



Internal Equity: Aligning your internal strengths with your external output

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Introduction: My Journey

- What's up everybody? It's your girl, Zakiya Harris, aka Oyadolu, aka Sh8peshifter. I'm gonna be your copilot for this next module, which as you know is called Internal Equity. I wanted to begin by telling you a little bit about my own personal story and journey to internal equity.

I spent the first 20 years of my life checking off all of the proverbial to-do boxes of what I was taught success was about: getting a good education, finding gainful employment, getting into a long-term relationship, having a child, buying an asset, doing all of those things. And after achieving all of those things, I realized I wasn't happy, I wasn't fulfilled, I wasn't living the life that I knew was my birthright to live. And in the blink of an eye, my whole world really turned upside down.

This was around 2008, 2009, right around the time of a major recession that many of you can remember. I was running my own successful non-profit organization. We had just come off the heels of throwing the first solar-powered hip-hop concert in San Francisco. We were super excited. And I had to lay off my entire staff, including myself, becoming completely unemployed. I was also the new homeowner of my first piece of property that my husband and I had sunk our entire life savings into. And we actually were victims of foreclosure and lost our home. Our relationship ended in divorce. And not only was that my business partner and my life partner, we also were creative partners. And we had been touring professionally as a hip-hop group under the name of Fiyawata. So my whole kind of creative world got thrown upside down as well. I ended up having a biking accident, you can see here, had a \$30,000 emergency room bill and no health insurance. Like everything that you can imagine happened, happened. At the end of it, I had to literally move home to my momma's house with my three-year-old daughter in tow, and really build my life from the ground up.

And believe it or not, water, of all things, became my greatest teacher at the time. Water, as you know, makes up the majority of our planet. Water makes up the majority of our bodies. Water is feminine in nature. Water is always taking the shape of any form. If I pour water on the ground, it takes the shape of the ground. If I put water in a vessel, it takes the shape of the vessel. Water is always seeking its own momentum. We know that if you write words like love

on water, it'll actually crystallize to high frequencies. And if you write words like hate on water, it'll actually crystallize to low vibrational frequencies. Water actually imprints the messages. So when we talk every day, we're actually imprinting the water within us.

And so when all of my identities of homeowner, and business owner, and wife no longer fit, I had to find my own momentum. I had to be like water. I had to keep shape-shifting through it all and continue to move forward despite the seeming obstacles and uncertainties before me. I went into my closet and recorded my first album, solo project called "Adventures of a Shapeshifter," which actually spawned an amazing group, me touring all over the Bay Area and nationally releasing several projects.

I also, around that time, got a phone call from Toyota Motors, of all people, who said, "Hey, we heard about these solar-powered music concerts, we wanna hire you to work with us over the next six years while we produce our first campaign targeting African-Americans." And so I ended up touring historically black colleges and universities with Toyota. I got a free car out of it for six years, hello. Actually, that spawned me running out to form my first LLC, my first for-profit venture, which then led to me co-founding a \$2 million coworking space, a million dollar non-profit around youth and technology. My creative career was continuing to shine. I went through the Zoo Labs business incubator with my group at the time, Elephantine. That actually led to me writing my own book, starting my own successful coaching practice called "Sh8peshift Your Life," which I now do to this day, right.

And so I think that it's important when we're talking about people's accomplishments, and bio, and reading all the to-do lists, that we also take time to think about what happened in the unseen realm. That's not on my bio, that story. That was what was internally going on in my life that actually created all the magic that I'm living today, it was that unseen realm. We know that that is where creativity actually begins. That is the tension, the sweet spot, the magic, the mystery of creativity. It's actually in darkness. Just like when you put a seed into the soil, it's pitch black. And it has to actually burst open in the darkness before it actually comes to light. Just like all of us when we were in the wombs of our mother's bellies, that we actually started in pitch black darkness before creation is born.

And so it is that unseen realm that we're going to really be tapping into in this module of Internal Equity. We're going to have an opportunity to look into the fertile darkness of our soul's souls. To look into the inner alchemy, the messages, the imprints, what's really there that's going to allow this creativity, this new creative venture that you're here doing this incubator for to really be actualized and realized. And so there's going to be questions, visualizations, and really inner reflections to help you get there.

Because one thing that I know for sure, you can take any business incubator class, you can learn the business model canvas. Believe me, I've invested thousands of dollars in my own professional development, I've been through tons of incubators, and read about lean startups. You can do all of that stuff. But if you don't know who you are, none of it's gonna work, none of it's gonna come together. You've gotta know how you approach business model canvas. What is your special sauce? What are those gifts that make up your Value Proposition? How is that aligned with the flow of your life and how you wanna be living? How

are you designing a lifestyle for yourself that allows you to not have to separate who you are but to bring all of these gifts to the world? That's the magic, and that is in the unseen realm. And it's with that unseen work, with the work that is in the light, the visible work, right? It's when those two pieces come together, that that's where the sweet spot, and that's where the magic happens. And so this module is an invitation into that realm.

So with that, let's get started.