

“To Do” Or Not “To Do”

Dr. Lissa Rankin MD | [Wake Up World](#)

I recently attended an event with a coach who challenged us to stop dreaming so much and start DOING something about our dreams. He likened our big dreams to an acorn that had the potential to become an oak tree, and in scenario after scenario, he gave us examples about how “law of attraction” based inaction could thwart the acorn’s potential to become the oak tree. Sure, we could visualize the acorn as an oak tree. We could affirm the oak tree’s potential. We could even adopt a gluten-free diet and drink more green juice, in hopes that our efforts will help the oak tree grow. But unless we plant the acorn in fertile soil, nurture it with water, sunlight, and patience, that acorn is never going to realize its potential.

To demonstrate his point, he challenged us to an unusual form of “meditation.” Instead of sitting still and trying to calm our thoughts, we were invited to lift our arms over our head and bring the mind into present time while scissoring our arms together until our arms and shoulders got so tired and sore that we were ready to scream. Then, when we were all in pain and yearning to quit, he pumped the music up louder and dared us to keep going. Giving us permission to modify our movement if needed, he pushed us to keep up the pace if at all possible, to grunt and growl and cheer each other on. By the end of the exercise, I’m sure many people felt a sense of accomplishment and patted themselves on the backs as an acknowledgment of their determination, commitment, and self-sacrifice in the face of pain. As I looked around the room, most people were grinning with the kind of relieved, endorphin-laden “We did it!” looks you see when people finish running marathons.

But that’s not how I felt. I may have been the only person in

the room of pumped up people who felt...PISSSED- not with the coach, but with myself.

No Pain, No Gain

Maybe it's because I endured the pain of twenty years of self-sacrifice during medical school, residency, and my medical practice that I find myself resistant to anything that forces me to hurt myself, especially if it's fueled by the kind of peer pressure you feel when a group is pushing each other to keep going, even when it hurts. After years of living by the "No pain, no gain" philosophy, these days, I'm much more inclined to feel attracted to Martha Beck's mantra- "Play until it's time to rest, then rest until it's time to play."

After years of learning from Martha, I've realized that I was once saddled with a limiting belief that all good things required hard work, suffering, sacrifice, and pain. Yet I now know that when I move in the direction of EASE instead, things mysteriously begin to flow.

Be Less Sperm, More Egg

It may just be a matter of gender difference. In asking us to push ourselves beyond our comfort zones in order to maximize our potential, this very Divinely Masculine coach is making a valid point. As long as we fail to even plant the acorn, no amount of play or rest is going to make that seed grow into an oak. The masculine principle of ACTION is a necessary part of the realization of any dream. Sometimes you have to do what I call the "ass in chair" work. Sometimes the required next step is to DO something.

But I no longer think the "ass in chair" work needs to be painful or require sacrificing your self care. I've had to learn to adopt the feminine principle I was taught first by Christiane Northrup, who taught me to ["Be less sperm, more egg."](#) This feminine principle has since been reinforced by my

spiritual mentors Martha Beck and Tosha Silver. Martha taught me what she calls the “Four Technologies of Magic” (you can read my blog series about the Four Technologies of Magic [here](#)). Tosha instructed me on how to make an “offering” by turning over our desires and problems to the Divine and letting the Divine take the lead. (You can read about what I learned from Tosha [here](#).)

These three very feminine but very successful women have all convinced me that we can thrive, fulfill our life purpose, be vessels for Divine work in the world, and manifest many dreams when we commit to surrendering our desires over to Divine Will, releasing attachment to outcomes, and letting the Universe work its magic.

It's not that the masculine principle isn't necessary and there's not a place for the Divine Masculine, but in a culture dominated by the message that we have to push, strive, and make things happen, even to our own detriment, I tend to lean towards less pain, more flow.

What Are We Proving?

Perhaps this is why I bristle a little when I agreed to do something that left my shoulders so sore that I could barely lift my arms the next morning. Why did I not back off when I knew I should have? The very loving and concerned coach had even given us an out by suggesting that we could modify in order to avoid hurting ourselves. Why did I let myself get swept up in the pressure of it all? What do I have to prove? Where is the fine line between pushing beyond the limits of our comfort zones and hurting ourselves for the sake of achievement?

Don't get me wrong- I'm all for working out, proving to ourselves that we can do hard things, increasing our endurance, and being brave. Discipline is an essential virtue necessary when we're dreaming big. If we always quit the

minute something got challenging, we'd never accomplish many of the big things we dream of creating in the world. The masculine principle of pushing ourselves when we must do hard things has its advantages. But when do we draw the line? When is too much of a good thing too much?

Embrace Inspired Action

I think the answer lies in what Tosha Silver calls "inspired action," which is generated from the excitement and enthusiasm that bubbles up through your body and makes you DO something. Martha calls it "playing" when you take action that arises not from what you "should" do but from what feels so yummy you can barely keep yourself from doing it.

You can feel the difference in your body. The very idea of some actions makes you feel exhausted before you ever start. Other actions make you so excited you wiggle with delight and can't wait to get started.

It may sound idealistic to suggest that you might only do that which feels yummy in your body, but I'm going to go out on a limb and suggest just that.

Don't do it if you're only doing it because you "should."

Don't do it because someone else is pressuring you to do it.

Don't do it because you need to prove to yourself that you can survive pain.

Don't do it because you think all good things arise from hard work.

DO IT BECAUSE OF THE LOVE.

Do it because you can't NOT do it.

Do it because you're being Divinely guided to do it, and Divine guidance tends to show up in the form of EASE.

And if you don't feel that way, give yourself permission to stop doing it, not because you're lazy, not because you're a quitter, not because you can't do it, but because you love yourself enough to grant yourself ease, happiness, joy, self care, inner peace, and shoulders that aren't killing you.

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