

What Really Matters Syllabus

(Mon Jan 22, 2018 08:00 AM - Mon May 07, 2018 08:00 AM)

What Really Matters? Leadership with No Regrets

INSTRUCTORS: Khalid Latif and Yael Shy: Syllabus

2 Credits

Course Overview:

What Really Matters? Leadership with No Regrets

In study after study, people lying on their deathbeds overwhelmingly say they regret five things at their end of their life: 1. Not living a life of authenticity 2. Working too hard at the expense of their relationships 3. Not having the courage to express their feelings 4. Not staying in touch with friends. 5. Not letting themselves be happier. For leaders, it's not any different. This course unpacks each of these "regrets" with readings, exercises, meditation, deep listening, skill development and leadership theory, examining historical and contemporary answers to the question of what really matters in life, and providing the space for students to grapple with the question themselves.

Course Requirements:

1) 35% (15% attendance, 20% participation) of the grade will be based on your class participation, which is not just the quantity of your comments but the nature of your engagement with the class. Unexcused absences and latenesses as well as phone-checking/texting and web-surfing during class will count against your class participation grade. If you know you are going to need to miss class, please let us know as far in advance as possible and keep up with all assignments and readings. Each unexcused absence from class will result in your participation grade for that class being an automatic check minus. If you are absent more than twice, your entire grade will drop by one half grade per day absent (A to A-, B+ to B, etc.). **LATENESS:** If you are more than 5 minutes late to class for any reason, or you have to leave class early for any reason, your class participation for that day will drop by one half-grade (check plus to check, etc.) More than two latenesses or leaving early will result in your entire grade dropping by one half grade per day late (A to A-, B+ to B, etc.). Please leave extra time to deal with all subway contingencies, etc. Subway delays are not an excused lateness.

All laptops are to remain closed during the "Practice" section of class.

2) Integration papers (see below) will count for 65% of your grade.

Integration papers: It is easy to skim through many readings, but hard to remember what you've read unless you do some higher-level integrative processing. To help you do so, please submit a total of 14 one-page "integration papers" (you can skip 2) . Each one has two parts:

Part 1: Summaries. Just write a brief version of the title. Then try to capture the main idea of the reading in a few sentences (no more than three). Do this for all the readings, chapters, web pages, and videos assigned for that day.

Part 2: Integration: Apply the ideas in the readings and class discussions to your own life, workplace, or career. This should be a full paragraph, or two at most. Don't try to cover every reading in the session, but you should mention or draw on at least two of them. Find connections, ways to use the ideas in the future, or good examples of the ideas from your work experience. This paragraph is the main thing you'll be graded on, so see if you can derive some novel insight or offer a non-obvious connection.

Part 3: Leadership: Dedicate 1-2 sentences about how you can use the concepts in a leadership role.

Format the document as single-spaced, 12 point font, with no title page, and an absolute max of 2 pages so that we can easily print it out on a double-sided piece of paper. (One to 1.5 pages should be enough text). Be sure to put your name at the top. Submit your homework via NYU Classes. They will be graded on a 1-3 scale where 2="check", which means that you meet our normal high standard for Wagner work, 3 = "check plus," reserved for the few people who showed unusual depth, insight, or creativity, and 1 = "check minus." If you do not hand in any paper, it is a 0. Late papers are knocked down one level (plus to check, etc.).

Structure of each class:

Each class will begin with a short meditation exercise. If you are not on time and miss these exercises, it will impact your class participation grade. The class will continue with a lecture, followed by a short break. The second part of class will be a discussion of the readings as well as additional experiential exercises. Guest speakers will join us for some of the sessions.

Office Hours:

Yael Shy: yael.shy@nyu.edu (by appointment)

Khalid Latif: khalid.latif@Nyu.edu (by appointment)

Gavi: 9:30-10:30am By appointment: Gavriella.Rubin@nyu.edu

The following syllabus is a draft and subject to change.

SECTION ONE: LIVING A LIFE OF AUTHENTICITY

In order to live a life of authenticity, we must figure out who we are, what we value, and what our purpose is. Then we must structure or restructure our life in line with that authentic self.

JAN 22: Who am I? History, Personal Narrative, and Starting at the End

Introduction to course, syllabus, requirements

Lecture: Death and life

Readings/Assignments (to be done before class):

- [“Top 5 Regrets of the Dying”](#) from the Guardian
- “Start at the End” Chapter from 7 Habits of Highly Effective People
- [“Poetry is not a Luxury”](#) from Sister Outsider by Audre Lorde: a meditation on Lorde’s relationship to poetry and her realization that her authentic self as a poet
- [“The Summer Day”](#) and [“Wild Geese”](#) by Mary Oliver

JAN 29: What do I value? What is my purpose/mission? What are my priorities?

Lecture: Building value in your life through discovering your own values and motivations and re-prioritizing what is important. Examining the difference between internal and external markers of worth.

Readings/Assignments (to be done before class):

- [“How to Discover Your Life Purpose in about 20 Minutes”](#) by Steve Pavlina
<https://www.stevepavlina.com/blog/2005/01/how-to-discover-your-life-purpose-in-about-20-minutes/>
- Caroline Webb, How to Have a Good Day: Priorities: Part One: Chapters 1,2,3

FEB 5: Obstacles, Fears, Failures, and Resilience along the Path of Self Knowledge

Lecture: How to work with obstacles and common pitfalls when creating a life of purpose. How to create effective self-care practices to help us sustain our commitment to a life with no regrets.

Readings/Assignments (to be done before class):

- Yael Shy, What Now?: Chapter One: Suffering: You aren’t Crazy and You Aren’t Alone.
- Peter Bregman, [“The Unexpected Antidote to Procrastination,”](#) Harvard Business Review
- Self Care Inventory: <https://www.nami.org/getattachment/Extranet/Education,-Training-and-Outreach-Programs/Signature-Classes/NAMI-Homefront/HF-Additional->

SECTION TWO: UNDERSTANDING AND EXPRESSING FEELINGS

Opening up and expressing our feelings is much harder for some of us than others. Expressing feelings - whether positive or negative - is a learned skill, which has direct correlation to healthy relationships, healthy workplaces, and overall well-being throughout our lives.

Feb 12: Feeling Feelings

Lecture: An exploration of emotions and the benefits of opening up and recognizing emotions, from individual trauma and loss to the collective pain of racism and oppression.

Readings/Assignments (to be done before class):

- Alice Walker, “Suffering too Insignificant for the majority to see”
<https://www.lionsroar.com/suffering-too-insignificant-for-the-majority-to-see/>
- [“Guest House” by Rumi](#)
- Yael Shy, What Now? Chapter 4 on “Feeling Emotions, Not Being Emotions” p. 87-116

NO CLASS FEB 19

Feb 26: Expressing Feelings

Lecture: It takes skill to move from recognizing our emotions to expressing them in healthy and liberating ways. This class will explore the expression of vulnerability, strength, anger and love.

Readings/Assignments (to be done before class):

- Lama Rod Owens, “Remembering Love: An Informal Contemplation on Healing” in Radical Dharma.
- Yael Shy’s What Now? “The Anatomy of Anger” 116-126

March 5: Forgiveness

Lecture: This class will explore forgiveness inside and out: its benefits, why we might be scared of - or opposed to -forgiving those who have wronged us. We will also look at the difference between forgiving and forgetting, revenge and accountability.

Readings/Assignments (to be done before class):

- Read at least 5 of the stories at [The Forgiveness Project](#)
- Yael Shy, What Now? Forgiveness, p. 126-134
- Errin Hainn Whack’s article: [“How do Race and Forgiveness Intersect with Justice?”](#) in the Christian Science Monitor.

March 12-18: SPRING BREAK

SECTION THREE: BALANCE AND MEANING AT WORK

Once we leave school - and sometimes while we are still in it - most of us spend a huge portion of our life at work. How can we make sure our work life is meaningful? How can we balance our work and our relationships so that the former does not eclipse the latter?

March 19: Finding the Right Work For Us

Lecture: How we can leverage our strengths and passions to do meaningful work. What is the difference between a job, a career, and a calling?

Readings/Assignments (to be done before class):

- Take the “VIA Signature Strengths Questionnaire” at www.AuthenticHappiness.org (you have to create a profile -it’s free!). Print out your feedback – your top strengths, and bring those to class. (Click on the link to print out all your strengths too)
- Webb, How to Have a Good Day, Part VII: Energy (20,21)

March 26: Working with Balance, Productivity and Flow

Lecture: Not getting consumed by your to-do list. Knowing what you are working for, and why. Finding joy in the flow of work.

Readings/Assignments (to be done before class):

- Chade Meng Tan, Search Inside Yourself, “Making Profits, Rowing Across Oceans, and Changing the World.”
- Webb, How to Have a Good Day, Appendix B “How to be Good at Email”
- Omad Safi, [“The Disease of Being Busy”](#)
- “Chapter 10: Happiness Comes from Between” from The Happiness Hypothesis (2006), by Jonathan Haidt (PAGE 1-13 only)

April 2: Effective Relationship Building

Lecture: How can I engage in self-discovery through my work and personal relationships? What do our relationships say about us and how can we “consume” input from people wisely, the same way we consume food and and media wisely? Managing difficult people.

Readings/Assignments (to be done before class):

- Yael Shy, What Now? Chapter 5: Mindful Relationships
- Webb, “Building Real Rapport” pgs. 116-126

SECTION FOUR: MEANINGFUL FRIENDSHIPS

Friendships and relationships are an essential component of a meaningful life. Relationship-building is also an essential part of leadership development - particularly when challenges arise in our work and life. What are the markers of a real and meaningful friendship? How do we make and maintain these friendships/relationships throughout our life?

April 9: Friend Me: Staying Connected in an Age of Connectivity

Lecture: We are living in a time of hyperconnectivity on social media, our phones, and the internet. Yet, loneliness is high and deep connections are often hard to come by. This lecture will focus on the importance of balancing technological connections with real-life one.

Readings/Assignments (to be done before class):

- Gable, S. G. & Gosnell, C. L. (2011) The positive side of close relationships. In K. M. Sheldon, T. B. Kashdan and M. F. Steger (Eds.) [Designing positive psychology: Taking stock and moving forward](#). Read pages 265-279.
- Paul Best, Roger Manktelow, Brian Taylor, [“Online communication, social media and adolescent wellbeing: A systematic narrative review”](#) in Children and Youth Services Review, 41(2014) 27-36
- Omad Safi, [“If Community Were a Safe Place to Fall Apart,”](#) On Being Blog

April 16: Relationships Across Difference

Lecture: As we get older it is very easy to self-select into friend groups of people that look exactly like we do, practice faith like we do, and share our background. This class will focus on the importance of forming relationships and friendships across difference.

These differences often show how essential communication is in our relationships, friendships, and work environments. Although we all know how to talk, very few of us have undergone training on how to communicate to be heard and to hear others.

Readings/Assignments (to be done before class):

- [“How Friendships Change in Adulthood,”](#) in the Atlantic, (2015), by Julie Beck
- Kristof, [“Our Biased Brains”](#) in the New York Times
- Sharon Salzberg, Chapter 5: Communication and Connection in Real Happiness at Work, pgs 136-157.

SECTION FIVE: LETTING YOURSELF BE HAPPY

Everyone wants to be happy. And yet, for so much of our life, so many of us look in the wrong places for happiness, and spend a substantial part of our time doing things that do not bring us happiness. These classes will be an exploration of real happiness and contentment.

April 23: What is Happiness?

Lecture: An exploration of the research behind true happiness, the difference between happiness and contentment, and the ingredients of lasting and deep happiness.

Readings/Assignments (to be done before class):

- “Chapter 5: The Pursuit of Happiness” from The Happiness Hypothesis: Finding Modern Truth in Ancient Wisdom, 2006, by Jonathan Haidt.
- “Self Blame and Compassion” and “Praise and Blame” from Real Happiness at Work, by Sharon Salzberg.

April 30: Class Fourteen: Positive Outlook and Gratitude

Lecture: Research continually shows that people who have a positive outlook are happier and have greater health benefits. Yet many of us are not naturally optimistic or positive. We will learn how can we accept our natural outlook while cultivating more positivity and gratitude in our lives.

Readings/Assignments (to be done before class):

- Jane Brody, [“A Positive Outlook May be Good for Your Health,”](#) New York Times.

May 7: Bigger than the Self

Lecture: An essential part of living a happy and meaningful life is serving others, being kind, and making a difference in the world.

Readings/Assignments (to be done before class):

- Listen to or read Martin Luther King Jr.'s speech, ["The Quest for Peace and Justice."](#)

Class Sixteen: Bringing it All Together

An opportunity for small and large group discussion on themes, readings, and exercises of the course.

 [Original Syllabus- What Really Matters \(2\).pdf](#)