

Freedom ^{from} **DIETING**

A Whole Approach for Nourishing Your Self and Your Body

TOOLS TO HELP YOU DEAL WITH YOUR EMOTIONS SO THAT YOU CAN CREATE CHANGE

My dear friend Kristen, a writer, and one with whom I share a love of reading, passed on to me the book “A Year by the Sea – Thoughts of an Unfinished Woman”. This is Joan Anderson’s account of her year in a cottage in Cape Cod, a movement away from the stagnation of her thirty-something year marriage and the roles she had become.

I admire the courage that it took for Joan to make the break into the uncharted territory of her own mind and I delight in the free spirit that she becomes by her willingness to face the fear of change and the richness of solitude.

As I read, I am reminded of the journey of many women that I know - myself, my friends, my clients, other adventurers that I have met along the way. Not all of us need to leave our relationships or live alone for a year but we all must be able to embrace the courage that it takes to change. Without change we stagnate and we waste precious moments of our life in angst and discontent.

To arrive where you are, to get there from where you are not, You must go by a way wherein there is no ecstasy.

- T.S. Eliot

The nature of change comes with it discomfort. How do you handle discomfort? Do you have the tools in place to be with the discomfort without struggle? Or do you find yourself consistently resisting what you are feeling by turning to food or some other habitual substance?

Human beings have a primal instinct to avoid pain and move toward pleasure. Are you avoiding immediate discomfort to the degree that you create the greater pain of denying who you really are and what you dream about for your life?

In my work with clients I have an arsenal, a ‘toolbox’ of sorts that I draw from and introduce them to as needed, to help them move through discomfort. Here are some of my most well-used tools. Whichever one you choose, these or another of your own, remember a few structures:

1/ The idea is to **get the thoughts out of your head and into expression**, whether it is through your body, your voice, your pen, paints, etc.

2/ **Keep your intention clear** as to what you want **the outcome to be** on the other side. If it is to create change, then think about what you want that change to be and go into the process with that in mind. There is a big difference in how you approach it if you are going into your feelings with no intention, or the intention just to let off some steam, and if you go in with the intention for change. Try it.

3/ Whatever environment that you are in as you express yourself, it must **feel safe for you**. If there is no one that you feel safe to do this with, do it in the confines of your own space and set it up as a safe, comforting and sacred place to be.

- ❖ **Talk with a trusted friend, family member, coach, colleague.** Someone who you know will not judge you, yet will aid you to see a broader perspective. Stay away from those who drain your energy or who like to dwell in your pain with you. Let that person know not only what you are feeling but also where you would rather be (your intentional outcome).
- ❖ **Journal your thoughts and feelings.** Remember to set an intention for your journaling. Once that is done, let your feelings go. If you do not feel safe to do so, as someone might find it and read it, then remind yourself that you can shred or burn your writing right after. The important thing is to express yourself fully.
- ❖ **Breathe, move and make sound.** Thoughts always have a corresponding feeling in the body, as feelings also create corresponding thoughts. Breath, movement and sound are the quickest way to change the state of our thoughts and feelings. Start with breath and then let yourself move as your body needs to. If that does not totally change how you are feeling, let yourself make sounds. Only minutes of this can change how you feel dramatically.
- ❖ **Get physical.** Go for a walk, to the gym, for a swim, ride your bike, dance to your favourite music, roll around on the floor. Any movement will do. But if free movement as suggested above is not your style, move in any routine way.
- ❖ **Paint, draw, or do some work with your hands.** The mind can only focus on one thing at a time, so putting your energy into some kind of creative project with your hands or otherwise is a great way to dissipate the feeling. However, remember to keep your intention about the outcome clear so that your creative work becomes a reflective time as well. That shifts it from avoidance to clearing.
- ❖ **Emotional Freedom Technique.** EFT, for short, is a type of self-help acupuncture. It is beyond the scope of this article to explain the details but what I can say is that it is simple, quick and effective. You can learn all

about it, including how to do it, by going to www.emofree.com and downloading the free manual.

- ❖ **Sticky paper or flowchart your thoughts.** For the highly analytical amongst us, there is always the flowchart or some creative version of it. Sticky papers are fun because you can stick them anywhere. If your inclination is to figure it out, this technique can work well, as long as you declare and write down your intention as the header.

There are tools and techniques to move through discomfort with ease. If you know what those tools are and you take the steps to practice them, then your journey will be richer and what once seemed impossible, becomes probable.

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