

# The inner game.

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*To thrive and lead a fulfilling life, I believe we need to nurture the most important relationship in our life - the one we have with our Self! Thus, my intention here is to share with you matters I hope you'll find useful to guide you on your journey to create a loving relationship with yourself and others, and to build a life you desire.*

*Let me begin with a story from a past life...*

More than 10 years ago I was the owner and the CEO of a boutique advertising and event company. We were small in the count of people, but we were big on creativity, innovation, courage, excellence in everything we did... we dreamt big and always got big opportunities.

One day we received a request for an offer; it was from TAV Airports and they were looking for a company to decorate the Skopje airport for the upcoming Christmas and New Years' holidays. "We've never done that before, we don't have the experience!" - was the first thought that crossed my mind. But, I liked the challenge and the client, too. We discussed it with the team and we all agreed that we'll go for it. Being aware that creativity was our strength, our strategy was to design the decoration and rent the lights and deco from a



local company that owned the equipment and had the experience in the field.

Now, we were in the game with huge players, most of them male led companies. One of them was a company that year after year was decorating the city of Skopje for the holidays. I happened to know the owner, so I gave him a ring. I explained to him our intention to bid for the project and presented, what it seemed to me, a win-win strategy for both of us. If they won the

project, it would be a win for them. If we won the project, it would be a win for both of us - because we would rent the equipment from them and hire them for the implementation.

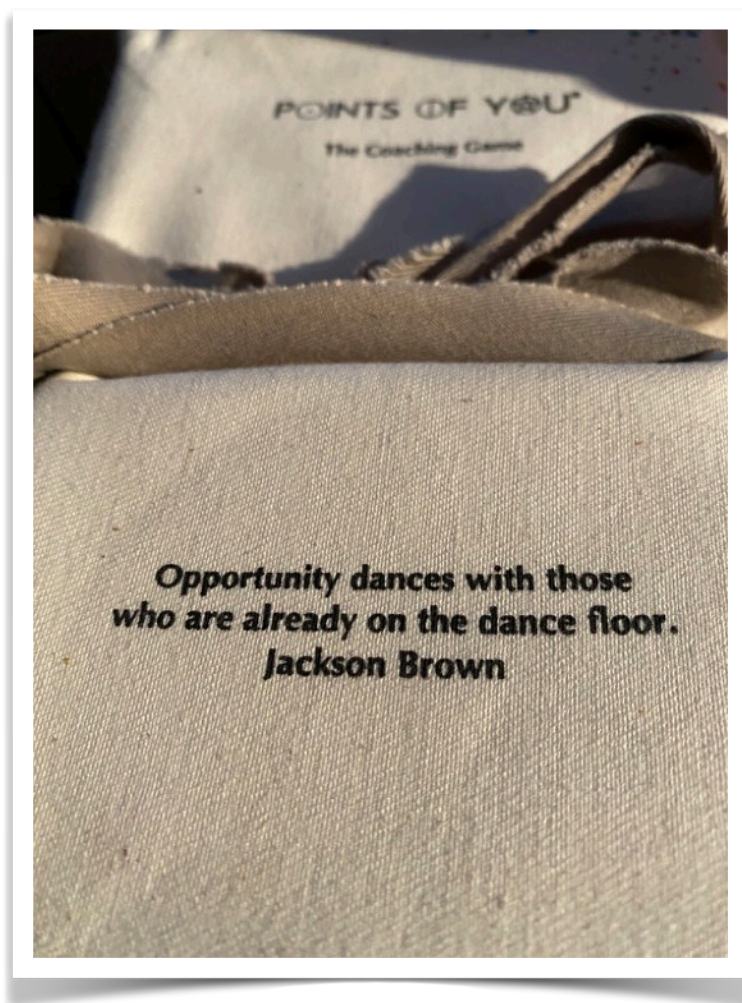
To my shock, he responded with an irritated and loud voice: "**Who do you think you are?**" Then he went on with a threatening monologue that we didn't stand a chance, we should give up and not waste our time, after which he hung up the phone.

To say I was irritated is a soft description. I was furious! But, **anger is an emotion packed with energy!**

What were our options now? Give up? Of course not! We wanted the project. So, we went on in our creative state and asked the question: How can we use our strengths and create a competitive advantage to win the project?

- We analysed our competition and figured out that all of them will offer the decorations for rent. To be unique, we decided to offer the client the opportunity to purchase their decorations. We were risking big time, our offer was to be the most expensive. But, this way, the client was to invest more in the beginning and save in the long run, because they could reuse the materials in the years to come.

- We didn't focus on winning, we focused on innovation and thinking outside the box - actually, there was no box for us because there was no past experience to limit us. Everything was possible.
- Our strengths were creativity and innovation, so we created a design that hardly any of our competitors could beat, because they were not in the creative business. We played our own game.
- We were also in the business of creating experiences, and we were excellent in it. During the presentation of our offer in front of the board of directors we showed up dressed in red (the color of the holidays), we dimmed the light in the room and we presented the proposal as seen and experienced by the visitors of the airport. We put ourselves in the presentation of our idea and the board was stunned by the experience we created for them.



**As you may be already imagining, yes, we won the project!**

Below are some learnings from this experience that can be applied on both the individual level, and on group/team level, too:

1. Know who you are and what you stand for. Be aware of your strengths and weaknesses and use them to your advantage.
2. Know your competition and don't play according to their rules. Instead, create your own rules.
3. Be bold. Be edgy. Be courageous. Be you! There is no one else like you.
4. Risk - without risk there is no gain.
5. Always have an intention to create long term benefit for the client (in whichever area you operate).
6. Focus on the inner game and dedicate your full attention on what you want to accomplish. If you lose the inner game, you lose the outer game.
7. Create experiences, this is what makes an impact and what people remember.
8. Know your value and value your effort. It is okay to ask for what you deserve.
9. Innovation sparks when there are feelings of safety and trust. Trust yourself first, and then create an aura of safety and trust around you. Also, trust the process.
10. As small as you are, you can create a big difference. The butterfly effect is real :)



*Onward,*

## **The Outer Game vs. The Inner Game**

In the month of May I'd like to invite you to become aware and explore these two concepts: your outer game and your inner game.

In his book – "The Inner Game of Tennis, Tim Gallwey writes:

*"Every game is composed of two parts, an outer game and an inner game. The outer game is played against an external opponent to overcome external obstacles, and to reach an external goal. Mastering this game is the subject of many books offering instructions on how to swing a racquet, club or bat, and how to position arms, legs or torso to achieve the best results."*

But, there is another game at play, it is:

*"the game that takes place in the mind of the player, and it is played against such obstacles as lapses in concentration, nervousness, self-doubt and self-condemnation. In short, it is played to overcome all habits of mind which inhibit excellence in performance."*

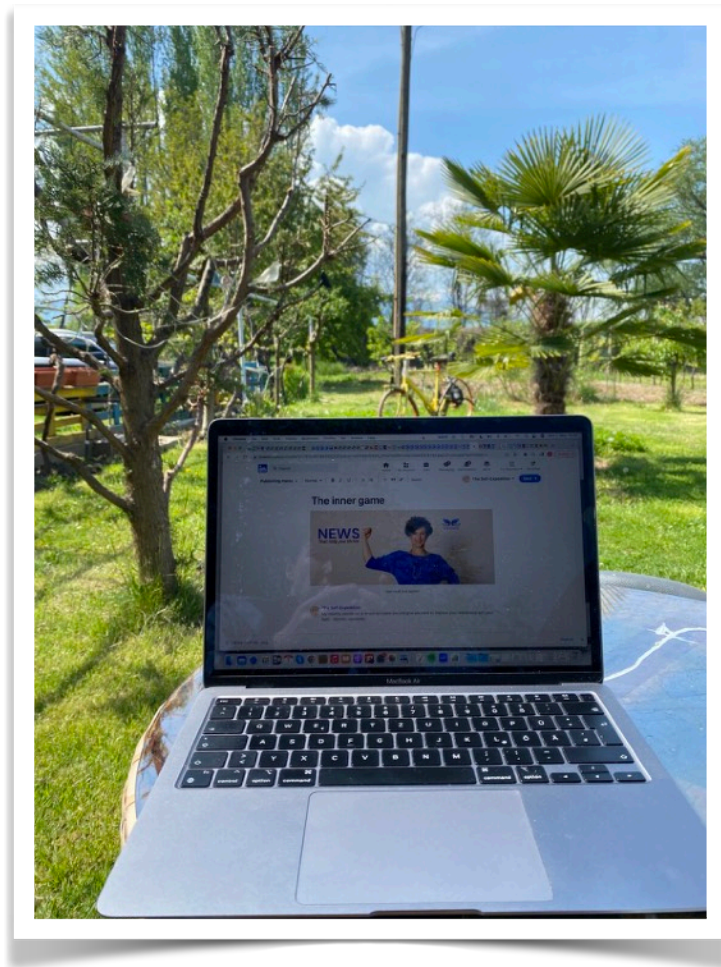
### **What's your inner game when it comes to challenges?**

- as an individual?
- as a leader?
- as a team?
- as an organization?

*To finish,*

My message for the month of April is:

***Master your inner game and then you can master your  
outer game! ♥♥***



### Conversation starters:

(Inspiration and Information Sources)

### I'm reading, watching, listening to:

- **The Inner Game of Tennis: The Classic Guide to the Mental Side of Peak Performance**, Timothy Gallwey
- **How to Outsmart Your Own Unconscious Bias**, a TED talk by Valerie Alexander
- **Think Fast, Talk Smart: The Podcast** by Matt Abrahams, lecturer in strategic communication at Stanford University
- **The Worst Person in the World**, a film by Joachim Trier
- **Guillermo del Toro's Pinocchio**
- **Everything Everywhere All at Once**, a film that collected all the Oscars by Daniel Kwan and Daniel Scheinert