

All the lanes are MINE.

By Porchia M. Hare

“Stay in your lane.”

Have you ever been on the receiving end of this phrase? Or watched someone else get hit with it—one of those verbal “strays” tossed casually but loaded with judgment? In today’s modern slang, stay in your lane is often used to police ambition, curiosity, or deviation from what is considered normal. It implies that growth should be narrow, interests should be contained, and success should follow a single, predictable path.

But who decided how many lanes we’re allowed to occupy? There’s an old proverb that many of us have heard—often weaponized rather than understood: “A jack of all trades is a master of none.” What’s less commonly quoted is the full version: “A jack of all trades is a master of none, but still better than a master of one.” The complete proverb offers permission—permission to explore, to experiment, and to take the driver’s seat in as many lanes as curiosity allows.

From a very early age, I was a lover of art—and I mean all forms of it. I loved museums of every kind. I loved music across genres. I loved reading, writing, poetry, and storytelling. Creativity wasn’t a hobby for me; it was how I experienced the world. From elementary school through my senior year, I took art classes every single year. Eventually, I earned an art degree, fully convinced that I had it all figured out.

Spoiler alert: I didn’t!

Like many creative and curious people, my mind was never content staying in one place. I had endless ideas about what I wanted to try, touch, build, or explore. For years, I didn’t have language for that instinct—I only knew that I felt pulled in multiple directions. It wasn’t until later that I discovered there was a term for people like me: **multipotentialities**.

The Psychology of Having Many Interests

While formal research on multipotentialities (individuals who pursue multiple interests or careers) is still emerging, scholars have long examined the underlying concept of **multipotentiality**. “In vocational and giftedness research, multipotentiality is described



as a trait associated with broad learning capacity, adaptability, and the ability to synthesize ideas across disciplines (Kerr & Gentry, 2004). Rather than reflecting indecision or lack of focus, this trait supports complex problem-solving and innovation, particularly in environments that demand flexibility.

In other words, people with many interests aren’t scattered—they’re integrators.

This perspective reframed so much for me. Traits I had always been recognized for—quick thinking, creativity, resilience, resourcefulness—weren’t signs that I lacked direction. They were indicators that my mind was wired for connection rather than confinement.

Yet knowing this intellectually didn’t immediately quiet the emotional conflict.

The Pressure to Pick One Thing

For years, I watched my peers choose a single path. They studied one subject, committed to one trajectory, and built careers around mastering that one thing. There's something admirable—and enviable—about that kind of tunnel vision. Society rewards it. Employers understand it. Families praise it.

I tried to replicate it.

I suppressed my internal variety and attempted to mold myself into something more linear, more predictable. The result was never peace, it was emptiness. No matter how hard I tried to “stick to one thing,” I found myself unfulfilled, restless, and daydreaming about the next passion waiting in the wings.

Career-wise, I've done it all. Sometimes out of necessity—because surviving the job market requires adaptability—and sometimes



simply because I wanted to try. But with each pivot came judgment. From others, yes, but also from myself. I internalized the idea that moving across industries or interests meant instability. I questioned my maturity. I wondered if something was wrong with me.

What I didn't yet understand was that identity is not static, and neither is purpose.

Creativity, Careers, and Nonlinear Paths

Career development research consistently shows that careers are not one-time decisions but lifelong, evolving processes. Donald Super's life-span, life-space theory emphasizes that individuals continuously revise their career choices as their self-concept, values, and life roles change over time. In modern labor markets—where longevity, technology, and economic shifts redefine work—nonlinear careers are becoming increasingly common.

Additionally, studies on creativity and work performance suggest that engaging in diverse creative pursuits enhances adaptability, confidence, and problem-solving ability. Research published by the Association for Psychological Science has found that individuals who regularly engage in creative hobbies often demonstrate stronger performance at work, particularly in roles requiring innovation and flexibility.

Still, theory only goes so far. My real transformation didn't happen in a classroom or a journal article—it happened in my

kitchen.

The Cake That Changed Everything

Starting my cake business, Sis & Ann, was never part of a master plan. Honestly, it was an accident. I loved cooking and was good at it, but baking? That wasn't my passion. What drew me in was the artistry—the sculptural, visual aspect of cake design.

When I started, I only worked with buttercream icing. Piping came naturally to me, and looking back, it makes sense. Art was already in my bones. When customers asked about fondant, I always declined. “I don't do fondant,” I'd say, blaming taste or texture.

The truth?

Fondant intimidated me. It felt like a different lane—one I wasn't sure I belonged in.

Then one year, a family member asked me to make a fondant cake. I hesitated, already rehearsing my refusal. Before I could finish, she said, “Yes you can. Go for it.”

So, I did. And it turned out beautifully.

From that moment on, fondant became part of my repertoire. As my business grew, so did the complexity of requests. Sculpted cakes. Gravity-defying designs. Challenges that demanded precision and confidence. The money was good, yes—but more importantly, the growth was undeniable.

Somewhere in that process, something clicked.

The Epiphany: All the Lanes Are Mine

Clients and fellow cake artists started calling me “cake boss.” At first, it felt flattering. Then it felt affirming. And then it sparked an epiphany that changed everything:

ALL THE LANES ARE MINE.

Gone was the language of limitation—I only do... Gone was the fear of stepping outside what I'd already mastered. What I realized was this: specialization had its place, but so did expansion. Mastery didn't have to mean confinement. That mindset didn't just reshape my cake career—it reshaped how I approached life.

Multipotentiality recognizes that creativity and success don't always emerge from narrowing focus. Often, they emerge from **layering skills, interests, and experiences**, allowing one domain to inform another. Innovation thrives at intersections, not silos.

This isn't a call for recklessness. It's not an invitation to quit your job tomorrow and skip rocks at the nearest pond (although, honestly, sometimes that sounds tempting). It's an invitation to stop treating curiosity as a liability.

Aging, Maturity, and Permission to Change

As we grow older, change often becomes less frightening—and more necessary. Whether personal, professional, or social, transitions begin to feel intentional rather than impulsive.

Psychologist Laura L. Carstensen's **socioemotional selectivity theory** helps explain why. Her research shows that as people age and become more aware of time, they naturally shift their focus toward emotionally meaningful goals—such as fulfillment, relationships, and purpose—rather than long-term, abstract achievements.

Aging isn't simply biological. It reshapes what we value.

This shift explains why so many adults pursue second (or third, or fourth) careers later in life. Studies on later-life career transitions show that many individuals experience increased well-being when they exercise agency and align their work with evolving values rather than outdated expectations. In other words, changing lanes isn't a sign of immaturity—it's often a sign of clarity.



Letting Go of the Myth of "Too Much"

One of the most damaging myths we internalize is that having many interests means we lack commitment. In reality, it often means we possess **depth in multiple dimensions**. The problem isn't that we want too much—it's that society offers too few frameworks for honoring breadth.

Multipotential individuals aren't unfocused. They are responsive. They are adaptive. They are builders of bridges between ideas, industries, and identities.

Your lane will change. Sometimes slowly, sometimes suddenly. And that's okay.

Claiming Every Lane That Fits

So the next time someone tells you to stay in your lane, pause. Ask yourself who built that road—and why they think it belongs to them.

Growth isn't linear. Purpose isn't singular. And creativity doesn't flourish inside rigid boundaries. For those of us wired to explore, to integrate, to reinvent, the journey will never be about choosing one lane forever. It will be about learning when to merge, when to expand, and when to blaze entirely new paths.

All the lanes don't belong to everyone.

But the ones that call to you?

They're yours.

Yours truly,

A Banker, Cake Artist, and Published Author...accolades loading, To Be Continued!

Sources

Carstensen, L. L. (1999). Taking time seriously: A theory of socioemotional selectivity. *American Psychologist*.
Explores how priorities and motivations shift with age, emphasizing emotional meaning, fulfillment, and purpose.

Kerr, B. A., & Gentry, M. (2004). Multipotentiality, giftedness, and career choice. *Journal of Secondary Gifted Education*.
Discusses individuals with multiple interests and abilities, highlighting adaptability, broad learning, and the integration of ideas across fields.

Association for Psychological Science. (2018). Creative hobbies linked with job performance.
Summarizes research showing that engaging in creative activities supports adaptability, confidence, and problem-solving in professional environments.

Super, D. E. (1990). A life-span, life-space approach to career development. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*.
Presents the idea that careers evolve over time as people grow, mature, and redefine their values and roles.