

Hello?

IT'S ME

**REDISCOVERING YOUR PURPOSE,
PASSION, & POSSIBILITIES**

Dr. Shante

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Hello?

I'm Dr. Shante', Host of Believing Bigger Podcast, where for several seasons, I have equipped thousands of listeners with the tools, confidence, and FAITH to turn their Beliefs into Action!

- WHO AM I?
- WHAT AM I DOING WITH MY LIFE?
- HOW DO I EVEN START?

These are BIG questions and they're important ones. Sometimes life has a way of making us forget who we are. It's easy to get caught up in certain roles: spouse, parent, insert-job-title, and we wake up one day and realize that outside of those roles, we really don't know who we are, what we're doing, or where we're going.

This Guide is designed to help you find your way... to challenge you to confront any excuses, answer tough questions, and rediscover YOU. Let me caution you. If you are not willing TO DO THE WORK, TO BE HONEST WITH YOURSELF, TO CONFRONT LIMITING BELIEFS, & CHANGE CERTAIN BEHAVIORS, this will not work for you. Nothing will.

Let's get started.

A portrait of Dr. Shante', a Black woman with curly hair, wearing a black turtleneck and large hoop earrings, smiling and looking upwards. The portrait is set against a white background and is partially cropped on the right side.

Dr. Shante'

Identify the Breach

PSALMS 8:4

What is man that You are mindful of him,
And the son of man that You visit[a] him?

GOD SAYS

In Psalms 8, David questions why the God of the Universe would be remotely interested in mankind, let alone him.

He acknowledges that God has crowned us with glory and honor. Of all of the things that God created, Man is his crowning achievement. It's what He loves most and is most proud of.

God did not create you to disappear into obscurity. He never said that you have to give up your identity or your happiness at the expense of others.

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RETRACING YOUR STEPS

Sometimes we're so busy "living" that we forget to make an actual life. Whatever dreams, hopes, and passions we once had take a back seat to things like work, family, caregiving, or health challenges.

What's worse is that people, many of whom profess to love us, can make us feel guilt and shame for wanting or pursuing anything outside of what THEY believe we're "supposed" to be doing.

You get called things like "selfish", "unrealistic", or your ideas are "stupid". In other cases, we impose that guilt on ourselves. And it has trapped many of us in a prison of dutiful obligation, working to please others, while denying ourselves the right to pursue personal happiness.

IDENTIFY THE BREACH

When did you get lost?

What happened?

Who have you ALLOWED to make you feel guilty about pursuing personal happiness?

IF YOU DO NOTHING

When you operate out of fear (of abandonment, of judgment, of hurting someone else's feelings) or guilt, you will carry feelings of bitterness and resentment. You become an enabler, facilitating the happiness and comfort of everyone else in your life, but denying yourself the same joy.

Is that what you want your legacy to be?

THE TOUGH QUESTIONS

1. DESCRIBE YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH YOURSELF

2. HOW DID YOU LEARN TO LOVE YOURSELF? WHAT IS THE EVIDENCE THAT YOU DO?

3. IN WHAT WAYS DO YOU TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR YOUR HAPPINESS?

4. DESCRIBE ANY FEELINGS OF GUILT OR FEAR ABOUT PURSUING YOUR OWN DREAMS/PASSION...

Do You Remember?

REVELATIONS 2:3-4

You have persevered and had patience, and have labored for My name's sake and have not become weary. However, I have one thing against you, that you have forgotten your first love.

GOD SAYS

In the book of Revelations, God writes a series of letters to seven Churches. In chapter 2, He writes to the Loveless Church. They're doing good work, but they're doing it without passion, without zeal. They're just going through the motions.

Sound familiar? God wants you to be excited about what you're doing. He doesn't want you to just "do life". He wants you live WITH GUSTO!

Psalms 85:6 reads: Will you not *revive us again*, that your people may rejoice in you?

Are you ready to get your groove back? God is.

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LET'S BE CLEAR

There is nothing wrong with doing an honest day's work, for an honest day's pay. There is nothing wrong with raising your children, supporting their endeavors and keeping them off the streets. There is nothing wrong with caring for aging parents in their years of decline.

BUT YOU WERE MADE FOR MORE... and you know it.

Do you remember the last time you felt happy? Energized? Motivated? In the Zone?

Do you remember when you loved to write? Loved to paint? Loved to cook? Loved to read? Loved to travel? Loved to exercise? (yes, it's possible) Loved to engage in robust conversation? Loved a night out with friends?

Do you remember when you lost your zeal for those things?

LOSS DOESN'T MEAN LOST

Believe me. I know what it means to **grieve** the loss of the life YOU *THOUGHT* you were going to have. Somehow things don't end up going the way we pictured them in our heads. And one of the casualties of grief can be our sense of purpose, and direction. But you are not lost. God sees you. Your willingness to do this work means you are perfectly positioned for God to restore you.

IF YOU DO NOTHING

Bronnie Ware, a hospice nurse in Australia, gained notoriety for the work she published on the **"Top 5 Regrets of the Dying."** After interviewing hundreds of dying patients, she found that the #1 regret was, *"I wish I'd had the courage to live a life true to myself, not the life others expected of me."* You're not going to get another chance. Life doesn't have a "do-over." This is your **ONE** life. Live it without regrets.

THE TOUGH QUESTIONS

**1. WHAT THINGS DID YOU USED TO ENJOY OR HAD A PASSION/
FONDNESS FOR?**

**2. IF YOU WERE COMPLETELY SUPPORTED AND FREE TO PURSUE
YOUR HEART'S DESIRE, WHAT WOULD THAT LOOK LIKE?**

**3. WHAT CHANGES ARE YOU WILLING TO MAKE IN ORDER TO
PRIORITIZE YOURSELF?**

You Deserve It

JEREMIAH 29:11

For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.

GOD SAYS

I've got BIG plans for you. And I'm fairly certain that those plans didn't include squirreling the best years of your life away at a job.

Are we called to be good parents and spouses, and daughters, and sons? Yes. **AND** we are called to a purpose higher than ourselves.

God has plans for us. And He gave us gifts to make those plans a reality. Are you a talented baker, writer, event planner, host, makeup artist, speaker? God uses those gifts to reach people who are lost. It's time to flex your gifts.

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SOMEWHERE ALONG THE WAY

You became convinced that your happiness was negotiable; that your dreams were OPTIONAL. We tell ourselves things like, "Well, as long as **THEY'RE** happy..." "Maybe if I was **younger**, but now..." "I **can't complain**. My needs are met. I've got my health..."

Seeing your loved ones happy is a blessing and a gift. BUT NOT AT THE EXPENSE OF YOUR OWN JOY AND FULFILLMENT. **It's not EITHER/OR, but "AND"**. *"I support my family AND I follow my dream." "I work full time AND I write on the side." "I vacation with my family AND I travel with my friends."*

We teach people how to treat us. And once we teach people that we will forego ourselves to make them happy, it can be hard to recondition them, but not impossible.

COURAGEOUS CONVERSATIONS

You need to advocate for yourself. You're an adult. It's okay to tell your boss, your spouse, your kids, "I need more out of life." Time is the one resource that you will never get back. People that love you will support you. Unselfish people will support you. But even if they don't, you must have the courage to go it alone without permission or apology.

IF YOU DO NOTHING

Guess what? You're not a Savior. Jesus saves. If you've buried your hopes and dreams in an effort to "save" or "spare" someone from feeling angry, resentful, or abandoned that's not your job. The Bible says to practice self-control, not control over others. It's not your responsibility to manage other people's emotions. And in doing so you are taking on burdens that aren't yours to carry.

THE TOUGH QUESTIONS

1. WHY DO YOU DESERVE TO BE HAPPY?

2. WHAT DOES DOING WHAT'S BEST FOR YOU LOOK LIKE?

3. WHAT'S NOT WORKING IN YOUR LIFE?

4. WHAT BAD HABIT(S) or THOUGHTS HAVE YOU PICKED UP AS A RESULT OF YOUR UNHAPPINESS/UNFULFILLMENT?

Ask For It

JAMES 4:2

You desire but do not have, so you kill. You covet but you cannot get what you want, so you quarrel and fight. You do not have because you do not ask God.

GOD SAYS

God knows the desires of your heart which leads many people to wonder, "then why doesn't He just give me what I want?"

Asking means swallowing our pride. It's admitting that we can't do everything, and solve every problem. Asking is an acknowledgement of God and His power. Asking is evidence of our faith in action. Asking is evidence that you believe you are worthy and deserving of what you ask.

Yet many of us don't ask because we aren't willing to be that vulnerable, even before God who knows us inside and out.

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CLOSED MOUTHS DON'T GET FED

For all the gifts and talents that God has given us, mind reading isn't one of them. If you're feeling stressed out, overwhelmed, overcommitted, underappreciated because you're doing everything for everyone and putting yourself on the back burner, then it is *your* responsibility to **say** something.

A martyr is a "person who sacrifices something of great value and especially life itself for the sake of principle." We all have to make sacrifices from time to time, but your happiness and quality of life shouldn't be among them. I realize how, "American" that sounds. I watched "Crazy Rich Asians" with my daughter and was struck by how the main character's mother devalued happiness. She valued: duty, honor, tradition, and legacy AT THE EXPENSE OF HER OWN HAPPINESS.

She was highly respected, *but she was miserable*. Anything that costs you your peace of mind or quality of life, is too expensive.

IF YOU DO NOTHING

Jesus said, "come to me, all who are weary and heavy laden and I will give you rest." Some of us have been carrying our unspoken dreams, unspoken requests, and unspoken needs around for so long that it's become a heavy burden. God has the power to change your life, but you have to ask. When I was a kid, if I thought the answer would be "no", I wouldn't bother asking. But in doing so, I robbed myself of potential yes's. Speak up. Make your requests known. If you don't feel comfortable asking, then examine why? Examine your relationships. What's stopping you? Is it them? Or is it you because you haven't given them the opportunity to love and support you? Have you *decided for them* in order to spare yourself the potential pain of rejection?

Go For It

DEUTERONOMY 1:8

See, I have set the land before you. Go in and take possession of the land that the LORD swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give to them and to their offspring after them.'

GOD SAYS

Never once in the Bible did God say, "think it over." God is an action God.

God promised the Israelites a land flowing with milk & honey. But they had to DO something in order to get it. Faith without ACTION is dead.

Some of you may be thinking it's too late for you, but it isn't. One of my favorite stories in scripture is the Valley of the Dry Bones (Ezekiel 37) . Sometimes our lives look like that; dry, empty, and deserted.

But God wants to breathe life into you; He wants you to regain your spark, your passion. But you have to be willing to take action.

DO OR DO NOT; THERE IS NO TRY

That is one of my favorite quotes from the Star Wars canon. Master Yoda would not accept excuses from his young student, Luke. Whenever we reach a point of decision, many of us build a safety net called "I'll try..." No. Nope. Unh-uh. Not acceptable.

You're either going to do what is necessary to change your life or you're not. You're either going to have those courageous conversations, or you aren't. You're either going to prioritize yourself, or you're not. You're either going to be consistent, or you're not.

It's just that simple.

Does life happen? YES! All the time. Life is never going to STOP happening just because you have a goal. Having goals doesn't exempt you from having obstacles. But where there's a will, there's a way.

Will you stumble? Probably. Get up. Will you falter? Likely. Start again. Keep going until your life resembles one that is true to you. It's possible. Do or do not. There is no try.

IF YOU DO NOTHING

I don't have to tell you how fast time flies. You look up one day and all of a sudden you're not as young as you once were. You don't have the energy you once had. "Time is a ship on a merciless sea". There are no breaks, no pauses, no slow-downs, no going back. The clock ticks with the unrelenting pressure of **NOW**. Now is all you have. It's all you're ever going to have. And if you continue doing nothing, you will come to regret all of the now's you let slip through your fingers, leaving you with a mountain of meaningless excuses and coulda-woulda-shoulda's.

Next Steps

HOW TO GET STARTED

1) START WITH YOUR VALUES

WHAT IS IMPORTANT TO YOU?
WHAT ARE THE THINGS YOU VALUE MOST? VALUES INCLUDE THINGS LIKE:

CONVERSATION
CREATIVITY
SUCCESS
PEACE
TOGETHERNESS
PERSONAL GROWTH
FRIENDSHIP
FAMILY
PROBLEM SOLVING, ETC

WRITE DOWN YOUR TOP 5 VALUES

2) REFLECT & COMPARE

DO YOUR VALUES MATCH YOUR LIFESTYLE/CHOICES?

For example: If you value Friendship, but rarely spend time with them, that's a disconnect.

WHAT THINGS KEEP YOU FROM LIVING IN ALIGNMENT WITH YOUR VALUES?

3) DO SOMETHING FOR YOURSELF, BY YOURSELF

Your purpose is YOUR purpose. Your passion is YOUR passion. You need to spend some time with YOU. People are great, but are often a distraction from the things you need to address within yourself.

You also may be of the belief that there's no joy or fulfillment unless you're WITH someone else. Don't fall into this trap. In many cases, "the more the merrier", but in others, less is more.

Find or Try an activity by yourself: Paint & Sip, Museum Visit, Read on the Beach, Book a Hotel & Write all Weekend, Take Yourself to Dinner, Go see a Play, etc.

4) SUBSCRIBE TO THE "I AM" PROGRAM

The I Am... Program is a Monthly Coaching Subscription that gives you gives you practical tools to grow spiritually, build healthy relationships, shed unwanted baggage, and live your best life.

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