

THE SCOURGE OF GENTLE SOULS



You've been given an important assignment. It's a great opportunity for you and it's a big stretch out of your comfort zone. But, hey, you're up to the challenge. This'll be great for you! Then, without your really being aware of it, you begin to notice just a hint of dread...maybe this project is a little big for you, maybe you're not quite ready for it. It's almost as though some irresistible voice is reminding you of all your fallibilities. Here, look at this one: where you forgot to send out the right documents, or hey, look here: you didn't send the newest addendum or remember this one? You said something you wish you could take back at the last group meeting. Pretty soon, your confidence in your ability to pull off this project has just tumbled down, like the Jenga structure when the key piece is pulled out.

For many of us, our self-doubt wreaks havoc with our lives. We've likely heard these doubting voices since we were young children. Perhaps we were told we were too little to do something, or not strong enough, or somehow just not capable enough. Those messages wheedle their way in to who we think we are.

Now, as adults we want to succeed. We want to make more of a difference, get out of our comfort zones. But those voices (which now sound like our own) whisper in our ears, reminding us to be careful of that scary, uncomfortable unknown just beyond our comfort zone. After years of hearing these voices of self-doubt, we are lulled into going on automatic with them- we believe them, trust them, figure they ARE us, they've been with us so long. They must be the truth, so we don't even think to question them. So we stop before we've reached the success we want. We've fallen face down in the mud and struggle to get back up.

Unfortunately, those voices then berate us for having fallen down in the first place and we feel even less steady as we begin to move forward again. We usually manage to gain a little more strength and determine that, next time we'll do better about managing that self-doubt. But wouldn't it be great to find a way to disarm the self doubt that hinders our ability to move through the world in a way that feeds our soul, feeds who we want to be?

The how is the method of "Stop, look, and listen."

It sounds so simple, doesn't it? Like we're back in kindergarten? That's okay! It is simple, although it takes a little practice - and for some of us it takes a lot of practice. (Now that we're adults, sometimes it's much harder to be in touch with what's really going on with us, so we almost have to re-learn how to be in touch with our own truth.)

Stop. When your self-doubt is coming up, or as soon as you catch yourself listening to it and being dragged downward, stop. Take a breath. Or two. Or ten. Shut off the automatic pilot.

Look. What is going on? Notice what's happening in your body. Notice the thoughts you're thinking and whether these thoughts or ideas are supporting you in living the way you want to be living. If not...

Listen. Listen to your heart, soul, inner guidance, inner wisdom, God, to hear some more empowering thoughts. Let yourself be realigned, having your coordinates "readjusted" so you can be moving in the direction you want to be.

In many ways it's going to require the diligence and training of mastering an athletic sport. But the practice will be well worth the effort. When these skills are mastered, the necessary actions to take become more clear, more inspired, and much more doable.

Don't let the scourge of your gentle soul keep taking the upper hand. Honor yourself and the gifts you've been given, as well as the responsibility of USING those gifts. Become as a little child and "Stop. Look. Listen."

With love,

Shawn

Let me know what you're thinking! I love to hear from you, and I read every email personally, even when I can't reply to all of them. Send your thoughts to shawn@joyouslifeworks.com or visit my blog: www.vibrantlyalivewomen.com to add your comments! And if you prefer not to be quoted in a future article, just let me know.

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