

Today I'm trying to be right here in the present moment. I'm trying to be right here in the present moment. What I see... The twilight had almost covered the world outside. The warmth of the street lights introduces another mood, more reflective, quiet one. I like that moment the most. The day is nearly finished, but there is still time to focus, to take a rest a little and then prepare for the next day or maybe just to reflect on the life, once more. It is also a perfect moment to tell something, share the thoughts... I didn't know that the most painful feeling can turn into the most powerful tool. My name is Julia, I am a cellist, 25 years old. I would like to tell you the story - my story.

Sometimes in our lives, there comes a moment when we don't actually know what is wrong in general, or what is wrong with us, but we feel deep down that we are lost somehow. I felt that kind of emotions a few times in my life. Of course, it often appears on a different levels of our personal development, and also at the different age. Sometimes it is about crossing the borders, between being a child, then teenager and finally an adult person. Other times it's about the emotional hurricane inside us, or maybe just looking for a place to live...but sometimes, it's about the way of life that we would like to follow, to create our professional career. Usually then, our existence, slowly day by day fills up with the unexplained fears and doubts.

I can say that I perfectly remember myself one year ago. The days were going by very fast. I had finished Music Conservatory, and then I've continued my music education abroad. First I went to Holland, and then to Belgium. I was fully realizing my desires and also, what was very important for me, my dreams. Excitation announced my new life. Great Professor, who's class I attended, amazing friends that I've met and a groundbreaking development of my musical skills. I've spent a few months in this fantastic view in my mind. Looking forward for the next day...and suddenly I was stuck in the middle of nowhere with my feelings, passion, and motivation. A huge avalanche of thoughts just flooded my brain, and my soul. I suddenly became very self-conscious... It was very challenging but it did make me ask a lot of questions about my life and think very seriously about it, and what those issues are and why I, as a woman, felt something wasn't working.

I was playing a lot, trying to explore something new, more special in me to prove to the world that I had something to offer. I had an impression that there is less and less sense in what I was doing. I will not exaggerate if I say that sometimes I was hopeless, in a love-hate relationship with my cello. I couldn't find peace in my heart. Feeling afraid of everything, mostly of the things that haven't happened yet. I couldn't understand why I feel such a big frustration, especially if I'm trying so hard, and what's most important, why I want to quit the music, while loving it at the same time. I was struggling... I had many conversations with my teacher, with God, friends, family. I'm eternally grateful for every word. People strongly believed in me, even if I wasn't and I could see their deep admiration for my work. But it wasn't enough for me, I was pushing myself to find a better version of Julia. I was thinking, I'm just doing this because I feel, like this is what I'm supposed to be doing. It was probably all in my head, but I felt this pressure from the outside. I don't think anyone meant to pressure me. I think I was just ready for a change and felt like I couldn't make one, because I was afraid of some fallout that didn't exist. I knew that it was about my past which was calling me again, and I had to stay face to face with it. I said to myself -"Now or never"

I decided to take a really deep breath and take a break for w while.

That's when I went for the masterclasses in Schiermonnikoog in Holland "Jong talent festival". In weekly schedule, I saw classes with Mental Trainer. I have really wanted to speak with him, even the discussions seemed to be enough for me. Every clue seemed to be a godsend. After lunch I went to his office. We spoke. That day I have meet Bartholomeus Van De Velde.

Mental trainer, coach is somebody who asks you questions to develop your inner self. To put yourself in question and find the answers by yourself.

The first question, that Bart had asked me was: what am I missing in my life, and what am I looking for. My answer, as I remember, was appreciation and trust. We wrote it down on the big blank piece of paper. In the center was my name, and around were other aspects that will allow me to find a perfect harmony. At the first look it seemed so familiar and obvious.

It reminded me about all the things that I'm doing, but with two big differences. I've never said them out loud, and never put them in a proper order, as we did first time with Bartholomeus. On the one hand, I knew these words, activities and habits before, but always kept them in a big chaos.

The further we went during our meeting, I started to realize, that actually all my life I was doing something for others, to fulfill their expectations. Always waiting for appreciation from others, assurances from everyone that I'm right, good and perfect enough to feel it by myself. Automatically, through all those years of my education, I have made myself as a piece of light fabric, going wherever the wind takes it.

But everything happens for a reason, and I wouldn't change anything. Maybe apart from one decision. I wish I knew about working with mental trainer before. Many times I was wondering why we don't pay attention to the more effective working progress, regardless of our profession.

I remember that the other question I've heard from Barth, was about how I imagine my career, where are my goals. The ceiling was the master level and the floor was the beginners level. My hand as a pointer, went to the middle height between these two. I didn't see what my problem was, he showed me on this example. First of all, I've never wanted to be the best, for unknown reasons. I have created my comfort zone, because of my fears of failures or extra requirements needed. The very well known quote says that "Life begins at the end of your comfort zone". I felt in that moment that this is my next step, this is what I needed to do... to get out of my comfort zone.

I considered this question once more. Bart helped me to understand my way of thinking. I didn't indicate on the ceiling, because there I saw my masters, authorities, the best musicians ever, and of course with comparison to them I was sure that I should put myself on the lower level. But what about me in my life? What if I were to look without any comparisons and complexes...? What if I imagine my way as a compliance of my desires and wishes? I perceived the different point of view in this whole puzzle. With my whole awareness I felt that I want to be the best as I can, and then my aim was on the real top of the indicator. Its all about the training of creating positive images about ourselves. About the future, a place in the whole world, but also during practicing time. Visualizations help us build confidence and new motivation.

We should create the future but watch the present. I know that in my life I could count many fears, like one day something will be too big for me to achieve. There is a very simple tip to get rid of it. Just focus on your immediate target. We should switch big goals for a small pieces and focus step by step by portions and don't expect to get a quick result. It needs time.

Sometimes more, sometimes less, but it is very important to stay with hard mind and use the patience and a natural aspect of preparation time. The healthy balance in present is the thing that brings the eagerness to your live. Like simple daily functions: eating, breathing, laughing, making physical activity, reading, relaxing, talking, practicing, all should be in proper proportions. This is the key to the effective existing.

From most of the schools we hear that we should do as small amount of mistakes as possible. And our subconscious understands it as the certainty, and saves it on a hard disc in the brain. Through all these years we grow up with conviction that somebody who's making mistakes is worse. Mistakes are proof that you are trying.

When we think too much about everything around we are not fully in practicing time. Everybody needs a comfort place to work. To be right there and look only at what you need to do right now. Take care about your pace, breathing, concentration and eliminate tensions in your body.

When I was feeling like quitting my cello I thought about why I started.

Well... I started because I love to create, and with music I can do this in the most unearthly way. Every time I take my instrument in my hands I feel a deep pleasure, and enormous joy. Especially when I'm alone with my cello, I feel the most pure relationship between us.

I had decided many years ago to do what I am sure that makes me happy. Somewhere along the way I forgot it, but now I finally remind myself about it again.

The meetings with mental trainer helped me to create new questions, and surprisingly prompted me to change my priorities, and take a chance to stand up once more. Im very grateful for support from Bart. I got to know a lot of new things. I went back to Brussels with a huge sheet of paper, with a draft of my needs. A map of what I should keep in balance and what I should add to my existence plan to help myself. I truly believe in self-help, and I'm exploring it. I've started to act , and from that moment I've completely changed everything, and also everything around me have changed. First of all, I made a plan, and then I started to follow this plan. I work on it, not being so invested in outcomes and being more engaged in the process of my life.

I'm in peace with my life, and all of my guilt and anxiety causes my loss, I'm healing through humor and honesty to myself. I'm doing my best to simultaneously push my boundaries. Some of my most noteworthy developing credits include awareness during a performance at the stage, and following my real wantings.

I remember my first concert after a while and after the big changes in my mind. This one day I was playing a solo part in orchestra. The first thoughts were really new, unexpected, and silly. Despite of this I didn't want to go back to my past. To the times, when I was totally hopeless. In a few days there was another rehearsal and concert. I have to admit, I felt actually somehow great. This was the feeling of fulfillment and enormous happiness. That one positive experience makes you think that substantially everything is all right again, there's a chance there.

I've been always dreaming about making my own choices. Now, I'm busier than ever and I don't have so much time for myself , but I can use it consciously. These are the consequences of my choices. I'm happy, I have freedom, and I'm brave. I'm strong and I can do things that scared me before.

I've made an agreement with myself. I could play something on my cello many times and my soul is truly in there, in every single note.

As long as I feel this, I know I'm on the right track.