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CAREER STRATEGIES AND INSIGHTS

Texture and Highlights

As a business owner, work absorbs a significant portion of my thoughts and activities. Admittedly, this girl is a workaholic. However, after having a couple of stress induced meltdowns (crying episodes), I realized that I needed to do something different. At the time “different” simply meant leaving the office at a designated hour and completely unplugging on weekends. Now, *I simply want to live a full and delightful life*. That means adding “texture” to my living and “highlights” to my experiences.



At home and at work, texture is the addition of colors that energize me and photos that capture my stories and hold special memories. Now plush, patterned area rugs accent my hardwood floors and welcome the touch of my bare feet. I’ve smoothed surfaces by removing the clutter that induced mental exhaustion and reduced mental clarity. All of this paired with scented candles and the sounds of soft jazz engender the warmth of a big hug from someone who is really glad to see me.

In life, it’s about giving more of myself in ways that matter. I’ve served as a mentor at Spelman College for five years. My relationships with the three young ladies I’ve mentored have been great, but this year I wanted to go beyond the minimum requirements of the program. I realized that it would be easy to include my mentee in other activities. The shift requires leaving earlier to pick her up, but the RIO is obvious in the depth and breadth of our conversations and the extent to which we share more of ourselves with one another.

A few weeks ago, my brothers were in town, each for a different reason. Ordinarily, we’d figure out when we could get together and plan to meet somewhere for dinner. This time I wanted to create an opportunity for us to just hang out and enjoy one another; so I prepared (rather than running out and picking something up) several meals during the course of their time in Atlanta. We had so much fun together that my younger brother stayed an extra day and my mom was thrilled to have us all together. That textured experience went down in my journal as a highlight.



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Sitting on the couch one evening watching the talented ensemble of the Broadway play “The Color Purple” I suggested we go to the play. Bernard replied, “Sounds great, where is it?” In one swift moment, I replied, “New York,” negotiated the best weekend, grabbed my computer, and purchased the tickets. The speed with which I made that happen surprised Bernard, but I explained, “Life these days is about *texture* and *highlights*.”

In what ways can you add more highlights and texture to your professional and personal experiences?

What impact would a small shift have on you and those with whom you interact?

In what ways can you give more of yourself?

*Dr. Kym A. Harris is President and CEO of Your SweetSpot Coaching and Consulting, LLC. Her clients are high performing and high potential leaders and executives who are known for their strong performance. Her belief that “competence is **more** than performance” is fundamental to her coaching model which is fueled by the principles of Emotional Intelligence. She is the coach that helps leaders discover, develop, and explore their **more**.*