**Motivational Mondays interview:**

**Nicole Mayer – *Airing* 04.05.2021**

**Max Irzhak** [00:00:02] If you met Nicole today, you would never-believe that not too long ago, her life was completely falling apart.

Taking out student loans to support her family, a new baby on the way, and a marriage that was heading for divorce.

But when a tumor on her liver forced her to come face to face with reality, she knew she had to do something different.

Today, she’s sharing her story of how she clawed her way from the bottom, went on a journey of self-reflection, and came out on top living her best life.

This is Motivational Mondays. I’m your host Max Irzhak, and joining us is Nicole Mayor.

Nicole, it’s so good to have you with us today!

**Nicole Mayer** [00:00:38] Thank you for having me!

**Max Irzhak** [00:00:40] When people hear “success” they typically think of material things. The expensive car, the great house.

But some of the happiest people I've met see things very differently.

How do *you* define true wealth?

**Nicole Mayer** [00:00:53] That’s a great question. So I was once one of those people. Graduated from college and thinking my life was going to be a big house, fancy cars, a very big job title. And you know the white picket fence life, and i quickly realized life had a little bit of a different journey for me—but it helped me realize that success is so much more than that. And really, it became what I value and what I want to get out of this life. And today, I look at it and say I have a really nice house, I have a nice car—is it all the flashy, fancy, what you may be seeing on the next Instagram post? No, because i have decided my trade-off is i want so much more, and so my success is being able to have traveled to 21 countries, spending time with my son, having quality time with my son, having a job i wake up and love going to every single day. And helping people, giving them guidance and advice and helping them live their best life. And helping them realize things, and sometimes it’s things that you don’t realize until later in life when your mortality is facing you. I would say I got lucky and got to face that early on in life so that I could be living my life with more meaning—well before hopefully I'm no longer here.

**Max Irzhak** [00:02:18] Who inspired you to sit down, take stock of your situation, and become better?

**Nicole Mayer** [00:02:25] That’s a great question. I have some amazing mentors in my life. I definitely urge people to seek out mentors. But there was no one in particular. I think I just got to a moment where I was really at the bottom, you know. If anything you had said was going to happen to me, I wouldn't have believed you. But you know, here i was—had a great college experience, got out of college, got engaged, was really living what i thought at the time was my best life—and my white picket fence life. And then, the dominoes started to fall. And i realized quickly that “oh my gosh, everything you can have could be taken from you in a second”. And what you once envisioned your life to be like, it’s not necessarily going to be. So you know, we hear this a lot like “live your life like it’s the last day”. And i kind of call BS on that because what does that mean, you know? Are you going to party it up every day? No, but it does for me sort of mean that I do want to walk into a place that I love working every day. I do want to have meaningful people and conversations and relationships in my life.

So i think it was being kind of at the bottom, i had just gotten divorced. I was about to have a major surgery where, you know, half of my liver was going to be cut out. And they’re telling you all these complications can happen. I said “I have to do something different, and I have to lead my life in a different way, and I have to have something more meaningful.” And you know what, the cars, the houses—those things weren’t going to fulfill me. So what was going to fulfill me? And I started to really dissect what I valued in life, and I value spending time with people I care about, I value travel—I just love seeing the world as I have such an appreciation for my own life when I get to see the world. And I totally value my son and my relationship there. And I value health and wellness. So how can i live my life and create an awesome life surrounded by those things? And you’ll notice that none of those things had to do with a 10,000 square foot house, and a Lamborghini in the driveway. While they're nice, and don’t get me wrong, i wouldn’t turn it down—if you had to choose, i choose to live my life with the things that i value versus things. I’m big on experience over things, and that’s because that fills me up.

**Max Irzhak** [00:05:10] Let’s talk about getting back on track when things fall apart. What’s the process for figuring your way out?

**Nicole Mayer** [00:05:17] Good question. So I did 2 things. One was taught to me, and then the other was just something I did. I’ve always been goal-oriented; I wasn’t taught to write down goals, but I always did.

One exercise i did was “how do i envision my life?” So you’re at the bottom, things are going really rough, if i could wave my magic wand today and this is my life would be perfect, what would it look like? From the time I wake up in the morning to the time I go to bed, how am I spending every minute of the day? And I still have my vision hanging on my closet door. And i used to have it in my shower because i would read it every day, and it’s really how i wanted my life. Like I want to wake up, I want to work out in the morning, I want to make breakfast for my kid, I want to do this after work, this is how my weekends look, this is how my significant other looks—I have it super detailed.

And then the other exercise that was taught to me that really put my vision into perspective and made me edit my vision a little was writing my own eulogy. It sounds crazy, sounds a little bit morbid, but i will tell you when you start to think about how you want to be remembered, and what you want people to say about you when you’re no longer there, it is an amazing tool to say “are you truly living your life everyday the way you want to be remembered?” So when you hear, you know, live your life like it’s your last day… well, live your life like you want to be remembered. And I think you make very different choices throughout your day, your week, the months—in what you’re doing and how you’re doing it.

**Max Irzhak** [00:06:57] A lot of us are trying to live up to someone else’s definition of success.

Whether it’s what our parents think we should be doing, or societal norms, or even what Instagram tells us life should look like.

How do you live according to *your own* standards, and not other people’s expectations?

**Nicole Mayer** [00:07:14] That’s a great question. So comparisons are so hard right now because we are trying to live up to what society is putting out there in your Instagram, your parents, whatever. And this is where I tell you to get real. What is important to you? What do you value? And if you’re doing that, your life and your best life is going to look different than your friends, your neighbors, your parents—and that is okay. Because everyone is unique. And when you get down to it, you realize there’s a lot more unhappy people living a life that looks happy from a picture, and trust me when i tell you it’s not. I meet with thousands of people a year, and so many of them i admired, i thought i wanted this or to have prestigious whatever it is—and then when you realize how hot of a mess their life is, you’re like, okay i don’t want that; you couldn’t pay me to have it. So stop comparing yourself to others. Just like your fingerprint is unique to you, your best life is unique to you. It doesn't look like everyone else’s, and when you are clear what’s important to you, you stop comparing yourself, and you don’t care what someone else is doing because you are living and you have this confidence about your life that others don't—and they’re still trying to prove and get acceptance from people around them.

**Max Irzhak** [00:08:37] Even when we make an active decision to turn our lives around. Sometimes, it just doesn’t feel like things are improving fast enough.

What’s your advice for staying positive as you work to achieve your goals?

**Nicole Mayer** [00:08:50] Oh man, perseverance is a tough one because, you know, my story is really a story of perseverance. When we talk about all the things that happened, they happened in a five-year period, and I felt like I kept getting sucker-punched every way I turned. I would make some progress and then it was like life hit me down again. You’ve got to keep going, keep going. It’s part of your journey, for whatever reason life has thrown those curveballs at you and that’s okay. And if you remember not to play the victim role, and that you’ve got this, and you celebrate the positives that are happening (because there are positives).

And I'm the worst; I'm like a bull in a china shop. I want to get to my destination so fast, but again, I think life threw me some curveballs on purpose to slow me down and appreciate my journey on the way. And again, there’s no magic to this, it really is mindset. Mindset over matter, and you’ve got to get your mindset in it, and you keep visualizing what you want and where you’re going to go. And again, it’s going to get clearer and clearer as you’re going on your journey. And celebrate the small stuff along the way, and just keep pushing along because it does get better.

**Max Irzhak** [00:10:14] People tend to look at what they *don’t* have, rather than appreciating what they *do* have. How do you balance those two while still working towards a better future?

**Nicole Mayer** [00:10:26] So my thing is i’m grateful that i have the opportunity to travel to so many places because it's really opened my eyes to say how amazingly grateful i am even when i don’t think i’m where i’m supposed to be, or i'm not at my destination yet. But just always, and again this is where that gratitude practice is—people would die to be where you’re at, and have half of what you have. And I think you have to realize that there’s so many people that don’t have what you have, and it might be, you know, maybe you’re the one with the really great relationship in your life—a significant other, and that other person has an amazing job. Well they’re looking at you and being like well i would trade my amazing job to have an awesome relationship. It’s always something. Someone has something that you want. And I think staying positive and saying “listen, stop wishing and wanting. Appreciate what you have today.” And i have this amazing quote, and of course i can't think of it right now, but it actually hangs on my mirror. And it basically says “stop wishing, and appreciate what you have today because people wish they had what you have.” And it’s the truth! Appreciate what you have today, you are making progress, there is always something to be grateful for in your life. And yeah we want more, and who doesn’t want more, but i would say like do you have enough cake to eat right now? And you probably do ... but we always want more cake. So appreciate along the way, and again, I can't stress enough how much gratitude and having a real solid understanding of what you value and what’s important. Because if you can keep going back to that and saying “yup, i value this; i’m getting to do this.” Okay, so I am meeting my goals. I am meeting some of it. It may not be a tangible thing.

One of my goals was to live within a mile of my office so i can be like a real mom, and still be like the things i’ve always envisioned in my life on the personal side. It couldn’t come fast enough, it took me a long time; my office is in a very affluent area. And you know what, it all came together when it was. I was so disappointed so many times when I went to look at houses or townhouses. And then one day, it just happened. And I'm so thankful I didn't force it the other way. But again, just gratitude; you have more than a lot of people, and people wish you had what you have. So stay positive.

**Max Irzhak** [00:13:06] We hear the saying all the time “if you fail to plan, you plan to fail”... but what happens when you *do* plan, and things still don’t go the way you expected them to?

**Nicole Mayer** [00:13:17] So, here’s the thing about a plan… and the best way i can describe it is I’m here in Chicago and I want to get to California. There’s going to be some detours, some traffic, maybe some things that are happening along the way that I literally can’t predict. But i still know my destination is California; i'm here in Chicago and i'm going to drive to California.

The idea of a plan is so you can be educated enough about your situation and about where you want to go, and that you have a destination, that you can make and navigate some of the detours that are going to come up. You have to go into a situation knowing there’s going to be detours; knowing you’re going to have to navigate away. You’re still going to get to your destination, but it may not be the direction that you thought you were going to go.

And you know, I was guilty of this. I graduated from college, I had a plan in my head. My plan was i'm going to get married, i'm going to have kids, i'm going to be this total boss babe, and have an amazing career—and i never thought about the detours. But I still got to where I wanted to be. I wasn't in the mindset to realize that there would be detours and some of those things threw me off my course, and really threw me off and i was like “my plan is totally shattered.” But it wasn’t shattered. So think about it as you’re going on the destination, wherever that destination is—Google Maps on your phone doesn’t work, and you just have to know well enough about what you want, where you’re going (your final destination), that you’re going to be able to navigate those detours. And i have to say this: detours are going to happen. There are going to be road blocks in your way to getting to your final destination. But they’re there for a reason. Embrace some of them because they teach us a few things on the way.

**Max Irzhak** [00:15:11] Can you tell us about your new book “Navigating Life’s Transitions”.

Why did you write it? And what’s the #1 lesson you want readers to walk away with?

**Nicole Mayer** [00:15:21] So, I wrote that book because I wanted to share part of my journey. Fortunately most people don’t experience what i experienced all in one shot. The thousands of clients that I've met with, you know, it might be that they're 55; they’ve had a great career and they get let go from their job—and now they’re in this wondering “what do i do next?” Or it’s the person like, their parents get sick, or they have a health issue—and so it’s real life stories of clients that I have worked with, it’s my own story and my journey on getting to and through my own transitions and getting to my destination. And I just really wanted to inspire others, and i really wanted people to understand that there is guidance and advice out there for people to get to and through their journey successfully. And you’re not alone. I would say what a cover of a book looks like and then once you open the cover of a book might be two different things. So, the old saying “don’t judge a book by its cover”, it’s the truth—and i see it with people’s lives all the time. But I'm just really excited just to share my own journey, and share other clients' journeys, and how they’ve navigated through some of life’s hurdles, some road bumps along the way.

**Max Irzhak** [00:16:45] As part of this Live Your Best Life brand that you’ve built, you also have a course that you teach.

One of the things that people seem to love about your course is that you make the complicated, simple.

You break things down into bite-sized bits of information so that people can understand their finances and see a clear path for reaching their life goals.

What are some of the main things that you cover in this course?

**Nicole Mayer** [00:17:07] So one of the main things we’re constantly adding content, but in the Live Your Best Life course one of the main things is we try to get you to get on the page and figure out where your destination is, what’s important to you, and help you try and navigate there so you can be living your best life. It’s really easy for me to say “hey, figure out what’s important to you, what you value”... okay, that’s great wrote it all down Nicole, now how do I get there? And it’s really showing you how to put the car in drive, how you got there, what obstacles may be along the way, and how you navigate those obstacles.

So it really breaks it down, makes it easy. There’s a lot of good tools, and this is stuff that people just don’t teach you. You end up learning by happenstance, by something either happening to you, or you never learn it, and you go through struggling. So we thought let's put this out there so people can learn to start living their best life now. And why would we want them to wait until something happens in their life that gets them to the moment where they go “oh my gosh, i have been living the last 15 years this way, and i wasted all this time”... and i want you to start living now, i want you to start living your best life now, and be able to navigate through life’s hurdles and jumps, and get you to and through your journey successfully—and really appreciating and loving each day.

**Max Irzhak** [00:18:36] And if people wanted to learn more, where should they go?

**Nicole Mayer** [00:18:44] Yeah, absolutely. You can find me on Instagram at "liveyourbestlife\_nicole”. I’m also on Clubhouse, which is a really neat new platform at “livebestlifenow”, and lastly YouTube we’re putting out a ton of content on YouTube “Life Your Best Life Featuring Nicole Mayer”... so you can find me on any of those places. Would love to hear from you, love to hear all about your journey and how you’re getting you know to your destination.

**Max Irzhak** [00:19:14] Nicole, thank you for helping us all understand that only we can define our success, and that with a little planning you canlive your own best life.

**Nicole Mayer** [00:19:23] Thank you so much for having me, it was really fun to talk to you, and I look forward to helping more people live your best life.