

SPIRIT, MIND & BODY

To Risk or Not to Risk? That is the Question

By: Pamela Bell

A client recently asked that I write a column about "Taking Risks", saying that she could use some encouragement and inspiration in that direction. Taking a risk, or even the proposition of it, is a scary topic for many people and resides somewhere up there in the "least favorite" categories, along with death and taxes. Given the fact that people fear it so greatly, I thought this a good opportunity to paint a different perspective on what risk-taking can do for you and how it can take you to places you never dreamed possible.

First off, let's look at the driving force behind the fear. What is it about taking a risk that people are so afraid of? There is a "change" that is generally required. There is the "unknown" and what it might bring. Will I be "rejected?" or Will I "fail?" are common dilemmas. Do I "have what it takes?" is another question.

The truth surrounding these questions, however, is that we have never known and never will know the exact results our actions will bring until our actions are taken. Look back over your life and the hundreds of risks and thousands of choices you've made. None of them guaranteed an outcome in advance. Some choices brought you

the results you wanted. Some did not. Whatever the results, you learned a lot more about yourself from those choices that didn't go your way than those that did.

I am reading this wonderful and thought provoking book titled, "The Way of Transition" by William Bridges. In it, he speaks of change and most prominently, transition. He mentions how change doesn't always require a transition (you get a new boss but there is no upset or ruff because of it), but a change always proceeds a transition (you get a new boss and your world is turned upside down because of it, forcing you to make some difficult choices). He also speaks of the three stages of transition which are met on either side by an ending and a new beginning. The middle ground, and the area that most of us have the greatest difficulty with, is known as the neutral zone. In this zone we are neither here nor there. We are just coming to terms with the "letting go" process (the ending) but we still have no idea what is next (the new beginning.) We are in limbo and hanging out our human frailties for all the world to see. What I love about this whole process is that the place where we are our most creative and open, where the answer to "What is next?" will begin, takes form in this

most uncomfortable land of nowhereville.

This is an incredible time! You might kick and scream and twist yourself into a pretzel looking for something to hang onto but, no matter how hard you resist, you have to go through this stage to get to the next. There is no short cut. No way to buy or cry yourself out of this one. What comes out of this vulnerable and uncomfortable place is generally a work of art, a creative idea, an awakening that propels you to a higher place. A place that is much more suited to who you are or who you need to become at this stage in your life.

I view taking risks the same way. Yes, there is the "unknown". But remember, we can never know the end result in advance and we're kidding ourselves if we think we can. Ask yourself, "What do I have to lose?" So it doesn't go the way you expect. So what! So you get rejected. So what! Who hasn't been rejected? So you fail. So what! What did you learn from it and how might you do it differently next time? These are all growth promoting opportunities and let's face it, wouldn't things get a little boring if life went our way all of the time? It's unnatural and would offer little perspective from which to appreciate the "wins".

The bigger questions to

ask yourself are this, "Who will I be if I don't take the risk?" and "How will I feel about myself?" If it's something you're really wanting, something that's gnawing at you from the inside out, you don't really have a choice. Choosing not to go forward is saying No to Life. It is saying No to the creative and brilliant person inside of you. It is saying No to what is required to keep you moving forward on your developmental journey.

What does taking a risk really take? It takes courage. And what is courageous about any act of man if one is not afraid? Courage is taking action in the face of fear, not in the absence of it.

"So long as you haven't experienced this: to die and so to grow, you are only a troubled guest on the dark earth."

-----Goethe

Bio: Pamela Bell is a professional Life Coach, Educator and Inspirational Speaker. She is founder of LifeSource Coaching and can be reached at: pamelabell@mindspring.com.

Hospice Seeking Volunteers

Memorial Hospice and Hospice of Petaluma are now interviewing new applicants for their Caregiver and Bereavement Volunteer Training program.

The training focuses on preparing the volunteer to care for patients and their families as well as clients by covering the hospice philosophy which includes all of the family dynamics, communication and listening, understanding loss, cycles of real grief and spirituality. The training begins on Thursday, February 26 at 6 p.m. and the class continues until 9 p.m. through April 22. The training location is at Memorial Hospice located at 821 Mendocino Avenue in Santa Rosa. The cost is \$50 for a materials fee and as a volunteer you may receive Continuing Education Units.

The class size is limited. Interviews for volunteering will be held through the third week of February. For more information call 778-6242 or 568-1094.

COMPLETE FACE & BODY CARE

Sheryl L. Speck

Certified Massage Therapist &
Licensed Esthetician



SPECIALIZING IN:

- Therapeutic Shiatsu/Swedish esalen massage
- European facials

707-763-3038

Located Downtown Petaluma
7 Fourth Street . Suite 58

Twenty years of experience



Gourmet Sandwich Selection • BBQ Specialties • Catering

Call Us Year 'Round For All Your Catering Needs

**WE FEATURE THE BEST WINES
AVAILABLE FOR ANY OCCASION**

**3413 Petaluma Blvd. No., Petaluma, CA 94952
PHONE: 707-763-6959**