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Joyful Transformation

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Joyful Transformation
by

Ana Lucia Martinez

An Abstract of a Project
in
Creative Studies

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements
for the Degree of

Master of Science

May 2017

Buffalo State
State University of New York
Department of Creative Studies

ABSTRACT OF PROJECT

Joyful Transformation

This project is a personal journey into what I have called the "Joyful Transformation process"; a process that integrates personal growth activities, activities to facilitate a connection with creativity and joy, plus spiritual practices. It provides freedom, connection with others, creativity, and a new sense of well-being. The results from this project include my own transformation that manifests in three major areas: greater sense of well-being, greater sense of freedom, and greater connection with others through authenticity, the development of the Joyful Transformation logo, Tool cards, and narratives, which I expect to share and use to help people live a better life.

Keywords: transformation, joy, authenticity, perfectionism, connection, freedom

Signature

May 4, 2017

Date

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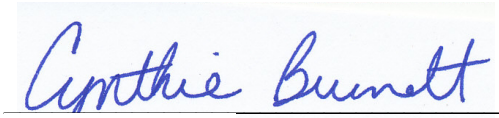

Dr. Cyndi Burnett
Associate Professor
International Center for Studies in Creativity

May 4, 2017

Ana Lucia Martinez
Student

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I would like to thank my advisor Dr. Cyndi Burnett who guided me to focus my Master´s Project on myself. I would not be the person I am now if I wasn´t for you.

To my close friends that listened to my stories, understood my fears, and shared my discoveries. You supported me in the difficult moments and rejoiced with my signs of progress. I feel deeply grateful for having you in my life.

A special recognition to my sounding board Isabela Gomati. How lucky were we to be doing the Master´s Project at the same time? You made it fun and challenging. Your disposition to listen to me at any time is invaluable.

To my psychologist, Oscar Perlaza, your patience and your willingness to help me are priceless. Thank you.

Finally, I want to thank my parents for their unconditional love and support. You have seen me battle through many things and have always been there for me. This process has taken me to a new label in my life and you can count that I would be ok.

You have all been part of this Joyful Transformation process that leaves me with feelings of joy, peacefulness, and freedom. I will be forever and ever thankful!

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SECTION ONE: PROJECT BACKGROUND

Purpose

The purpose behind the project is to reconnect with myself and with my creating power. I will refer to this as the "Joyful Transformation Process."

The joyful transformation process came to me at the Creative Problem Solving Institute (CPSI) in 2014, when I discovered that my purpose was to help and inspire other people to live a better life, and I saw creativity as a clear path for achieving this goal. This idea has developed over the course of my Master's coursework, where I have been able to witness the impact of bringing creativity back into people's lives through my students as well as my classmates, as well as the power in using creativity to imagine and develop a life that someone wants to create. Now one of my fundamental beliefs is that reconnecting with our creative power and incorporating it to our everyday lives, has a transformational effect that helps people live a better life.

I believe there are some blocks that one needs to overcome in order to achieve this. Some of these concepts come from my experience with Landmark Education (http://www.landmarkworldwide.com), others from my readings throughout this Master's and finally, from my own experiences. These concepts include fear, bringing experiences from the past to our future actions, perfectionism, not knowing what motivates you, not being able to create options and act upon them, and a fixed mindset. There are also some enablers to create the life we want like the ability to imagine and define it, vulnerability, self-expression, and flow. All these concepts, along with the creativity principles have been considered part of the Joyful Transformation process. This idea has motivated me through the last year of my Master's to the point that I stated in my vision developed for in the Creative Leadership course: **"**be the head of

Joyful Transformation, an organization that helps (young) people to reconnect with their creative potential, rediscovering themselves, and transforming themselves to live a life they love." Following this vision, it was clear to me that in my Master´s Project, I was going to create the first sessions of this Joyful transformation process. Then, when I started to write down my concept paper, I had to face a hard reality: I was not living a joyful life. I was not "in action" towards a joyful transformation process; so how could I ever think about writing these sessions if I was not walking the talk?

During the process of doing my Master´s, I have dealt with some parts of me that I have not confronted for a long time, like my perfectionism, my "should be this way" type of thinking, my obsessive thinking, my discipline, and the high demands I place on myself. As much as I have enjoyed learning and creating new opportunities around me, like teaching and training creativity and being the head of Innovation of my Organization, I have lost a lot a connection with enjoying everyday things, my connection with creating, my connection to the activities I love, my connection with others, and taking care of myself. I have discovered that my relationship with creativity became rational and cognitive, focused more on the doing and giving to others (teaching and training) than on being. I have also recently discovered that I am full of fears, all types of fears, and that I have been protecting myself all my life to avoid suffering. I consider that it is the moment to allow myself to just be and feel whatever I need to feel to bring a new level of freedom and self-expression into my life that will only add to my creativity and joy experience. Therefore, I have decided to use my 100 hours in living a joyful transformation. This project is expected to be original as it combines concepts of creativity, self-actualization and Landmark education (www.landmarkworldwide.com) in a unique experiment to rediscover myself, reconnect with my creative power, and have tools and activities to deal with what gets

one the way of living the life I want. I expect to take the principles that I learn through this process and further down the road develop the Joyful transformation sessions, and make my vision a reality.

There are some principles that are going to guide this journey:

- Phrasing all my problems like challenges (Osborn, 1963).
- Deferring judgment from me and others (Osborn, 1963).
- Experiencing the following creativity skills: curiosity, make it vivid and colorful, risk taking, mindfulness (Williams, 1970; Amabile, 1996; Puccio, Mance & Murdock, 2011).
- Developing a stronger connection with God and meditate.
- Discovering and practicing vulnerability, courage, connection, facing fear, expressing, and living from my heart and not my head.
- Surrounding myself with the people I love and that bring me joy.
- Doing activities that bring me joy like dancing, biking, running, cooking, traveling, going to the movies, and taking pictures.
- Experimenting by doing three new things every week to reconnect with the adventurous and spontaneous part of myself.

As per my personal goals in this project I have:

- Bring joy and creativity to my life.
- Deepen my knowledge and work on myself on the subjects of perfectionism, vulnerability, living from my heart, management of my fears, and reconnecting with others and with my creative power and the things I enjoy.
- Combine and synthesize concepts and tools that will be the base in the design of my Joyful Transformation sessions.

I am not only highly motivated by this project, but also highly nervous, which is good because it means that I am doing something innovative. This Master´s project will be the first step towards my vision, as well as an opportunity to apply and develop my creativity skills of combining, synthesizing, and highlighting the essence and looking it in another way; to create a unique experience that combines multiple sources of information. I expect this experience to be a great jump-start to create the joyful transformation process and bring joy and creativity to many in a structured and sustainable way.

SECTION TWO: PERTINENT LITERATURE

Introduction

The literature that has informed my project can be classified into three categories according to their role on the project: personal discovery and growth, creativity connection and growth, and joy and creativity activities and projects.

Personal Discovery and Growth

Brown, B. (2010). *The gifts of imperfection: Let go of who you think you're supposed to be and embrace who you are*. Center City, MN: Hazelden.

After years of doing research and gathering data on shame, Dr. Brown analyzes and connects information to look for the patterns that define what she calls wholehearted living: people that love and live with all their hearts and from a place of worthiness. In this book, Dr. Brown shares her discoveries through 10 guideposts to a wholehearted life which invite to cultivate: authenticity, self-compassion, resilient spirit, gratitude and joy, intuition and trusting faith, creativity, play and rest, calm and stillness, meaningful work, and finally laughter, song and dance. The book concludes that at the moment that we give up who are supposed to be and embrace who we are, when you let go of perfection, we get three gifts: compassion, courage and connection. And living with these three gifts is living a wholehearted life.

Each chapter from the book is full of examples and stories of living, or not living, a wholehearted life either from the author herself or from people from her research. These stories bring to life each one of the concepts and take the reader through a soul-searching journey.

The Gifts of Imperfection has been instrumental in my process of joyful transformation. I completely related with Dr. Brown when she first listed all the characteristics that defined a person that does not live a wholehearted life. Therefore, I read every chapter with close

attention, and as I discovered each concept, each tool, and each best practice, I applied them in my life, and I can say that now I recognize that I can live with my imperfections. With the actions I have taken, I am more compassionate with myself. I have a better connection with others, and I am more courageous.

Brown, B. (2015). *Rising strong*. New York, NY: Spiegel & Grau.

Rising Strong is the result of Dr. Brown´s research of hundreds of stories of people that have had the courage to try, fall and rise back. Brown asserted that we are good at talking about the scars that we have from our experiences, but not about the wounds, the moments when we are facing down and hurting because we have fallen. What does it take to rise back? What is the process of rising strong? These are Dr. Brown´s research questions and the findings she shares in this book. In the book, she introduces the rising strong process and its stages: the reckoning, the rumbling and the revolution. In the reckoning, one starts by recognizing the emotion involved in the situation and then getting curious about it: What is really going on and why? What is behind the behaviors, feelings and actions I am taking? After recognizing the real emotion, comes the rumble. In the rumble, one needs to discover the stories that one is making up about the struggles and find what is truth in the stories and what is imagination (i.e. “I am not good enough,” “I am a failure”). Recognizing the difference between these two stories is what brings the power to the rumble, because it discovers the actions that need to be taken to make changes. The process finishes with the revolution, when we apply the actions and change the end to our story.

With her story telling style, Dr. Brown shared numerous stories about applying the rising strong process to different situations, highlighting the importance of owning the stories we make and writing them down.

Through this project, I have been using the rising strong process over and over, permanently asking myself, what is the real feeling behind these actions? What is the story I have invented and what do I need to do differently to change the end to the process? (Always writing the story). Sometimes I rise strong with more courage, and sometimes I don´t, but getting in the practice of asking me what is the story I am inventing, brings me freedom to let go of things, be present, and be able to create.

Landmark Forum (www.landmarkworldwide.com/the-landmark-forum)

The Forum´s promise is to provide tools to deal with what is important for you in your life and in the process, leave you with more power, peace of mind, self-expression, and freedom. I attended the Landmark Forum, for the third time on March 10th, 11th, 12 and the evening of the 14th. This experience was the perfect tool, to bring together what I have discovered about my relationship with imperfection through the book *"The gifts of imperfection"* (Brown, 2010).

Kounios, J., & Beeman, J. (2016). *Eureka factor: Creative insights and the brain: Aha moments, creative insight, and the brain*. London, UK: Windmill Books.

This book was not part of my initial literature review but when I started to see how difficult it was for me to connect with my creative power despite the plan of activities I had and the work I was doing, I remembered Dr. Kounios conference in our 625 course (On line interview, 2016) where he talked about the connection between mood and creativity. In this book, Dr. Kounios and Dr. Beeman, share their findings of using fMRI and EEG brain scans and other advanced research methodologies to study the aha moment and "see what actually happens in the brain when someone solves a problem with a flash of an insight" (Kounios & Beeman, 2016, p. VIII). In one of their chapters, they discuss the relationship between mood and insight. First, they start by showing some iconic examples were being in a good mood has been the

trigger to achieve the insight moment; then they introduce research supporting the positive effects of good mood in creativity and the negative effect of anxiety. Among these findings are that people with "positive mood are able to base their overall judgment on the overall patterns while those in a negative mood based their judgment in the parts" (Kounios & Beeman, 2016, p. 119), limiting their ability to form and envision large-scale projects. Furthermore, that people with a positive mood have a broader perceptual and conceptual perception than people in a bad mood which allows them to see the whole picture, make remoter connections, set aside usual responses, be able to explore, and be open new possibilities. As I started this process, my mood and state of mind were not very positive, and I can say I had some anxiety going on in my life. Reading this book brought me peace of mind, let me be compassionate to myself, and assured me that with the work I was doing, I was going on the right track to my reconnection with my creative power. Furthermore, it gave me some simple tips to help me get in a good mood, especially in my office, which was a good block for my good mood.

Saraswati, D. (2008, October). *Dayananda Saraswati: The profound journey of compassion* [Video file]. Retrieved from https://www.ted.com/talks/swami_dayananda_saraswati

As I started to walk this road of joyful transformation and discovering the world of imperfection, the concept of compassion and self-compassion started to show up. Though it wasn't until I was sharing my process with my dear friend and author Juan Tonelli (www.juantonelli.com) that he made me see that I was trying to be perfect at being imperfect: I was judging myself, I was expecting to do everything exactly as it was supposed to be done, criticizing some of the ways I behaved. He told me: "you need to be self compassionate, there is not life or growth without self-compassion" and held a long conversation about compassion. After this, I started to look for material on this subject, and I found this TED talk. In it,

Dayananda Saraswati talks about how to start to be compassionate. He mentions that being compassionate is not simple or easy; in order to be compassionate each person needs to find its bigness and a feeling of wholeness. Being compassionate is accepting that we are whole and complete and that there is nothing to change, nothing to improve, just to love and be loving with yourself and with others. When we discover this we can find happiness, because we do not need to fulfill a desire to be happy. One of the things that I like about this talk, is that he says that we might not know how to act compassionate because we do not know compassion and we need to fake it until we make it. So, that is what I am doing: every time I find myself being hard on me or others I say, we are whole and complete, and I love myself or that person. I will move for being consciously compassionate to just being compassionate.

Creativity Connection and Growth

Cameron, J. (1992). *The artist's way: A spiritual path to higher creativity*. Los Angeles, CA: Jeremy P. Tarcher/Perigee.

I have to say that this is one of the greatest discoveries of my Master´s project as it hits the core of my needs. This book is a 12-week spiritual journey designed to unblock our creativity and connect us with our creative God. Since I started the program, I have lived through three creative affirmations: there is a divine plan of goodness for me, my creativity leads me to forgiveness and self-forgiveness, and I am willing to let God create through me. The book is full of practical exercises that work to open again the doors of creativity in our lives.

Grazer, B., & Fishman, C. (2015). *A curious mind: The secret to a bigger life*. New York, NY: Simon & Schuster.

This book is a testimony of what can be achieved when one purposely decides to be curious. Brian Grazer, an Academy Award winning producer, shares how curiosity has been the

principal motivation of his life, his most important quality and the key behind the creation of some of the top TV shows and movies through the use of his "curiosity conversations"; conversations that he held with complete strangers, of all types of backgrounds. He also shares the importance of accepting to briefly be ignorant to learn more, the importance of asking questions and being able to listen for the answers to connect with people, among other virtues of curiosity. He defends that curiosity should be included in our educational system and should be a valued skill in the workplace, just as creativity and innovation. For me, this book has been insightful and revealing since I tend to close conversations instead of opening them. This book has inspired me to stay curious and ask questions, and to stay open to get at new levels of connection with people.

Joy and Creativity Activities and Projects

Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1996). *Creativity: Flow and the psychology of discovery and invention*. New York, NY: Harper Collins.

Dr. Csikszentmihalyi, one of the founders of positive psychology introduced the concept of flow in 1990 as "the state in which people are so involved in an activity that nothing else seems to matter; the experience itself is so enjoyable that people will do it even at a great cost, for the sheer sake of doing it" (p. 4). In this book, Csikszentmihalyi presents the eight major components of flow and their application in our everyday life. These components are: having clear goals of the task, getting immediate feedback, a balance between the challenge at task and the skills to perform the task, focused attention, being in the present, being in control over our actions, letting go of what other people think, and a sense that the time transforms and adapts to your activity.

In the application of my joy and creative activities as well as in everyday tasks, I am including as many flow components as I can to experiment and make these activities more enjoyable.

Headspace. (2010). [Mobile application software]. Retrieve from Google play.

This is a meditation application I used during this journey that provides simple mediation programs of 10-minute meditations a day. It doesn´t have any spiritual content, and its main purpose is to help you create some quiet time in your head and practice being present and not engaging in our thoughts.

Barrios, D. S. (2007). *Runner's world complete book of women's running: The best advice to get started, stay motivated, lose weight, run injury-free, be safe, and train for any distance*. Emmaus, PA: Rodale.

This is the most comprehensive guide for women running I have seen. It not only includes wonderful training plans for all distance races, but it provides all the information one woman could need in order to run from what bra to wear to nutrition and weight lifting plans, from pregnant or older runner information, to how to deal with image issues. This book has been my companion during my running periods. It has been my guide for my half marathon and half iron man training and racing. Running was abandoned during my Master's, and I knew I had to come back to this book to start running again. I have followed a plan called from walking to jogging and I have reread all the basic information on the sport. The book has once again provided me with great tips to face my return to running and feels comfortable with it both physically and emotionally (some humble attitude was needed).

Other literature that has influenced my everyday creative work (i.e. phasing my problems as questions), or my small creative projects (i.e. team progression board in my office)

or my creative project of redesigning my creativity and innovation training for the company´s employees includes the bibliography below:

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SECTION THREE: PROCESS PLAN

Plan to Achieve the Goals and Outcomes

In order to live and experience this joyful transformation I am going to engage in three main activities:

Personal Growth

I will first read and deepen my knowledge on the subjects of fear, perfectionism, motivation, vulnerability, and flow and apply what I learn in real situations of my everyday life. The concepts that I learn through these readings, the tools I apply and the activities I do, will be tracked in my Orange notebook daily (Appendix A). As I apply the concepts in my real life, I will track how I feel, what works, what doesn´t work, and my general reflections in three different systems: my brown journal (Appendix A), my digital journal and in short videos. At the same time, I will be applying concepts that I already know from Landmark education (www.landmarkworldwide.com) like creating new possibilities in my life and taking 100% responsibility for my actions and will journal them in the same systems. I will also have weekly meetings with my psychologist and I will be attending the Landmark Forum again in March.

At the end this process, I will synthesize and connect the information to understand how these concepts, tools and activities, connect with each other and define the ones that have added more value to my process, and that could be apply in the Joyful Transformation sessions. I will create the Joyful Transformation Tool cards, which will describe each tool and when to use it, and two narratives of the application of the process to share in my future sessions.

Creativity Connection

The creativity connection activities are the ones that directly require creativity. These include activities from Cameron´s book (1992) *The artist's way: A spiritual path to higher creativity;* every day small creativity projects like painting in my office, finding new combinations of cloth, trying all the menu options in my office, using creativity tools in my every day work, movie reviews, doing three new things a week, permanently phrasing my problem as challenges statements and the elaboration of the Joyful Transformation Tool cards, which is one of the main outcomes of this project. . These activities will be recorded in pictures and short videos.

Spiritual and Joy Activities

I will have a morning routine that includes meditation, praying, and exercising, and I will track the insights and discoveries of these activities in my digital journal system. Other joyful activities I will do are dancing and traveling.

As I work in these three types of activities, I will track them in a progression board (See Appendix A), which has three main sections: Orange for the tools that I find most useful, green for the weekly new things, and blue for the joyful and creative activities.

Project Timeline

Below you will find the activities that I did in each one of these areas week by week.

Week 1 – January 23 (7 hours):

- Project work: First draft Project Concept Paper
- Literature review: *The gifts of imperfection: Let go of who you think you're supposed to be and embrace who you are* (Brown, 2010).

Week 2 – January 30 (9 hours)

- Project work: Project Concept Paper
- Literature review: *The gifts of imperfection: Let go of who you think you're supposed to be and embrace who you are* (Brown, 2010).
- Personal application and reflection: Recognizing and connecting with my fears.
- Morning routing: Running, 10 minute meditation and praying.
- Tools: Rising strong process.
- Appointment with my psychologist
- Creativity and joy activities: Bought a ticket 2 hours before traveling, first time in Baru, brunch in my house with coworkers, new flower decorations and worked from home in a Monday.

Week 3 – February 6 (15 hours):

- Project work: Finalizing Project Concept Paper
- Literature review: *The gifts of imperfection: Let go of who you think you're supposed to be and embrace who you are* (Brown, 2010), *Rising strong* (Brown, 2015).
- Personal application and reflection: Vulnerability: Connecting with my feelings and having vulnerable conversations.
- Morning routine: Running, going to the gym, and 10 minute meditation
- Spirituality: Attending religious group and mass.
- New tools: Having vulnerable conversations and letting people into my live.
- Creativity and joy activities: Cooked brunch at home for my family, new recipes, trip to the country side, created a 10 K race for April 22, and went to the local museum.

Week 4 – February 13 (10 hours):

- Literature review: *The gifts of imperfection: Let go of who you think you're supposed to be and embrace who you are* (Brown, 2010), *Rising strong* (Brown, 2015).
- Application and reflection: Authenticity: Letting go of what other think by owning and sharing my stories. And being courageous: recognizing my anger and react to it.
- Morning routing: Biking, running, going to gym, praying and 10-minute meditation.
- Spirituality: Mass and a yoga class.
- New Tools: Owning and sharing my stories authentically, being courageous: recognizing the fear and acting despite it and faking it until you make.
- Creativity and Joy activities: Setting the table nicely for a dinner with friend, new recipes and meeting with out side supplier in a coffee shop.
- Appointment with my psychologist.

Week 5 – February 20 (11 hours):

- Literature review: *A curious mind: The secret to a bigger life* (Grazer & Fishman, 2015), *Runner's world complete book of women's running* (Barrios, 2007).
- Personal application and reflection: Sense of worthiness: what I have to say is worth it. And connecting with what brings me joy.
- Morning routing: Running, going to gym and praying.
- New Tools: Accepting compliments and repeating to myself: “I deserve it”, meaning and joy board and progress board.
- Creativity and Joy activities: New nail polish colors, working from a country house, doing a movie review, exploring Pinterest, doing creativity tools with my coworkers and building the progress and meaning and joy boards.

Week 6 – February 27 (11 hours):

- Literature review: *A curious mind: The secret to a bigger life* (Grazer & Fishman, 2016),
- Application and reflection: Letting go of perfectionism and having compassion.
- Morning routine: Running, swimming, going to the gym and praying.
- New Tools: What is the worse thing that could happen if it is not perfect? Phrasing problems like challenge questions; what would a friend tell me if I share with her what I have done? and I am whole and complete.
- Creativity and joy activities: Brainstorming with my colleagues, creating new outfits with my current cloth, eating new food in the cafeteria each day, redesigning the innovation and creativity training for my company, developing prototypes for all the materials and doing a sprint triathlon without training.
- Appointment with my psychologist.

Week 6 – March 6 (45 hours):

- Literature review: *The artist's way: A spiritual path to higher creativity* (Cameron, 1992).
- Application and reflection: Attended the Landmark Forum where my biggest discovery was that I do not need to be or do anything to be loved.
- Morning routine: Running and morning pages.
- Spirituality: Started my friendship with God and going to mass.
- New Tools: Leaving the stories from my past in my past, completing conversations and not creating stories from the situations (what happened).
- Creativity and joy activities: Delivering the first Innovation and creativity training in the office, going dancing and trying new sushi flavors.

Week 7 – March 13 (10 hours):

- Project work: Working Sections 1-3
- Literature review: *The artist's way: A spiritual path to higher creativity* (Cameron,1992).
- Personal application and reflection: Connecting with others. Attended the Landmark Forum closing session.
- Morning routing: Running, going to the gym and morning pages.
- Spirituality: Strengthening my friendship with God and going to mass.
- New Tools: Sharing my new possibilities with others and being curious.
- Creativity and joy activities: Delivering the second session of the innovation and creativity training, applying creativity tools with my coworkers in the office, organized a family reunion in a day, going to a craft and design store to buy materials for projects at work and visited the innovation center of a major bank in Colombia.
- Appointment with my psychologist.

Week 8 – March 20 (18 hours):

- Project work: Review and finalize Sections 1-3.
- Literature review: *The artist's way: A spiritual path to higher creativity* (Cameron,1992), *Creativity: Flow and the psychology of discovery and invention* (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996).
- Personal application and reflection: Being creative and adding flow to my everyday activities.
- Morning routine: running, going to the gym, and biking.
- Spirituality: Strengthening my friendship with God and going to mass.
- New Tools: Powerful activities.

- Creativity and joy activities: Escape room, complete grocery shopping, doing new designs of flower arrangements at home, going clothes shopping with my male best friend taking risks on my selections, joyful cleaning of my closet and photographing new outfits with new clothing combinations.
- Appointment with my psychologist.

Week 9 – March 27 (15 hours):

- Project work: Review journals and synthesize outcomes and learnings. First draft Section 4.
- Literature review: *The artist's way: A spiritual path to higher creativity* (Cameron,1992), *Creativity: Flow and the psychology of discovery and invention* (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996)
- Application and reflection: Greater sense of Freedom. Attended the Landmark Forum commitment seminar.
- Morning routing: Going to the gym, swimming, and speed running.
- Spirituality: Permanent conversation with God and attending to mass.
- New Tools: Meaningful work board at the office.
- Creativity and joy activities: Buying mountain bike, doing my first mountain bike trip, taking notes visually, starting a painting wall in my office, running in the track, doing an afternoon coffee with my male best friend, and staring Landmark´s commitment seminar.

Week 10 – April 3 (20 hours):

- Project work: Work on Sections 4-6 and working.
- Project work: Review journals and synthesize outcomes and learnings
- Literature review: *The artist's way: A spiritual path to higher creativity* (Cameron,1992).
- Application and reflection: Auto regulation: Being free to chose who I want to be at any moment.

- Morning routing: Running, going to the gym and morning pages.
- Spirituality: Permanent conversations with God and going to mass.
- New tools: Acting the opposite way that I automatically do in a given situation.
- Creativity and joy activities: Designing the logo for the Joyful Transformation process and the Joyful Transformation Tool cards, cooking creative recipes for my diet, having afternoon coffee with one of my best friend, drawing mandalas, working outdoors and doing my second mountain bike ride.

Week 11 – April 10 (10 hours):

- Project work: Finalizing Section 4-6
- Literature review: *The artist's way: A spiritual path to higher creativity* (Cameron,1992).
- Application and reflection: Assuming being 100% responsible of every situation and circumstance in my life and discovering the barriers to hold my commitments.
- Morning routing: Biking, running, swimming, and morning pages.
- New Tools: Being 100% responsible.
- Spirituality: Permanent conversations with God and thankful prayers during sunset and sunrise.
- Creativity and joy activities: Road trip with my best friends, inventing games to play, finalizing the Joyful Transformation Tool cards, designing the Everyday Joy Board and using creativity tools to provide feedback of more than 5 work shops and trainings.

Week 11 – April 17 (18 hours):

- Project work: Final paper write up
- Literature review: *The artist's way: A spiritual path to higher creativity* (Cameron,1992).
- Application and reflection: Integrating my self: Happy strong Ana with sad, insecure Ana.
- Morning routine: Running, going to the gym, morning pages.
- Spirituality: Permanent conversations with God, being fully grateful and going to mass.
- Creativity and joy activities: Organizing and running a race I invented, doing karaoke night at home, organizing a Gin and Tonic degustation at home, working on finishing the Joyful Transformation Tool cards, and editing and organizing the pictures for the Every day Joy transformation Tool board.
- Appointment with my psychologist.

SECTION FOUR: OUTCOMES

I cannot believe it has been 10 weeks since I started this joyful transformation process. As I was reviewing my reflections and my activities throughout the process, I could see it was hard, painful, and worth it. I put myself out there, to make a transformation in my life, and I believe that takes courage. I have made great progress in all the three areas I focused on during this process, and it manifests in three major outcomes: greater sense of well-being, greater sense of freedom, and greater connection with others through authenticity.

Greater Sense of Well-being

One of the aspects that have contributed to my greater sense of well-being is being able to recognize my real feelings in a situation and identify where they come from to act upon them. I developed this ability by applying the rising strong process from Brené Brown (2010, 2015) and doing the courageous thing after identifying a feeling. I discovered through this process that my "fallback" feelings for many situations are to feel sad or anxious. After searching for the real feelings behind the sadness, I have discovered that there are two emotions that I have not allowed myself to recognize: fear and anger. There is a lot of fear in my life at this moment, I have fear of being abandoned, I have fear of people finding out that I am not as good as they think, I have fear of not doing things right, among others. All these fears have been manifesting, until now, as sadness. Acknowledging my fears lets me understand the stories I am inventing in each situation and how it is feeding my fear (i.e. people think the area I lead at work is not doing anything; the guy I am dating is not going to call me anymore, etc.). At that moment, I can decide to change the story and go back to reality. I can also see that I feel anxious mostly because I am afraid of something in the future, for which I am creating a negative vision. I see now, that this something is only in my mind, and realizing this allows me to let go of the anxiety.

Managing the fear instead of staying in an inexplicable feeling of sadness and anxiety has been a gift for my well-being.

In addition, recognizing and accepting that I can feel anger and express it instead of being sad has contributed to my general well-being and freedom. I have worked on this aspect since very early in the process while reading about courage in *The Gifts of Imperfection* (Brown, 2010), where I found that the courageous thing to do after recognizing the anger is to react to it. This is one of the most difficult things to follow. To discuss, yield, or contradict people that I care about is a new area for me, so I have had to use the "fake it until you make it" tool thinking about how someone else could react. I plan to do this until I actually develop this ability, as well as the freedom to choose to react to the anger or not.

Acknowledging my fears of being abandoned and not being loved, and working to understand them has given me one of the main outcomes from this process: a new sense of worthiness. In her book, *The Gifts of Imperfection,* Brené Brown (2010) said that the access to worthiness is to let go of what other people think. I have realized how much of my actions were limited by what other people thought. I would doubt myself or not express something because I was afraid of the reaction of others and their perceptions of me. I started to realize that I can't control people's perceptions of me, nor their actions (leave me or stay with me, love me or not). This led me to act despite my fears, being more authentic and expressing myself. Now, I live by the motto: "I am worth it and that what I have to say is worth it." This is a key piece of my well-being.

Another aspect that has helped me in my well-being is to balance the different areas of my life. In planning for this project, I allocated time for a morning routine that includes my spirituality development and exercising, time to work on my Master's degree, time to do new

and creative things, time to do things that bring meaning and joy to my life, and time with my family and with the people I have decided I wanted to reconnect through this process. Setting this schedule has made me realize how much time I was dedicating to "achieving" activities like my Master´s, teaching at the university and working, that I had almost completely left aside other important aspects of my life, which has affected me at a high level. I experienced that scheduling time with friends, family, exercising and developing my spirituality do not go against the quality of my work in the other areas leading me to have a more balance and healthy life.

Among the activities I incorporated in my life throughout this process, I want to highlight the contribution of reconnecting with exercising, my creative activities, and the new sense of joy I have found in doing small things. In terms of my creative activities, I have to recognize that it was hard to be creative. It was not until the week of March 13th that I felt that I was reconnecting with my creativity. That week was a huge turning point in my well-being and in my sense of joy. And that was when I was truly able to understand the influence of mood on creativity. The following reflection from my journal expresses what the reconnection with my creativity meant to me and how it contributes to my well being: "Every time I start doing something creative I feel alive; I feel a spark of happiness and joy." This is why I am working on intentionally incorporating creative activities in my day-to-day. I have also discovered that visualizing things richly and colorfully is one of the creative skills that bring me great joy. I have spent time playing with colored paper, markers, and play dough to make visual boards around my house and office (See examples in Appendix B), capture my notes in a more exciting way (See Appendix C), and to make all kinds of prototypes for my work (See Appendix D). These creative activities allow me to bond with my expressive creativity, a side I had not explored, but I really enjoyed and expect to continue doing.

I also discovered a new sense of joy in doing small, ordinary things. For example, starting to cook, inventing new recipes, setting a beautiful table, inviting my parents for dinner, going into the supermarket, buying flowers, going to design shops and clothing stores, and designing new outfits. These were things I did not take the time to do before, I was missing the joy of doing them and doing them in a mindful way. To keep track of these activities, I have done an "everyday joy" board with the pictures of the things I did throughout the process (Appendix E).

As part of this process, I created the concept of powerful activities – activities that bring creativity and joy to your life. In these activities, you need to combine things that you always have wanted to do with activities you already have to do in your week to create a new single activity. After designing the activity you have to add the flow aspects into it by defining the following: the objective, the feedback you can get, whether you have the skills needed, and whether it is appropriately challenging. An example is how I have always wanted to do photography, and I needed to tidy up my closet. So I set up a time to clean up my closet, tossing the clothes I did not need and keeping only the ones that brought me joy. Then I organized new outfits I have never worn and took pictures in order to remember what I designed. This turned out to be a wonderful "powerful activity," and I cannot wait to create others.

The final activity I want to highlight is reconnecting with exercising. For me, running, swimming, and biking are flow experiences where I get really involved with what I am doing and nothing else seems to matter (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). Exercising is also a space for my creativity to rise; doing it again has been a source of well-being that I am committed not to let go out of my life again.

Finally, the other area that has contributed to my sense of well-being is the spiritual work I have done. I believe there is a superior, universal force that connects us all and walks with us

during the time we are on earth, providing us with love and guidance. After this project, the connection, relationship or faith in this source is what I call spirituality. For someone as rational as me, it has always been difficult to grasp the concept of spirituality, which I have tried on other occasions. This time I started by praying while running, as well as going to prayer groups trying to connect with God. This gave me some moments of connection, and at the same time, coming from my perfectionist side, I was permanently wondering if I was doing it right. Later, I decided I was just going to start a friendship with God – to discover him, talk to him, tell him what is going on in my life, and ask him to talk to me and show me the way – and in this way develop my love for Him. With this constant communication with God, I am discovering a connection and a sense that I am not alone in this world and that there is a loving force that loves me just the way I am. I know there is still a long way to go in terms of my spirituality, but for now, these moments of connection provide me with a very needed sense of tranquility.

I also included meditation as part of my spirituality plan. At the beginning of this process when I was really confused and filled with thoughts and fears, I started to do 10-minute meditation sessions after waking up. This mediation is about being present: seeing my thoughts and letting them go instead of embracing them. This gave me serenity to start the day and contributed to my well-being. Though after making my definition of spirituality, I do not consider meditation as a vehicle to develop my spiritual side. Instead, I see it as a way to connect with myself, to be centered and calm down. The morning pages (Cameron, 1992), an activity where every morning, right after waking up, I write at least three pages freely and without judgment replaced the morning meditation. I have not stopped doing the morning pages since the day I started because it not only makes me focus on myself and start the day calmly, but I feel it

is also supporting my communication with God through things I write with Him in mind and some of the answers I get.

New Sense of Freedom

A major contributor to this new sense of freedom was to discover that some events earlier in my life made me tell myself that I had to stand out in order to be loved. Specifically, I had to be an achiever, someone who did a lot of things, and always did them right. This way of being was a blind spot for me, and had put a lot of pressure on me. When I identified these situations, I could talk about them with my parents and with friends and recognize that having to be an "achiever" was a story I invented when I was little and was not the way I had to be to be loved. I can and will be loved just by being Ana Lucia, the way I am and the way I am not. During this process, I could put these stories from the past to rest, leaving me with a new sense of freedom to just be me and to accept that I do not need to know it all or be it all. As I say now, to be loved, I just need to show up. This doesn´t mean that being an achiever is not part of the way I behave. It is just not who I am, and certainly not the way I need to be in order to be loved.

I am learning to be less of a perfectionist. Now that I can see that it is not required from me to do all the things right in order to be loved, I can put myself at ease and accept that things do not always have to be perfect. Recently, I received feedback about myself and was told that one of the main areas I needed to develop is that I get frustrated and upset when things do not go the way I like. I work really hard to have everything, especially for my trainings and my conferences. I have started to let go of perfection, understanding that if things are perfect or not is not a reflection of me or of who I am. Besides, I am starting to anticipate the question: what can happen if things are not as perfect as I planned them? And the answer for this question is always nothing. Relating to things from this perspective is letting me be more free and relaxed,

instead of getting frustrated or mad, taking weight off my life. Recently, when in a training, the wrong materials arrived, and I did not blame others or get upset at other people because everything should have been perfect. I decided to remain calm and look for solutions instead. Also as a way to start to embrace and put into practice my imperfection, I decided to do a sprint triathlon without training. This way I was accepting and confronting that I do not always have to do good to be loved, that I can be imperfect!

By the end of the project, I also started to work on a new concept, self-regulation. This is a new level of freedom, where at any minute, you can decide who you are and not get into your automatic ways of being in the face a given situation. You can be nice, mean, funny, serious, goofy, smart, direct, friendly, anything you choose to be. I have intentionally chosen to react/behave in a completely different way than what I usually do. If I usually say hello with a smile, then say hello with a serious face; if I usually do the correct thing, I do something that can be considered incorrect, not because I do not want to be friendly or correct, just to practice and develop myself-regulation. Despite trying to adopt this practice to get to a higher level of freedom, I have not been as successful since I still need to be more conscious of my automatic reactions and also be brave to act in a different way.

Greater Connections with Others by Discovering Authenticity

"Let go of who you think you are supposed to be and embrace who you are" is on the cover of *The Gifts of Imperfection* (Brown, 2010), the first book I read in this process. I did not know that trying to be who I thought I was supposed to be, was the major block to my connection with others. When I started this transformation process, I was feeling lonely, disconnected and deeply sad. While attending the Landmark Forum (www.landmarkeducation.com) in March, I realized that I had been complaining about my

loneliness for too long, but I was not opening up to connect with others. Because of the high demands, I put on myself and the stories I invented in my childhood, I was always busy doing things and I felt like I had to be "something" when relating to others. I either had to be funny, smart, or understanding, among others. Even if this was not conscious, this situation demanded a lot of energy from me, which led me to avoid relating with others. When I discovered that I did not need to be anything to be loved, I opened myself to the possibility of being authentic, free, and happy. And since then, I have been able to relate to people in a completely new way. I can approach others and let people approach me. I am not avoiding them anymore.

Starting the process of being authentic has been one of the greatest outcomes of this project. Brené Brown in her books *Rising Strong* (2015) and *The Gifts of Imperfection* (2010) talks of the concept of owning our stories and sharing them with others as part of being authentic and vulnerable, and that is what I have been practicing. I have spent hours in conversations with friends sharing my story, my fears, my doubts, my discoveries, my reflections, and my process. Every time I find myself in a moment where I want to hide or minimize something from the story, especially where I feel ashamed, I stop being vulnerable and authentic. Now I tell myself: "Come on Ana, this is your access to vulnerability, authenticity, and connection. Continue and share it all; share it openly and sincerely." Sharing authentically has opened new spaces of connection even with long-time friends. Not only because they become part of my transformation process, but also because of what becomes available to them when I share. People open up and start sharing their own stories. And even if they do not share, they see themselves in my stories and something changes within them.

Exercising was a way for me to understand how much I depended on what other people thought about me and how self-centered I had become. When I started reading about being

dominated by what others think, one of the first places I could notice this was at the gym. During the classes, I found myself feeling observed by others. I was in my head thinking if I was doing the exercises right or not, not because of me, but because I imagined others were looking at me. I now try to let go of those thoughts and come back to my training just for the fun of it. This work in the gym allowed me to see the same situation in other areas, and it was a key turning point in my transformation to disconnect myself from what other people think about me. Coming back from two and a half years of not exercising after being a very good triathlete, this process has also helped me to feel comfortable with being the slowest person in a group and being able to receive advice from other people with generosity without thinking: "I know this; I have done a half ironman." I have been intentionally trying to act upon the idea that I am worth it, and that I deserve people doing things for me. In the case of the gym, I say, "I deserve to have the group wait for me" even if I feel uncomfortable about it.

Another achievement of this process is the improvement in my relationship to my mother. Through this process, I had deep conversations with her about the past and what I was discovering, and this opened the space for her to share some of her stories too, things that we have never talked about. I started to feel closer to her, breaking some barriers and wanting to spend more time with her and be more loving. I have only told my mom that I love her a few times during my life, and I have even wondered if I do. With this experience, leaving so many things from the past behind, I can say now that I love her. I need to let that feeling flourish from my heart, and I have started being loving by loving. I am committed to letting myself discover deep love for God, my family, my partner, my friends, and myself.

A very unexpected result from this process of being authentic, vulnerable, and connecting with my feelings is that for the first time in a long time, I can recognize and say out loud that I

have fallen in love with someone. I do not feel like I want to run and escape from the relationship. I want to talk things over, communicate, and try to create a relationship that works. I am starting to understand what intimacy means. This relationship has been the perfect arena for me to express what I feel, be courageous, be vulnerable and experience and react to fear and anger. Even if the relationship does not work at the end, I will always be thankful to this person, because he made this process possible.

Besides being authentic, another thing that has helped me to connect better with others is curiosity. Before I did not feel I had the right to be curious about other´s people lives and ask personal questions. I felt uncomfortable and very quickly I would end the conversation. As with other aspects that I have discovered through the process, after being aware of the situation, I jumped into the water and started to practice being curious and overcoming the awkward feeling of being intrusive. I stay with people and ask questions, and I listen to how people openly answer, creating a new level of connection.

Finally, as I realize that life is about relationships and not achievements, I am investing more time in my relationships and in connecting with others. For example, one of the biggest outcomes in terms of this new level of connection is that I am doing sports with other people. Before I was focused on my individual results and this meant following a strict training schedule, which I usually did on my own. The result of the race was more important than being with people. Now I have let go the need of being the best and at this moment, I am training with different groups and even started mountain biking with a group of women I did not know, and it has been great to build a connection and to feel part of the group

Clearly that the main outcome of this project has been my advancements in what I call "Joyful Transformation Process." It started with the foundation that reconnecting people with

their creative power is transformational and brings joy to people, and I wanted to explore how to remove some of the blocks to being creative. After the project, I can say that Joyful Transformation is the process of self-discovery and growth that will bring you a new way of connecting to the world. It provides you with freedom, connection with others, a new sense of well-being, and creativity. I was planning to teach this process to others, but through this process, I have realized that I do not yet have all the skills to do so. Though, I know I can make a difference at a small level, therefore and as part of my creative projects, I have created a logo for this process (See Appendix F), and developed the Joyful Transformation Tool cards (See examples in Appendix G). I have also developed two joyful transformation narratives (See example in Appendix H) that I expect to share permanently.

SECTION FIVE: KEY LEARNINGS

Looking back at this process, the most important lesson for me is the need to dedicate time to discovery and growth. We tend to focus our time on things outside of ourselves, and even if we can see signs that things are not going that well within, we tend to ignore it. We do not have time to stop our lives and explore, to see what is happening. Deciding to take the time and spend 100 plus hours working through this process has been the greatest gift to my life, and has provided me with a new sense of freedom, a greater connection with others, and a new experience of well-being and creativity.

The other big lesson I learned is that I am not ready to lead this Joyful Transformation process for other people, as I had considered initially. I cannot replicate right now many elements that came from my appointments with my psychologist and the Landmark Forum. This situation opens a series of possibilities in the future that I will discuss in the following section.

In addition to these two main lessons, I learned other things that I want to summarize in two categories: process and personal learning.

The Process

- If you are going to start a process like this, you have to be very committed to yourself. A way to achieve this commitment is to see the impact that continuing your life the same way, has on you and on others around you. The moment you distinguish the impact, is the moment you say: “I have to do something.” In my case, the impact of feeling sad and lonely was a state of emptiness in my life and that the people around me were missing me.
- If you are committed to your process, take the time to do a broad diagnosis to see what you feel is missing in your life, the areas you want to work on, and create a plan. Even if this plan

changes, it is a way of saying to you and to others, “I am committed to this, and I am going to make it happen, no matter what!”

- The only way to actually be able to transform yourself, your context and the situations you are in is to declare yourself 100% responsible for things. You cannot pretend to change how things are in your life by changing others or expecting the situations to be different. You are the only one in command of it.
- A process like this is going to be difficult, and it is going to hurt. As happy as I am now, going through this process was also uncomfortable, hard, and painful. However, these feelings were the ones letting me know that what I was doing was worth it and was really making a change to my life.
- Treat yourself with compassion throughout this process. You might end up blaming yourself for some of the many discoveries you make, or wondering why you have or have not done certain things. You have to wonder: what would my best friend say to me if I tell her this? Treat yourself gently.
- Being aware of a situation or a concept is the way to make a transformation possible, but it is the hard work you put into practicing, exposing yourself, and exploring that makes that transformation real. The key is in the actions you take, not in the concepts you learn.
- The only way to learn how to swim is by swimming: a simple concept. The only way to be something new is by being that way. Every time you face fear you have to think: “the only way to be courageous is being courageous and acting”, every time you feel ashamed for sharing a story you got to think: “the only way to be authentic is by being authentic.” There is no way out of this equation, the only thing that works is to jump in and act, getting over any doubt or consideration you might have.

- The process of joyful transformation is a roller coaster, sometimes you are up and everything looks like if it is going in the right direction, and then you come back down, and it is hard. You have to trust that no matter how many ups and downs there are, if you work in the aspects of the process, you will end up in a place of joy that will allow your creativity to rise.
- Sharing your life stories, fully and completely, is a key way to access authenticity and real connection (Brown, 2010). In this project, sharing the stories also meant sharing them with my advisor and my soundboard, and involve them in what was happening in order to have a close, collaborative and fruitful relationship with both.
- When you are creating new possibilities, it is essential to involve other people in these possibilities (Landmark education). By doing this, I have made my possibilities real and have opened the space for other people to see me as an authentic, free, loving, and happy person.
- Throughout this process always remember that everyone, including you, is already complete (Landmark education). There is nothing wrong with anyone and nothing to change.
- To be creative in your everyday life you need to be intentional. You need to block time for the activities and use of the tools. This is not going to happen on its own. In my case, I realized that I spent the majority of my time at the office, and that I needed spaces to be creative there. So with me coworkers, we started painting in the office, applying creative tools to various situations, designing boards for all kinds of things, developing and creating our own design materials, among others.

Personal

There are five main lessons I've learned about me in this process:

- I am brave.
- I am committed to myself.

- There is only one Ana Lucia: I have discovered that there is a constant battle between the nice, do it right, achiever Ana Lucia, and the doubtful, sad, anxious Ana Lucia; as if they were two different persons. One wants to be exposed (even overexposed), and the other one wants to be hidden. The first one feels right and does not accept the second one. The key lesson here is that these two selves are one, and they need to accept, love and work with each other.
- I am not alone in this journey, nor am I unique. These things do not happen only to me, they happen to everyone. As a friend of mine says: “the human problems are few, and they are all the same.”
- I enjoy and can develop the expressive manifestation of creativity; not everything is cognitive.

SECTION SIX: CONCLUSIONS AND NEXT STEPS

I believe reconnecting people with their creative power is a transformational experience. I have seen it in my students, my classmates, and myself. I started this project, to work on myself, on some concepts that block or enable creativity like vulnerability, authenticity, and management of fear and past experiences, among others. I wanted to add these lessons to my current teaching of creativity, and design the Joyful Transformation Process and sessions. I was very successful at living a transformational process myself and bring back joy and creativity in my life. I feel free to create anything; though this is not a process that I can replicate for now. So what is next?

Personally, the biggest commitment in my life is to continue this transformation process. This Master´s project has been the beginning of being authentic, vulnerable, free, loving, creative and having a sense of joy and stability that does not depend on any external situation. This means that my focus is to continue being out there, being more authentic, creative, vulnerable, loving and expressing my love, recognizing my emotions and reacting to them appropriately, facing and dealing with my fears and choosing freely who I want to be at any time (self-regulation). I will also continue to strengthen my relationship with God. I will be attending a retreat in May that will surely lead me to another level of spirituality. I will write this new stage of my process and my discoveries in my journal as I have been doing these past 4 months.

As at this moment, I have taken off a large weight out of my life. I am at a point to choose whatever I want to do in my life, so the big question is: How does my purpose of helping and inspiring others to live a better life looks like in the future? I do not have any clarity on this yet, however I have been doing some divergent thinking and there are options like studying psychology, becoming a Landmark leader, training myself officially like a life coach, giving speeches about my process, asking for a job in human resources, among others. But for now,

there are some things I know I am going to do: I will continue to share my process and its stories to as many people as possible to make it more real, to connect more with people and to open a space of transformation to others. I will share my Joyful Transformation Tools with people around me to help them deal with what is going on in their lives, and I will follow their progress and results, to understand better the use of the tools. I am going to map out and structure the process I lived in terms of area of development, needs, tools, actions and outcomes to see if I can help people with parts of it. I will continue to bring joy to people by reconnecting them with their creative power through the classes at the University and the trainings in my office. As a result of the Master´s project, I will redesign the classes to incorporate some of the Joyful Transformation Tools I applied to my life (i.e. the morning writing, the powerful activities, etc.). In summary, using a metaphor from my psychologist: "I might not be the doctor, but I can be a very good paramedic."

In terms of connection with creativity, I will continue to be very intentional to bring creativity into my everyday life, giving a special focus to my expressive creativity. As I finish my Master's, I plan to take graphic-design courses to materialize my thoughts into images, and improvisation classes to increase the sense of playfulness in my life.

As I finish this project my feelings are of joy, peacefulness and freedom, and I am looking forward to living freely, in joy, and in peace.

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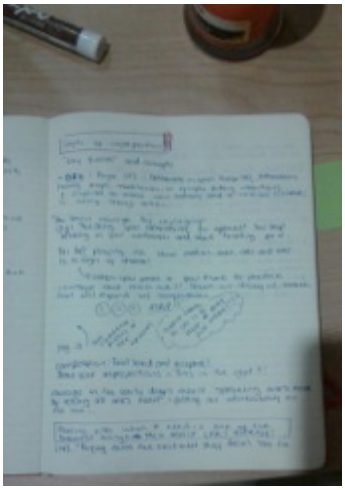
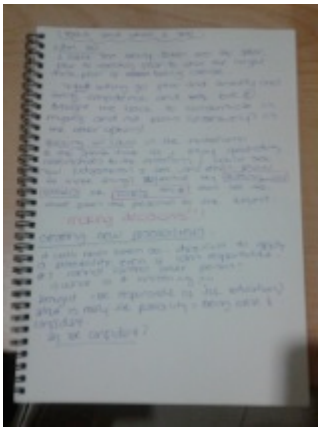
Appendix A – Joyful Transformation Process Track System

Orange note book (literature review)



Personal Journal

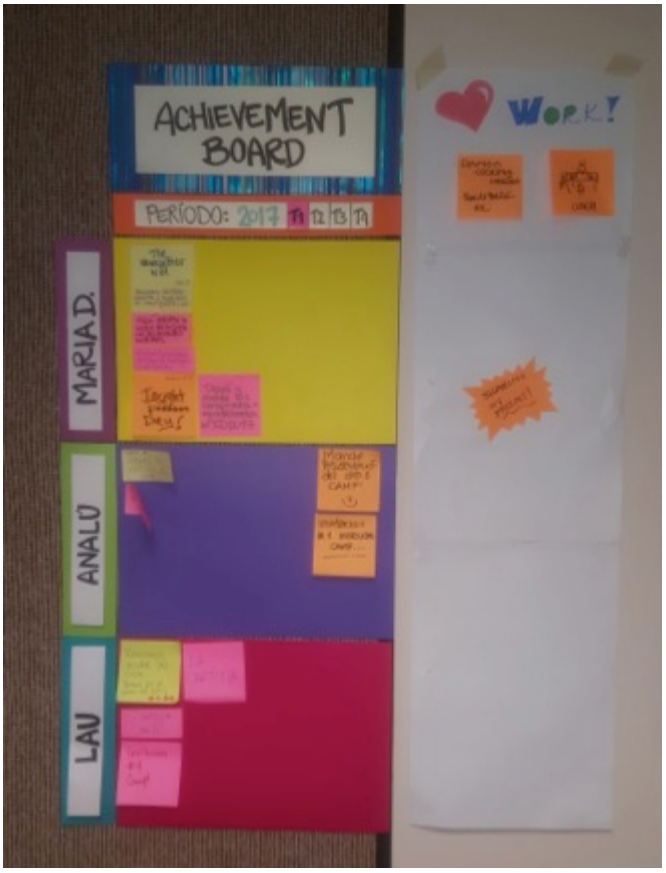


Progression Board: Orange (tools and activities), green (weekly new things) and blue boards (Joyful activities)

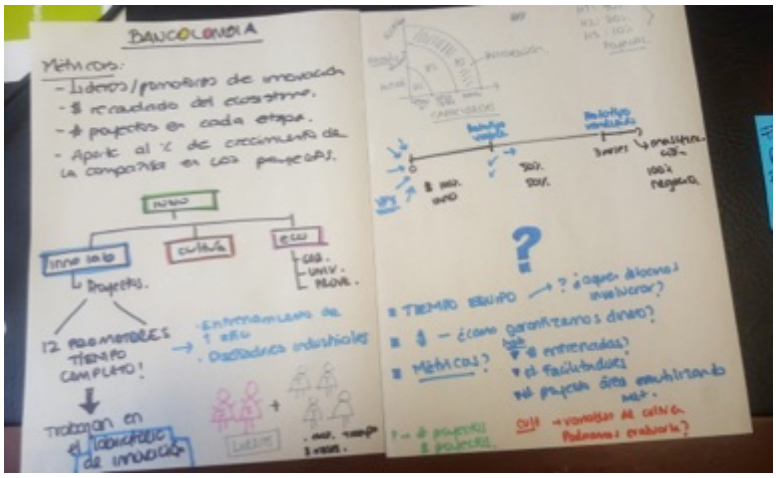
Initial

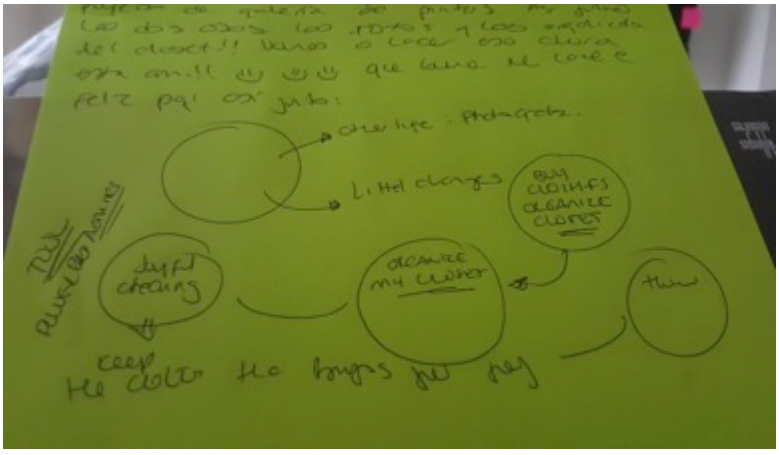
Final

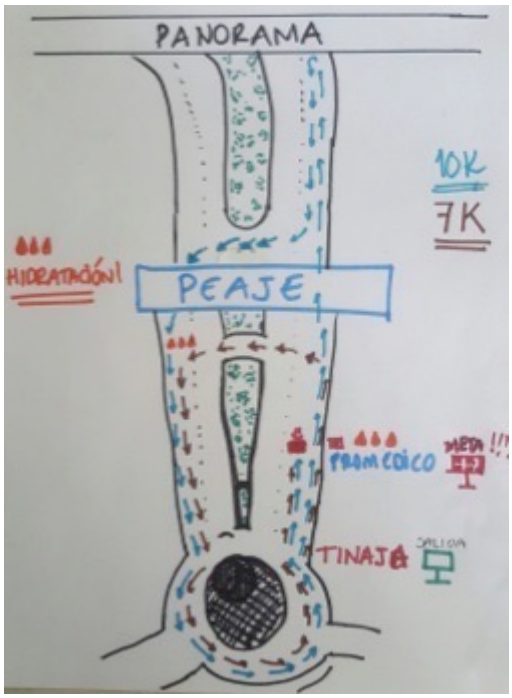
Appendix B – Board Examples



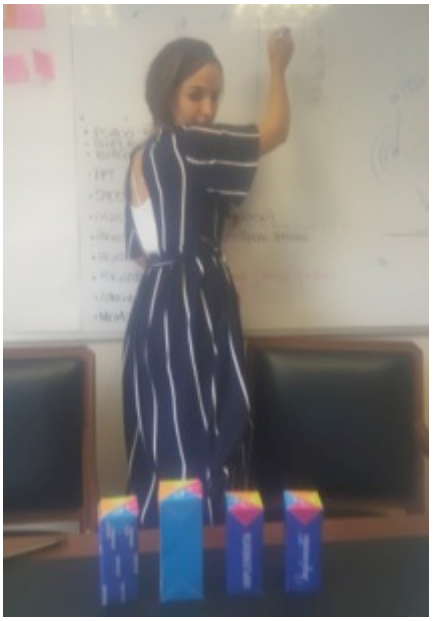
Appendix C – Visual Notes







Appendix D –Prototypes



Appendix E – Everyday Joy Board

APPENDIX F: Joyful Transformation Logo Applications

APPENDIX G: Joyful Transformation Process Tool cards Examples

THE TOOLS

SEEK OUT IMPERFECTION

THE TOOLS

SEEK OUT IMPERFECTION

Objective: Letting go of perfectionism

The only way to embrace imperfection is experiencing it and seeing that the world doesn´t end because you are not perfect; P people do not stop to love you because you are not perfect. Easier said than done! Right?. To start relating to being imperfect choose an activity where you usually make the effort to be perfect, you like to be seen like perfect; risk your self and just don´t be perfect. Allow yourself to take out all the weight that you carry preparing, analyzing and acting to be perfect; and enjoy the fact that nobody may have noticed anything, that the world is not over and do it again and again until you are free of perfection!

THE TOOLS

POWERFUL ACTIVITIES

THE TOOLS

POWERFUL ACTIVITIES

Objective: Do activities that connect you with your creative power and brings you joy.

- Make a list of 5 things you would have liked to be in another life (i.e. photographer)
- Make a list of little things or changes you need to do in your life and you can do with in a week (i.e clean your closet)
- Create a new activity out of these two things (i.e. after you clean your closet, make new outfits and take pictures of these outfits).
- Make a clear goal of the activity (i.e. at least 3 new outfits pictured in 15 minutes).
- Make sure you are tracking how you are doing vs. your goal.
- Don't make the activity too hard vs. your skill set so you don´t get upset.

Variation of a set of tools from The Artist´s way (Cameron, 1992) and Flow (cCsikszentmihalyi , 1996)

THE TOOLS

OWNING & SHARING YOUR STORY

JOYFUL TRANSFORMATION

THE TOOLS

OWNING & SHARING YOUR STORY

Objective: Be authentic and connect with others

We work hard to look good. That is why we keep to our self the stories that ashamed us. The simple idea of sharing them produce us fear of being perceived as unworthy. Keeping the stories to ourselves is a wall in our authenticity and our connection with others. This tool will help you to let go of what others thing, accept that you are imperfect and connect to the fact that we all feel the same. For this:

1. Recognize the story you are ashamed of.
2. Recognize and acknowledge the feelingsrelated to the story
3. Share it with people you trust. Do not skip or hide any of the story.

This tool is a variation from a concept from *Rising Strong* (Brown, 2010).

THE TOOLS

WHAT HAPPENED

JOYFUL TRANSFORMATION

THE TOOLS

WHAT HAPPENED

Objective: Relate to what really happens and not the stories we create of what happens.

Easy and simple, when you start to realize that you are creating a story of something that happened to you, for example I got divorce and *I am never going to find some else like him*, stop and say: "what happened is ···", and state what happened. In this case: "what happened is I got a divorce". Then repeat it again: "what happed is got a divorce" and repeat again and again until you relate to what happened, nothing else, the rest is a story.

This tool is a variation of a concept from *Landmark education (www.landmarkworldwide.com)*

APPENDIX H: Joyful Transformation Narratives Example

(Landmark Forum, March 2017). “At that moment, the leader goes ahead and asks: what would make this three and a half days worth it?” I raise my hand and say, “Recently, I have been feeling extremely lonely, and this brings me a deep feeling of sadness into my life, if after these days, I can come out with a new sense of connection with people, this Forum would be worth it.” Then, during the Forum, the leader starts to talk about identities: which is a moment in our lives when from a specific event, we decide to be a certain way for the rest of our lives. At that moment, an image comes to mind: I am eight years old, and some friends of my mom come to visit. We all run for the door, open it and one of them says: Oh! So this is the one that is adopted? At that moment, I look around, and I see my brother: chubby, pale, with freckles and with small eyes; I look at my sister: chubby, pale, with freckles and small eyes, and there I am in the middle, skinny, dark skin, and huge eyes. And I tell myself: Yes! I am adopted, and my parents do not love me the same way they love my siblings, and I make the decision that in order to be loved, I need to be someone extraordinary and someone who does extraordinary things. When I realize that this was all a story, I call my parents and share my discoveries with them. My mom and dad say: “How can you think that? We love you all the same; you are our partner, the one that we can count on for everything, the one that has helped us to discover the world, travel. The point is that things always worked well with you, and your siblings needed a more of help. And yes, you were an outstanding kid, and maybe we praised you a lot for that, and you thought that was how to had to be.” After that conversation, I am able to leave that past behind and create the possibility of being authentic. I realize that I just need to be Ana Lucia in order to be loved. After that, all the weight of pretending to be smart, knowledgeable, funny or supportive in order to be loved went away. Now, relating with people is not a weight or a burden, I am in a new level of connection with others, and I do not feel alone any more!

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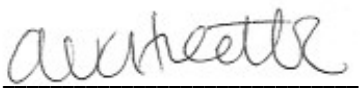

Name

May 4, 2017

Date