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Influence Inside and Out

As shocking as it may seem, we are halfway through 2021 and we are beginning to see individuals return to pre-pandemic activities. While certain aspects of our lives remain virtual and socially distanced, we are left with a sense of hope as the vaccination rates increase and people begin to make in-person plans once more. As our lives evolve socially and professionally, we can begin to reflect on the first half of the year and imagine our hopes for the remainder of the year. Our experiences this past year have been uniquely challenging, but they have also rewarded us with the opportunity to reflect and identify how we may want to influence our own lives.

Stories of personal influence can come from anywhere, and I had the pleasure of hearing some of these stories while on the road. A small town in west Texas is home to the Oswald Family Winery, where John and Dina-Marie grow grapes with their children. Over a decade ago they left the corporate world to pursue a passion for wine, and their story serves as a great lesson in self-reflection. After looking at their lives and reconsidering what they wanted for themselves, they took a huge risk in an effort to influence their lives in a way that centered on their interests rather than their bank accounts. Meanwhile in Arizona, Staci Martin has survived and worked through past trauma to create something beautiful. She founded the Feather and Chief Equine Sanctuary and uses her past to positively influence her own life, as well as the lives of people and animals.

These stories remind us about the importance of prioritizing ourselves and what we truly desire out of life. It's often easy to forget about ourselves as we move through our daily lives. However, when we apply the power of influence to ourselves, we can inspire others to positively influence change in their lives.

During my time on the road - with my van named 'Hope' - I have been able to self-reflect with the help of mother nature. I have had the privilege of visiting several national parks across multiple states, each as vast and captivating as the last. In Sedona, Arizona, the vortices of energy in the area promote healing and insight while El Malpais in New Mexico offers an expansive panorama that encourages me to think critically about the importance of nature and its therapeutic properties. Parks such as these force us to confront ourselves and our place in the world. Meanwhile, parks like the one in Black Canyon, Arizona remind us that we can have a negative or positive effect on the things around us depending on how we decide to think and act.

As you move through the remainder of 2021, I encourage you to reflect on your experiences and your thoughts, and how you can apply them in a positive way moving forward. Think about whether or not you would like to reframe your mindset, and how you can go about doing this. What beliefs or assumptions do you need to let go of or shift in order to get a different result? What changes do you have to influence within your own mindset that will allow you to influence greater positive change around you?

Follow the links below for more information on these amazing stories and more:

[Feather and Chief Equine Sanctuary](#)

[Oswald Family Winery](#)

[Black Canyon Trail Coalition](#)

[On Being - A Podcast About the Self](#)





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