

July Chronicle: Our Commitment to Change

Hey Guys,

In a few short weeks, The Clever Catalyst turns 1! 3 days later I am celebrating my 30th birthday. So grab your favorite time travel shoes because I'm taking a step back and doing some self-reflection this month.

A few years ago I was at home in my itty bitty apartment with my then obnoxious preschooler enjoying my life as a stay-at-home mom. I hadn't planned to be a stay-at-home mom, before having this blue-eyed beauty but it was a choice I am glad I made. At the time my husband and I were not independently wealthy or even pretend wealthy. We had just graduated from college (or maybe it had been about 3 years) and we had loads of debt. Oh, and my husband was still rocking that awesome blue Domino's uniform and working until 3 am. *sigh Good Times sigh

I remember staying up at night researching and dreaming about a way that I could help contribute in a meaningful financial way to my family. Without leaving my daughter at a daycare; which would have basically eaten up all my financial contributions anyway! I remember night after night, longing for a way to utilize this expensive education I had received.

Then one day, it happened. A kind lady hired me at \$11/hour for just a few short hours a week. I earned enough to order pizza but it meant so much more than that to me. I was home, my husband was no longer delivering cheesy bread for a living. I was earning money and I was with my daughter. I remember feeling happy enough to burst.

That one small paying job, led to more small paying jobs and more small paying jobs until I got to where I am today. The owner of a small business with the coolest clients on the planet and a team I know I do NOT deserve. It would be easy enough to call this a success, but we are not done. This year has taught me a lot, and not just because it was our first year in business.

I've learned what nothing looks like with our first photographic evidence of a black hole. I've learned that people still care about the royal family and their ever-multiplying brood of offspring. I've learned what true fear feels like with the emergence of a rapidly spreading global epidemic and subsequent economic downturn. And then I learned that I don't know a single fucking thing about fear

because there are human beings being hunted and killed because of the melanin in their skin. A reality 18 million times more terrifying than 100 pandemics. Loose in my room. With no ventilation or soap. And I've never even experienced it.

I am grateful for where I am but I am fully aware of the fact that I am nowhere near where I need to be. Growth is necessary, and here is exactly how I'm going to achieve it.

Step 1: Acknowledge that Growth is Necessary

Done.

Step 2: Listen

I can't do anything if I don't know what or why I'm doing it. So I'm going to listen. I am going to stop forming opinions and just listen. So many people get caught up trying to "be convinced" of something or trying to understand something that they forget to just listen. I am doing that now. I am listening.

Step 3: Reflect

Am I partly responsible for the Amazon rainforest burning? Or the countless lives lost last year to gun violence? Am I benefiting from a system that is subtly and not-at-all subtly oppressing human beings? I am going to spend time thinking about my contribution to my communities and to my planet. I am really good at being intentional in my personal life. It's possible I'm not being intentional enough in my business.

Step 4: Adjust

As I learn from my experiences and the experiences of others I will adjust. I cannot tell you how I will adjust yet, because I am ignorant to what I do not know. But I do know I am listening and I am willing to change.

Step 5: Repeat

This is not a short-term goal. I understand my growth will never be complete. As I improve some aspects of my business and life I know I will find others that I didn't know were there. When that happens I will acknowledge, listen, reflect and adjust again.

The last twelve months have been the culmination of so many late nights, long days, and blue light headaches. When I launched The Clever Catalyst, I had so many dreams of what it could be. I never dreamed it would be what it is today and for that, I am eternally grateful. But I vowed then and I vow now that this business will stand for something. And I promise you, whoever you are reading this, that is a vow I will never break.

Yours Truly,
Christi