

LIVING INTENTIONALLY AND CHOREOGRAPHED CHAOS

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If you want to see what choreographed chaos looks like, walk into the back room of a Bath and Body Works on Black Friday. It's terrifying and beautiful at the same time. [Black Friday to a consumer](#) is like a full moon to a werewolf. The people you normally regard as sweet, fun-loving and totally reasonable flip a switch and they all turn crazy. And then they go shopping. All of us who have spent more than 1 Christmas season in retail are a little crazy too - so it works. There were complaints from time to time, but you know the lifers by the glint in their eye when it feels like armageddon at the cash wrap (cash register for the lay people). Intense, but unbelievably intentional.

"Are you lucky or are you talented?" -Susie Egr

Our District Manager at the time was one of the most brilliant people I've ever known, and she used to pose this question on a consistent basis after our status reports. Never before had I been so challenged to **think about the "why" versus simply accepting the current circumstances for what they were and feeling good or bad**

about it. The 5 years I spent with Limited Brands are also where I credit an immense portion of my training around the mindset of how to be intentional and make quality analyzations.

Yes this was in retail. I'm telling you, it was remarkable the environment I was shoved into upon my hire. I eventually found myself working with the "dream team," (you know who you are) and it was *phenomenal* the amount of insight we had available at our fingertips thanks to tools we had in place that could basically measure EVERYTHING; and were read brilliantly by our superiors and peers. We were a cohesive and effective team because we knew where to pull insight from and more importantly, *what to do with it*. We were constantly coached to get to the root cause of a result - to pinpoint the behavior or best practice. We had direction, and we had a plan. SMART action plans to be exact (Specific, Measurable, Actionable, Realistic, and Timebound) - I still use these all the time.

Sometimes the plan took some work for us to arrive at a consensus because strong leaders have strong opinions and our team was full of both. There were some verbal knock down drag outs in the office that could frighten pit bulls. But stuff got done, people grew, and we all went to Old Chicago after work together. We were like family. Thank you Tara Maass, for mentoring me in this season and pushing me into the next level of leadership. Thank you Susie Egr, for your steadfast leadership and for generally always inspiring and challenging. I wish I could send you to Tahiti. Instead I'll feature you in a blog.

So let me ask you this: Do our hearts and minds not require the same type of intentionality? Is our world not chaotic? What's your plan? Who is leading you? What direction are you taking?

The people, places and passions that push to take up residence in our hearts ought to ultimately be invited there. That which takes up a home in our hearts will direct and nourish our influence. Our hearts, and our eternal impact is far more important than a successful Black Friday. *Do we live like this is true?* We have only so much time, so much mental and emotional capacity, and so much influence to make lasting and meaningful investments. We live in the reality that options are endless - there are a lot of things to sink the teeth of your heart into, some eternal, some not. Choose wisely. Because **if you do not take the initiative to make strategic decisions in your life, you will default somewhere; wherever the wind blows strongest.** And our kids, our

spouses, our employees; basically anyone we care about and lead, they need us to be intentional. Marriages soar with intentional investments, children grow wise, spiritual eyes are opened, eternity is impacted. My sweet friends, living intentionally opens our eyes to things we are not otherwise privy to. If the joy of discovering something eternally significant in your everyday sounds appealing, get excited - it's an option if you'll live intentionally.

Remember those aforementioned knock-down drag-outs? We don't do life well alone. People sharpen people. So we are wise to surround ourselves intentionally with those we want to be sharpened by.

"As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another." - Proverbs 27:17