

MS Emotional Wellness Teleseries  
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## UNFINISHED BUSINESS

What comes to your mind when you read the two words, "Unfinished Business"? This is a very charged topic and affects our emotional well-being because unfinished business hangs over us, weighs us down and sometimes keeps us feeling guilty.

I am going to divide *Unfinished Business* into 3 realms and then speak about what gets in the way of finishing the business in each realm and what are some solutions for getting to completion.

3 realms of Unfinished Business:

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1) **PERSONAL AFFAIRS and THINGS:** Getting your personal papers, finances and things in order

2) **MEANINGFUL PURSUITS:** discovering or reclaiming activities, hobbies, or volunteer work that allow you to exercise your interests, loves, talents and strengths.

3) **RELATIONSHIPS:** dealing with unfinished business with family, friends, co-workers and acquaintances in your present-day life or from the past.

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1) **PERSONAL AFFAIRS and THINGS**

This includes creating financial well-being for yourself... getting your financial picture in order: paying bills, paying down your credit, making a budget, living within your means and saving for retirement.

It might also mean choosing to donate money to a worthwhile cause, something you've been thinking about but haven't gotten to yet.

It also includes making a *Will*, completing an *Advance Directive*, telling others or writing down your wishes about your healthcare and your wishes for how you would like to be honored when you die. Also, asking your loved ones these same questions.

and lastly, it includes getting your things in your living space in order. Is there clutter that you need to clear? Are there boxes you need to

go through? Are there keepsakes you need to get in order or bring out of the dark and honor? Things to be repaired or given away?

## WHAT GETS IN THE WAY OF THIS UNFINISHED BUSINESS?

1) Anxiety is the most common roadblock. People feel anxious that they don't know how to best handle the task. Or, the whole area of money, healthcare, or death, feels troubling and is then avoided.

2) Another obstacle is the feeling of being overwhelmed and not knowing where to start or feeling like there is no time in the day to handle the project. Perfectionism and procrastination can then take over.

3) Also, especially with chronic medical conditions like MS, people do not feel capable to handle the task of completion because of cognitive issues or physical limitations like fatigue, pain, balance and mobility problems.

## SOLUTIONS:

1) Reach out and ask for help from family and friends. If needed, hire someone. Do not feel shame about needing help.

2) Divide the task into small, doable chunks and write down in your calendar the day and time you are going to complete each chunk. You have to carve out time in order to finish *Unfinished Business*.

3) Coach yourself that getting things done is more important than doing them perfectly. **GOOD ENOUGH IS GOOD ENOUGH.** In fact, **GOOD ENOUGH IS GOOD.**

Take a moment now to think of this realm of *Unfinished Business* and write down one thing you feel you need to complete that has to do with your personal affairs or your things. What is the next step? Put it in your calendar and follow through. Then, plan the next step the following week.

2) **MEANINGFUL PURSUITS: ACTIVITIES, HOBBIES OR WORK** that engage your interests, talents, strengths, your creativity, and your desire to contribute to the greater good? What is something you always wanted to do or create or give? Are you doing that? What is something you more recently realized you are drawn to because it awakens excitement in you even though you have some reservations about

doing it? What project do you have lying around that is unfinished? Is it a photo album, a gratitude journal you never filled out, a bag of clothes you've never donated or a class you want to take?

## WHAT GETS IN THE WAY OF THIS UNFINISHED BUSINESS?

- 1) This kind of Unfinished business also brings up feelings of ANXIETY:
  - a) Anxiety that you will feel dumb or foolish attempting the activity
  - b) or you won't be able to do the hobby as well as you could before MS and it will bring up feelings of frustration and loss so you don't try it
  - c) or the MS is so unpredictable, you FEEL you can't commit to anything because you don't know if you are going to have a good day or a bad day....so then you don't commit to anything in the outside world and your life tends to feel empty, isolated, lacking a sense of purpose and just filled with errands or coping.

## SOLUTIONS:

- 1) Adopt a Beginner Mind: If you are attempting an endeavor for the first time or haven't done it in awhile, allow yourself to be a beginner; don't expect to be good at it immediately. Hush that self-critical voice and let a nurturing voice come forward. Treat yourself as you would treat your best friend.
- 2) Recalibrate: Change your goals and hobbies so they are doable given your current abilities and limitations. Don't just throw in the towel due to MS Symptoms. Pick hobbies or volunteer work that you can manage in a smaller way and make a commitment to it. Whether it's getting back your photo albums or reading to kids in the local elementary school.
- 3) Dream again. What are things to plan for yourself that you can look forward to in the future? What can you do that feeds your soul? What brings out your creativity and curiosity? What would give you more meaning and purpose in your life? Find a buddy who is also interested or find an organization that would help you realize your dream.

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3) RELATIONSHIPS....this 3rd realm includes reconnecting with people in your past and present. I was inspired to give this talk because of the book: *UNFINISHED BUSINESS* by Lee Kravitz. His subtitle is: *One Man's Extraordinary Year of Trying to do the Right Things*. The author also describes his journey as devoting an entire year to "tying up loose emotional ends."

I encourage you to get the book from the library because it is a very inspiring read and also go to his website for other stories and to post your own: [www.myunfinishedbusiness.com](http://www.myunfinishedbusiness.com)

Lee Kravitz decided to deal with 10 areas of Unfinished Business in the realm of RELATIONSHIPS and then wrote a book about his journeys. Before I share the 10 journeys. let's look first at what feelings get in the way of dealing with *Unfinished Business* in the realm of Relationships.

- 1) Unfinished business around relationships often brings up feelings of ANXIETY, anxiety that you won't be received well but rejected by the other person.
- 2) Also feelings of GRIEF and REGRET... reminding yourself of the unfinished business triggers the loss and regret that was connected to the situation.
- 3) Sometimes the unfinished business in the realm of relationships triggers embarrassment or shame. You feel badly for not having followed through; you feel you have let someone down and you feel it is too late.

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[Lee Kravits: His 10 experiences described in 10 chapters](#)  
[Let these experiences inspire you!](#)

- 1) **Finding and reconnecting with a long lost relative....** He chose his Aunt Fern because she had always been very loving and supportive of him but he had not talked with her for 15 years.
- 2) **Making a late condolence call** on an old high school buddy who lost his daughter in Iraq...He read the article of the daughter's death in the paper but had never sent a condolence note as he had intended.
- 3) **Paying Back a Long Overdue Debt:** He sent a check for \$600 to an old college traveling buddy. He then called him and asked to make a visit.
- 4) **Reaching out to a Distant College Friend** who had written him a letter and had moved back to Pakistan years ago and Lee had never written him back.
- 5) **Letting Go of a Grudge.** Tried to find a man who as a teen had bullied him in High School and whom he had hated and wished dead.

6) **Making a Gratitude Visit.** Finding an important high school teacher from his past and visiting him to say thank you for being there for him when he went through a very dark period.

7) **Reconnecting with a Friend** he had lost touch with who had taken the road not taken; He had become a monk.

8) **Healing Family Wounds.** Deciding to help his dad and uncle (dad's brother) reconnect after years of estrangement by researching some family history and sharing it with them.

9) **Eulogizing a Loved One:** He had never gone to his grandmother's funeral and it haunted him because he had been close to her. He decided to visit her gravesite and read a letter to her.

10) **Keeping a Broken Promise:** He had promised a teen boy in a Kenyan refugee camp to fill his library in 1994 but met with such red tape back in the U.S, he let go of it. He then decided to recalibrate the goal and follow through on the promise years later.

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Now, you can ask yourself. Is there *Unfinished Business* in the realm of Relationships for you? Is there a friend or family member you need to reach out to? Is there someone to thank or someone to apologize to? Is there a promise you didn't keep or a loan you've never repaid?

#### SOLUTIONS:

1) **Seize the moment and pick up the phone or write that letter to the person and finish the *Unfinished Business* that is hanging over you.**

2) **Challenge yourself. It's a choice. Move through the fear. Put shame and awkwardness aside. Summon your courage.**

3) **Remind yourself that we are all human beings with strengths and weaknesses. No one is perfect. Good people make mistakes. The best humans are those who look to redress their errors.**

4) **Tell yourself that in most cases, IT IS NOT TOO LATE.**

5) **Tell yourself it will be a gift to the other person and to yourself.**

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Good luck with handling your Unfinished Business! Please feel free to email me your story of what you did to complete something in one of the 3 realms.

I am eager to hear about it. ~Catherine [coachfreemire@gmail.com](mailto:coachfreemire@gmail.com)