

Life begins on the edge of your comfort zone

By Suzanne Pool

Life begins at the edge of your comfort zone. That was written by one Neale Donald Walsch in his seminal spiritual work *Conversations with God*. It's true. Being scared and uncomfortable leads to growth and development in your life. Yes, it can be painful, that's actually a good thing, it is almost certainly uncomfortable, but it is also the juice of life. How come? Because it's exciting, it's challenging, it stretches you to strive for a place or an experience that you may not have attempted, let alone attained EVER before. And oh yes, what does that mean? IT'S FUN. I know I'm not the only one of you that likes a rollercoaster. They make me quake in my boots as I think about them, and when I'm in a line at an amusement park for a coaster, I frequently think WHAT ARE YOU DOING? But then I find myself at the front of the line, and with trepidation, I strap myself in. Five minutes later, having thrown myself upside down and round about a few times in my seat, at great velocity, I am walking away from the coaster as high as a kite. Because yes, I am thrilled that I had a go and expanded myself to take that risk.

As Eleanor Roosevelt, wife of FDR, the US President during the Depression and the Second World War, is frequently quoted as saying "Do One Thing EVERY Day that Scares You." Life begins when you start to uncover what really matters to you, what gives you a thrill, what gives you chills, and what turns you on. So do the detective work and investigate what is important to you. Consider your top 100 experiences that you are seeking to accomplish—do you want to refine the list? Are there experiences that you want to add to it? Can you enhance those experiences? What can you begin with? As Johann Goethe said, "Indecision brings its own decision. And days are lost lamenting over lost days. Are you in earnest? Seize this very minute. Whatever you do or dream you can do, BEGIN it. Genius has power and magic in it."

Take a look at the resources you have available to you. Do what I have been taught to call an inventory of resources. What is available to you? What support do you have? Who is behind you? Who can you count on? When you really engage in these questions, you will start to notice that actually, while you have family and friends that are very important to you, and it is critical that you recognize them and that; the reality is that YOU are the one you can count on most, you are the most support you have available to you, and you are your own greatest resource. This does not mean to say that you are the most important person in the world. You are part of a much bigger picture, and you are just an aspect of that picture (a mere brushstroke if you will). BUT (and it is a big but) that does not give you permission to diminish yourself either. That is what I mean when I say you are your own greatest resource.

Do you trust yourself? Do you really believe that anything is possible? This is what I mean when I say that you are your own best friend and that you are your greatest resource. You are going to take another minute now to assess the way you think and speak about yourself. I know, you feel

like I keep asking you to do that. And you are right. I do. Repetition is the mother of skill. Practice, practice, practice—remember that? Go on then.

Have you started journaling yet? I'm asking you to do that now. If you have ever read *The Artist's Way* or heard of an author called Julia Cameron (who was married to the very well-known film director, Martin Scorsese) you will be familiar with the process called Morning Pages. I'm not saying write three pages of your full-size journal (unless you want to). It's up to you how much you write in your journal. I am saying cultivate a new habit, daily, of writing in your journal. Journaling is a mysterious phenomenon. It seems like a really easy thing to do, and yet when you sit down to write, it can seem incredibly daunting. I have known many days of journaling where all I have written for three pages is "I don't know what to write. And yet there are some days where three pages are just not enough, and I have to stop myself over-indulging my writing habit. The point is this, I write. Daily. It gives me access to how I think and feel about myself and what is going on in the world and in my life.

When you journal, you start to notice, very acutely, how you talk about yourself, and others, and what you think about yourself and others. You may very well start to notice that the worst gas-lighter you have in your life is not outside of you. It is, in fact, you. When you see that, transformation is possible. It is only through awareness and observation that you can start to see your own patterns—that's why you have to do some detective work and investigation.

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