What a great question. What a great empowering question to ask.

If you think about it, I know that you can come up with 20 empowering questions to ask yourself every day. I am sharing these three with you.

Just to summarize, they're called, *What's working? How can I help? How can I do this?* But there are so many more. You can think about it. I want to introduce this idea of empowering questions to you to help you adapt to the new normal. You can do this. We can all do this.

Thank you, my friends. If you liked this episode, do me a favor. Please go rate it. Go to iTunes, Spotify, Stitcher, or wherever you're listening to this podcast from, give me a review. Giving me a rating really helps. Thank you so much. If you are looking for a coach, don't forget, you can get a free session with me at melsavage.com/chat. It's a free 45-minute session, we can talk about what's going on with you and about the best way to help you move forward.

Thanks so much, everyone. I will talk to you next week. Bye for now.

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