

# WHAT WERE THE OPPORTUNITIES OF 2020?

THERE'S OPPORTUNITY IN CRISIS, THE SAYING GOES.  
THIS YEAR, WE DEFINITELY HAD THE CRISES.



## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Lisa Hoashi is an ICF-certified coach whose mission is to help people connect their work with their larger purpose in life so they experience greater joy, fulfillment and impact.

## Hello, I'm Lisa Hoashi.

My mission is to help people connect their work with their larger purpose in life so they experience greater joy, fulfillment and impact.

I coach professionals who are ready to approach their work and life with greater intention. They've maybe ended up somewhere they didn't quite want or isn't the right fit, and I help them get back on track. I help them arrive at a place where they're feeling more momentum, like they're maximizing their strengths and creativity, and contributing in a way that feels more powerful and fulfilling.

I also work with businesses and business owners to realign their work with their biggest goals.

I want to talk about the opportunities of 2020 not because I want to paint this year as rosy. It has not been, not for me, not for you, not for anyone. It is still

incredibly difficult and heartbreaking at times. I don't at all want to minimize the suffering that so many have gone through this year.

Above all, this year has taught us about resilience. I believe that if we are to survive, we must focus and look ahead for the opportunities in the difficulty.

Following are three key moments from my own year, that made me stop and think. That alerted me to possible opportunity, and piqued my curiosity.

*I share these to perhaps add to or spark your own sense of possibility for you and your work in the world.*

## #1 Everyone is Home and Online

I live and run my business remotely from a farm in Catalonia. In mid-March of this year, Spain went into strict lockdown. I'd just managed to get my father on a plane back home to the USA. Shortly after, my hometown of Portland, Oregon, went into shelter-in-place. This truly was a pandemic: my loved ones thousands of miles away were living a very similar reality.

The majority of the professional world began to work from home. We were all online. All of us parents were juggling our jobs with kids at home and distance learning. Those who were single dealt with work taking over even more of their lives and increased isolation.

Everyone began to adapt to their socially distanced, more-time-at-home lives.



### **What this opportunity brought**

With everyone in a similar situation, and everyone online, I noticed that some things were more accessible, no matter where you were in the world. Events went online, services went online. There was an accessibility that was at times something to appreciate.

Maybe it would be less noticeable to someone who wasn't living on a farm in rural Spain, but I appreciated that my kids could now attend storytime with a librarian in Portland, that I could help the Harris/Biden campaign making calls to voters in Texas and Florida, that we could do P.E. with Joe in the UK. It helped to feel grateful for this, when so much of our usual social life was on hold.

As a coach, I realized more poignantly what a privileged view I had into other people's lives. Their real challenges with the difficulty of this situation. As I saw the same struggles coming up for everyone, I recognized our common humanity. We aren't alone.

I also saw that this pandemic, by stripping away so much busyness (travel, going out, running around) people were having the time to reassess what they really wanted in life. What did they want to happen when this was all over?

I felt a renewed optimism in the future of coaching. I saw how it resonated, especially when you can bring people together so they can see that they aren't alone in their struggles and they can gain confidence in supporting one another. When you can create deeper conversations to help meet a need for connection. When you can help people see how they can create something better for the future and support them to be brave and start doing it even amid a lot of uncertainty.

This is what led me to create my [Show Up Stronger](#) group coaching program so that people could get support to show up stronger for themselves and their most important goals no matter what came their way, and in community.

## #2 Black Lives Matter

When George Floyd was senselessly murdered by police in Minneapolis on May 25, it reignited an examination of racism in America, and around the world.

For me personally, it made me confront how little I'd actually been doing to dismantle racism in my own life and work. It was a wake-up call.

For the first time, my eyes opened to how white-centered the coaching industry is and how rooted in privilege. I saw how inadequate and sometimes harmful coaching methods and spaces can be especially for people of color.

I also saw how poorly coaching organizations and well-known coaches addressed the issue of racism and bias in our field.



Every coach needs to grapple with these issues – and I'm grateful that this year has opened the door wider to discuss and confront how far coaching as an industry has yet to go.

### **What this opportunity brought**

I realized that I need to intentionally and consistently commit to anti-racist work in both my personal and professional life.

After unsuccessfully searching for a space to do my personal anti-racist work with others who were biracial (I'm of both white and Japanese ancestry), I invited three other biracial women to create a group with me. We meet every two weeks and use texts to inform our learning. Our first two books have been [Me and White Supremacy](#) by Layla Saad and [Just Us](#) by Claudia Rankine.

The conversations and insights that have emerged from our meetings are often difficult, sometimes heartbreaking, sometimes discouraging and overwhelming. Yet the time I've spent with this group has been among the most meaningful and edifying moments of the entire year.

Social media played a big role in amplifying the conversation about systemic racism, as well as BIPOC voices in the Black Lives

Matter movement. Through social media, I found coach Trudi Lebrón, and joined her Equity-Centered Coaching Collective, which helps coaches to prioritize diversity, equity, inclusion and anti-racism in their practices.

She has helped me to see two things:

1. Coaching is about creating safe spaces. We must know how to create spaces that are safe for all people.

2. Coaching is about creating transformation for individuals, groups and society. Anti-racist work is also about transformation, for individuals, communities and society. They go hand in hand.

As I've started specific initiatives in my business to increase inclusiveness and embody my anti-racist values, I've grown and learned in important ways. I feel a greater sense of purpose and can see how this work will deepen the impact of my business and reach more people in more profound ways.

*Coaching is about creating safe spaces. We must know how to create spaces that are safe for all people.*



## #3 The Long Haul

As we entered the fall and it was clear that there was going to be no fast or easy solution to COVID-19, we had to start grappling with the reality that this situation would continue and perhaps worsen as we went into winter.

We'd all been dealing with isolation for at least six months, and if we didn't have good habits to keep us healthy, in body, mind and spirit, it started to show.

In the U.S., COVID and the Presidential Elections invaded so much emotional and mental space. There was so much anxiety, uncertainty, polemic and online distraction with 24/7 new updates. "Doom scrolling" became a thing for seemingly everyone.

In 2020, there were two moments that I personally hit an all-time low in my own smartphone behavior. I was constantly refreshing the news and social media, completely gripped on what would happen next in the world at the moment of lockdown in March, and after Election Day in the U.S.

I could tell it was seriously damaging to my health and afterward have had to take a critical look at how I would now prevent this



from becoming a precedent for how I interacted with my phone. And from speaking with clients, I know I'm not alone.

As a coach, over the summer and fall I noticed that while there was renewed interest in coaching, my clients were having a harder time than ever with creating time for, and making headway, on their goals.

That was forcing me to examine what was standing in their way. To look at what was special about what was happening right now.

I'm a habits and productivity nerd and always work with my clients in these areas. With digital addiction on the rise in response to such an uncertain and socially distanced reality, I realized I was going to have to up my game and discover what would really work for them in this context.

### **What this opportunity brought**

In late summer, I discovered a powerful new productivity tool and community called Caveday.

Caveday is a New York-based organization that holds daily "caves": online co-working sprints that help people dig into their projects with deep focus.

Here's how it works:

- At the beginning of a one- or three-hour sprint you log into Zoom with a bunch of other people and are led through a short check-in by a Cave Guide.
- Everyone says what they'll be working on for the sprint, then you go do it (camera on!).
- At the end of the hour, everyone checks out by sharing what they got done.

Deceptively simple, and SO effective.

Since August, I've used Caves for my work projects, and my productivity (and enjoyment of the workday) has totally shot up.



I loved Caveday so much that I contacted their founder and became a first affiliate partner so I could offer them as a option to my clients. And when they recently expanded to Europe, I became one of their facilitators.

Two texts that have continued to inform how I support clients with their habits and productivity in this challenging context have been *Atomic Habits* by James Clear and *Digital Minimalism* by Cal Newport.

*Atomic Habits*, is for me, the go-to book for effective ways to support clients in creating better habits. I work with clients to make significant changes in life, and frankly, you can't make these changes, to be brave, to step out of your comfort zone, and be happier, if you don't have good habits to support you in your everyday life.

*Digital Minimalism* really helps illuminate the dangers of digital addiction, the ways that smartphones and social media have been designed to keep us addicted, and how to use technology in a way that's healthier in the long-term.

In this book, Cal Newport cites the ideas of "The Slow Media Manifesto" a document posted by a trio of Germans. He writes, "The

manifesto opens by noting that the first decade of the twenty-first century 'brought profound changes to the technological foundations of the media landscape.' The second decade, the manifesto then proposes, should be dedicated to figuring out the 'appropriate reaction' to these massive changes."

For me, this is a good way to think about this moment of moving to 2020 to 2021.

In 2020 we saw profound changes in our world and context, and in how we connect and relate to one another. In 2021, then, it's time to figure out how we want to adapt and move forward from all these changes.

*For me, a critical part of that is taking stock both of changes and the opportunities they present for our future.*

## It's Your Turn

1. *What are the opportunities that you saw open up for your work in 2020? Where do you sense more space than you did before?*
2. *What has piqued your interest lately, in terms of trends, ideas, people, businesses and groups?*
3. *Of these, what is one that you'd like to continue to follow? What will be your one next step on this?*

After you're done reading this and doing your own reflection, I'd love to hear from you.



## Resources

**Equity-Centered Coaching Collective** with Trudi Lebrón

A membership program to support you in creating a business prioritizes diversity, equity, inclusion and anti-racism.

**Caveday** - How you can try it for free:

1. Click here for the schedule:  
<https://www.caveday.org/schedule>
2. Select a 3-Hour Sprint
3. Enter your name, email, phone and this code: L\_LISA

If by the end of your first Cave, you're intrigued and want to try it for a whole week, you can get an additional 7-day free trial using this link: [caveday.org/lisahoashi](https://caveday.org/lisahoashi)

**Digital Minimalism** by Cal Newport

**Atomic Habits** by James Clear

*\*Caveday links are affiliate links. I may get a commission if you decide to sign up for a membership through this link.*



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