

Tell us about an influence (person, event, theory, or idea) that has shaped your world view

When I was 17 I was faced unexpectedly with severe health problems. My eyesight dropped dramatically due to retinal detachment and I was to undertake an urgent surgery and to undergo a lengthy recuperation period. I took a year-long leave of absence at the university in [no name], and went back home to a small town where I grew up. The next year I spent in bed, thinking and, when my eyesight began to improve gradually, also reading.

This was a time when I looked back at my life and suddenly realized that I was mortal (a big realization for a teenager) and that my life could end at any moment. All these were the reasons for me to re-think my values and goals in life, and on that path I found a great help and consolation in books written by the Russian 20-th century philosopher Merab Mamardashvili. He wrote that we live only when we are conscious of each passing moment, conscious of our being here and now. At that point in my life I started practicing conscious living.

The books that brought me such comfort in the hard moments of life turned out to be those that were once recommended and given to me by [no name], my Theory of Culture university professor. He was a man who taught us values and ideas he lived in accordance with, and was highly respected by his students. After I graduated Igor became my husband, and to this day he remains one of the most respected and loved people in my life. It was he who inspired and guided me when I made the first steps on the path of conscious living, and who helped me shape my values.

Among other things, together with him I started exploring the issues of healthy lifestyle, which gradually became my major hobby and an essential component of my worldview. This interest of mine has its roots in the area I specialized in when obtaining my first higher education – Cultural Studies. The subject I was particularly interested in was Chinese and Japanese culture. I got interested in tai chi, then began practicing ving chun and also started learning more about the principles of healthy nutrition. Consequently, in 2003 together my husband and I have excluded meat and alcohol from our ration. However, the issues of nutrition being fundamental to the healthy lifestyle concept, they are not the only important components of it. Of course, I do physical exercises, such as stretching and pilates, and also seek a possibility to spend more time in contact with nature, planning to move out of the city, to a private house. However, those are only the extension of my worldview and inner values.

Among other things that I have come to understand, in part thanks to my husband's support, and accept as crucial for my wellbeing is importance of taking full responsibility for my actions and decisions, without shifting it to other people. I realized that I need to set myself ambitious goals (because human abilities are almost limitless) and work to achieve them consistently while preserving a positive attitude to life. At the same time, I also know now how important it is to be humble and respectful to the world around me, learning from other people and appreciating each moment of life.

I believe that the concept of conscious living has also helped to shape my style of business-making. First of all, I definitely see defining and sustaining common values as a fundamental step towards success of any organization or group. Besides, through living in a conscious and healthy way I am able to generate a lot of energy for work and maintain a calm and positive attitude to even the most stressful professional situation. This attitude is also an important component of my leadership style, as it is what I aim to share with my team and colleagues and what helps me to guide them towards their goals in the most effective and balanced way.