

Living Passionately: The Partnership between Mind and Body
~Keri Coffman-Thiede, CPCC

We're told, "Don't trust what you want. It's selfish, bad and irresponsible. If you just did what you wanted all the time, you'd become lazy and hedonistic. This certainly won't help you be happy." So, gripped by fear we put our minds to the task of informing us / "figuring out" of the right way to do things. This, after all, should help us take care of our roles and responsibilities in a way that fulfills us. Thus, we create our life...doing what we THINK we SHOULD and wondering to ourselves, where has all the passion in life gone?

Our mind excels in this job, feeding us the "right" lines and actions as we play the role of "Loving Spouse," "Dutiful Parent," "Star Employee," "Best Friend," even attempts at playing the role of "Perfect Person". The more determined we are to play the role perfectly, the more bewildered we get when the script we're using doesn't work to bring us that deep satisfaction we crave. We're playing the role of "loving spouse" but where's the passion? We're saying and doing all the "right things" as a dutiful parent but we're wondering, "Where's the joy when I'm with my kids?" We're receiving kudos and a great paycheck in our role of "Star Employee," but we feel empty and ask "Is this all there is?"

Something's missing!

Look to your sources of information for the answer. We have been finding the scripts, the how to's, the answers to what we "should" do by looking to the world around us. What are other people doing? What does this book say or that expert recommend? Great sources of information indeed, and if we ONLY look there without considering how the answers we find resonate with US, we ARE missing something...ourselves.

WE, ourselves are a source of information and our bodies house this information through our experience – our emotional and physical sensations. Our bodies give us a true read on what matters to us. When we hold up for inspection the information gathered from our search of the outside world, and tune our minds into the physical and emotional sensations this information evokes in us, we clearly experience the distinction between what resonates as true for us and what doesn't.

I invite you do to this exercise: Ask yourself, "What kind of spouse/ parent / employee/ friend / neighbor do I think I should be?" (Just choose one role to explore for now.) Make a list of your answers.

Notice your responses. "Should's" as you might guess, are answers that feel constricting. Possibilities are cut off and there is a threat that something bad will happen if you don't do what you "should". Notice the expectations or judgments behind your answers. Also notice what emotion(s) these answers evoke? How does this feel in your body? Is there a tightening in our shoulders, the knot in your stomach, or shallowness to your breath? Use your mind to gather all the information your body has to offer about these responses.

Now, ask yourself, “What kind of spouse/ parent / employee/ friend / neighbor do I want to be?” Make a list of your answers.

Notice the difference in your responses. Wants and desires feel like, “Yes! This is so me!” Enthusiasm, passion, and satisfaction are inherent in these responses. Honoring what we want and desire, as you might guess, feels expansive. We’re creative and resourceful and open to following our own ideas. You can see your own unique picture of what is possible for yourself and there is enthusiasm about what might happen if you really do what you want. Again, focus your mind on finding what emotion(s) is present. What does it feel like in your body when you allow yourself to consider being and doing what you really want to do?

The more our words and actions are in line with what matters to us the more they resonate with the passion within us. We feel our body’s aliveness, enthusiasm, and sense of being full of possibility and we engage in words and actions that create and sustain passion within our roles and relationships. Words and actions that move us away from what we want, create dissonance. We feel our body’s doubt, anxiety, fear, and scarcity. These actions leave us “playing” roles that feel constricting and we feel stuck.

The key is remembering that our logical minds are for us to use as we direct in gathering us the information we need to make choices most in line with what matters to us. The mind eagerly steps up to the task - after all, supplying information is what it does best. It’s up to us to direct our mind to check in with our bodies to know the degree of resonance or dissonance. Then, being fully informed, we can choose our words and actions consciously aware of what matters most to us. In this way, we can experience the passionate path of living life true to ourselves.