

# It's Never Too Late: Do What You Want. Be Who You Want to Be

*Wendy Glavin, Founder & CEO, Wendy Glavin Agency*

Last year crystalized my vision to help others discover their true potential by looking back. I've been doing this all throughout my life. Now, I have the tools to help you.

## Your Background

Think about what you loved as a child. I'll get you started by highlighting what was most important to me: playing with Barbie Dolls, catching butterflies, taking swimming and acting lessons (among others), becoming a lifeguard, and a camp counselor.

I dreamed of becoming a lawyer, like my dad, or an actress. I went to middle school with Kevin Bacon in Philadelphia and hung out with friends after school. And often, my grandmother took me clothes shopping and after, let me swim in her building's rooftop pool.

What were your passions?

## Your Experiences

So, if you consider six degrees of separation, you're likely to know someone with whom you may have forgotten. After majoring in acting in college for two years, my professors said I was too dramatic, which led me to obtain a degree in communications.

I did take the LSAT, but my prosecutor dad said, "you'll never

win your case until you can see the other side...you're more of a Norma Rae."

My parents were all about tough love. After graduating, I worked at General Electric for roughly five years. Surrounded by engineers, scientists, and others in technology, I was hired by a full-service agency; my first account was a division of DuPont.

After marriage, my husband and I moved to New York City. My previous boss recommended me to someone at Burson-Marsteller. While there, I managed a division of DuPont while my now-ex worked on Wall Street.

Throughout the years, we lived in the south of France; where my love of fashion and accessories led me to start a business importing jewelry from France to the U.S.

At the time, I learned about customer service; educating myself on what different types of women wanted. The business grew. Over time, my partner and I did shows for employees at magazines like Vogue, investment banks, law firms, hospitals and more.

Most importantly, I learned a lot (and continue to do so) from my three grown sons. Some twenty-years ago I traveled worldwide and had memorable experiences like ziplining in Costa Rica, boating in Corsica, touring Bilbao in Spain, and doing watersports in the Dominican Republic.

What experiences were significant to you?

## **Your Relationships**

Most of us can name our friends, business colleagues, clients, and other connections from social media. But what I'm suggesting is for you to reflect on who was or has been significant to you throughout your life; whether you're still in touch or not.

For me, it's my dad, my previous agency boss, several people with whom I knew in politics, a global marketing executive, an attorney, a book publisher, a global speaker, a digital marketing leader, a business consultant, a graphic designer, and my three boys.

Others include: a serial software developer of mobile apps, two startup founders, and many other leaders in technology, marketing, and social media.

What relationships have been particularly significant to you?

## **Weaving It All Together**

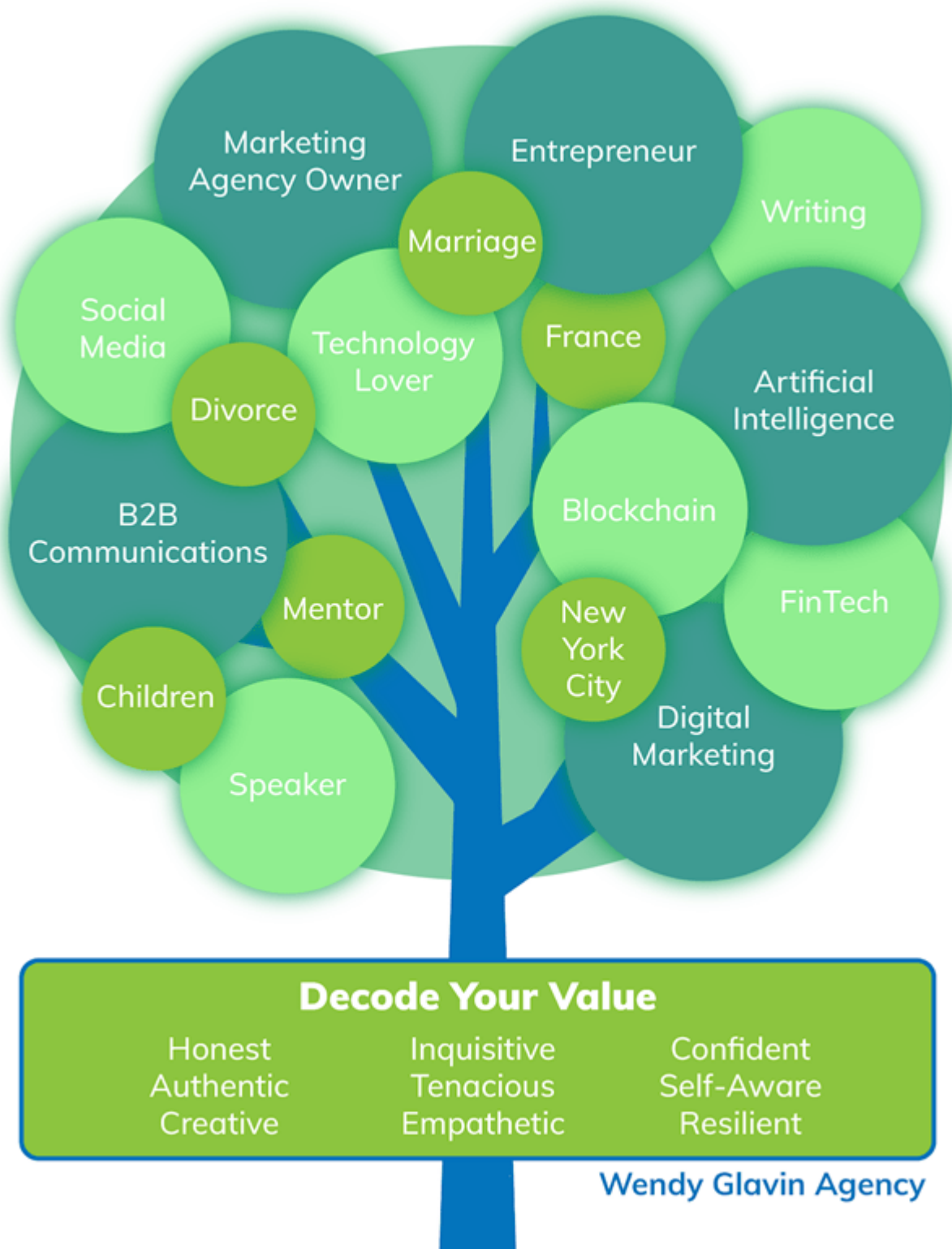
When you carve out all the experiences you've had in your life, you're able to look at yourself through a broader lens. The process I created with my team is called Decode Your Value.

You may have heard me discussing it in a video or during a live event. Or, if you've followed my articles on the subject, you've learned the importance of looking back to identify your core values and merging your professional and personal personas to seize opportunities instead of waiting for external events to change.

While recognizing your hard and soft skills is one way to categorize your strengths and weaknesses, life skills consist of what you've learned throughout your life. When you know what they are, you can incorporate them into your brand and your communications.

Recently, I began thinking about how I could illustrate the Decode Your Value method. This sparked a memory for me of hiking in a forest long ago with my family and getting lost. Everywhere we looked was the same; tall trees, colored leaves, fallen branches and rocks. We panicked and didn't know how to find our way out of the woods.

Perhaps, this is how you feel because of or in spite of the pandemic. To help you make sense of the concept, here's an illustration of my Life Skills tree below. The trunk represents my core values; the greenery are my notable life experiences; and the branches represent how the categories connect:



Here's a **Life Skills tree PDF** that you can download and complete. If you need help, please reach out with your questions, ideas or comments. Like a patchwork quilt, create your own life tree and spread the word. Hopefully, this year, we'll create a digital forest.

Recently, I read an article in Inc. about the perfect age to start a business. Interestingly, it's older than you think. Regardless of age, gender, location, and other self-limiting characterizations, you can do what you want to do. I'm not suggesting that you necessarily start a business or a startup, but it's something to consider.

Someone I know was furloughed. During this off-time, he chose to focus on a passion of his that he didn't have time for in the past: writing. He used the time to self-publish a book, create a basic website (which he'd never done before), and ultimately release his work to the world. Now, he's onto his second novel.

As for me, the skills I learned in acting are still relevant: to get inside the head of the character in which you're playing (know your customer) and use storytelling to deliver an experience. My interest in law helps me understand other people, see both sides of a problem and work towards a mutual solution.

While in Paris, a friend taught me to look at the colors in nature and art to learn what goes together in fashion and décor. My inspiration comes from art museums, aquariums, beaches, the streets, culture and architecture. In fact, the colors of my website are from photos of wild berries.

Another lesson is to build on your strengths. My interest in technology grew by reading, listening to others and covering events. Eventually, I became a published writer and a technology columnist.

As for law, I'm still considering getting a degree. After watching, "The Post," Spielberg's account of the *Washington Post's* decision to publish the Pentagon Papers, I remember watching legal movies with my dad, like, "Inherit the Wind," "To Kill a Mockingbird," "12 Angry Men," "Good Night. And Good Luck" and, "All the President's Men." We spoke about ethics, the importance of standing up for what we believe in and the Constitution.

At night, I enjoy watching Law & Order. While the episodes are not real, it's interesting how evidence is collected to solve a case. Amazingly, last night, I was watching SVU and saw a childhood friend of my son's sister on tv. She had been abducted. Only because I knew the girl, I stayed up late to see what happened (she was found).

Getting back to Kevin Bacon, years later, I drove his father to a radio interview and told him about the years watching him in school plays; an example of relationship-building.

I hope my article inspires you to think about your story since "Life isn't about finding yourself. Life is about creating yourself." – Mark Twain



**About the Author:** Wendy Glavin is Founder and CEO of Wendy Glavin, a NYC full-service agency. Wendy is a 30-year veteran of corporate, agency, consulting and small business ownership. She specializes in B2B2C marketing communications, executive writing, PR and social media advisory. Her website is: <https://wendyglavin.com/>.

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