Your Three-Step Guide to Shedding the Shoulds

The biggest \textit{should} I’ve ever shed came when I was 31. I was 4.25 days in to a job that was turning out to be less than desirable. It was a perfect fall day, and I was sitting in on a four-hour conference call in a windowless room. A quick break offered me the opportunity to turn to my boss. “I’m sorry,” I said. “This just isn’t for me.”

\textit{It was one of the best decisions I’ve ever made, as it led me right here, to you.}

I’ve since shed many \textit{shoulds} in my life—but certainly not without some wrestling and uncertainty. So I developed a set of questions for myself to determine if an opportunity is, in fact, a should I need to shed. If you answer them honestly, they will free you up to enjoy what truly matters.

\textit{LET'S GET TO WORK.}
QUESTION 1:
WHAT IS MY MOTIVATION?

What makes this important to me?

An Internal Desire
it excites me or brings me joy or peace, etc.

An External Desire
someone’s opinion or a pay raise or a potential promotion, etc.

Your motivation is **INTRINSIC**
that is, it is inwardly rewarding to you.

Your motivation is **EXTRINSIC**
that is, it is rewarding because of an outside source.

Consider where you landed: *How does this make me feel?*

On the surface, intrinsic motivation seems preferable. But if you’re aware of the extrinsic motivation and still feel the desire to pursue it, keep going.
QUESTION 2: DOES IT ALIGN WITH MY VALUES?

- **Work:** Your career
- **Money:** Financial security, income, investments, retirement
- **Living Environment:** Your home, office, transportation
- **Spirituality:** Religion, philosophy
- **Family:** Parents, partner, children, siblings, in-laws, etc.
- **Health & Wellness:** Everything you do to take care of yourself (diet, exercise, doctor’s appointments, meditation)
- **Personal Growth:** What you do to learn or improve yourself
- **Community:** Friends, community involvement, social life
What are my top three values?

Mine are personal growth, family, and health. These ebb and flow depending on the season of life I’m in, but they are my guideposts.

Once you identify your own top three, ask yourself:

*How am I defining success as I live out these values?*

*Does this new opportunity fit into one of them?*
QUESTION 3:
DO I HAVE A CHOICE?

YES.

This is a bit of a trick question. You always have a choice. But if you’re having trouble stepping into that, try these exercises:

If I say yes to this, I’m saying no to [________________________].

We have limited time and resources, so the reality is that we’re always giving something up when we say yes. How do you feel about what you filled in?

Take a cue from Greg McKeown’s book, Essentialism, and rank the opportunity on a scale from 1 to 100. Is it less than a 90? If so, move it to 0.

Use Glennon Doyle’s coin toss trick. Heads it’s a yes, and tails it’s a no. Toss it in the air, and consider where you want it to land. That’s your gut talking—so listen up.

When I think about saying yes to this, do I feel excitement or dread? Run toward things that excite you (they make you feel the good kind of scared). And walk away from anything you’re dreading.
Motivation, values, and intuition—these three tools will tell you all you need to know the next time a new opportunity makes its way to you.

Did these exercises help you shed a should?
I’d love to hear about it: regan@reganwalsh.com.