

The Poison Of Self-Doubt – It's Time To Get Uncomfortable In The Land Of Mediocrity

BY TANYA TIGER

How many opportunities have I missed? How many amazing people have I let pass by because I was too afraid to connect?

For so many years I hid parts of myself deep inside. No matter how many people told me that I was smart, funny, talented, or beautiful, I couldn't hear them. I wasn't ready to receive the good stuff yet. I was perpetually giving and striving to do better. To be better.

Time and again, opportunity knocked and I hid behind the door, staring through the peephole watching it pass by.

“What if I'm not good enough? What if they laugh at me? What if they look down on me? What if I say something stupid? What if I screw up? I'm not as good as them. I can't do this. I'm a fraud!”

Does this sound familiar? This was the tape that constantly played in my head. No matter how big or small the endeavor, that tape would play and I would psych myself out of making an attempt. Class speech = burst into tears. Job interview = suddenly forget how to talk. Cute guy striking up a conversation = my IQ dropped through the floor and I went mute. I sabotaged my own progress because I just couldn't believe that I had anything worth sharing with the world. Who was I to think I could be somebody worth knowing?

I poisoned the well of my mind with self-doubt at a young age

and made myself comfortable in the land of mediocrity.

I got really good at flying under the radar. "Keep my head down and do a good job. Shine but don't shine too brightly. They might expect more from me and I don't know if I can deliver."

My family and friends would push me to expand my horizons, take risks, and put myself out there. They reassured me that I had what it took to be successful and that I was likeable. I still couldn't see it. Any time I started to step up and out of the hole I had dug, I would be reminded of all the times I had been bullied and told I would never fit in or be somebody.

It seems crazy that, even after decades had passed since Middle and High School, the echoing of my tormentors' voices could still be heard. I was a grown woman. Why did they still hold so much power over me? I began to realize that it was because I let them.

I had somehow convinced myself that I was the weird, dorky misfit they made me out to be.

I believed their lies and owned that identity, even if it was only on the inside. I accepted my place on the sidelines and daydreamed about being an author, an artist, a really awesome and sought after counsellor. I set aside my dreams with a heavy sigh and an even heavier heart.

It took the loss of my daughter to wake me up and shake the last remnants of fear from my psyche. I had already faced the worst. I was ready to find out what I was really made of. I began small, by reading books by "edgy" writers, people who seemed super-woo to many of my peers. I allowed myself to look at what really mattered in my life, to examine my real wants and needs, rather than simply following along with what others wanted for me.

As I became stronger and stronger, believing more and more in myself, I reached out to someone I looked up to. She was someone that I never thought in a million years would even acknowledge my existence. Imagine my surprise when I was invited to one of her retreats. Surrounded by other women whose stories seemed all too familiar I realized how not alone I am. I realized how many other people walk around, pretending to have it all together while they are falling apart inside. I realized how deep the poison of self-doubt runs in society and how many people seek a cure. This experience provided the window of opportunity I needed to spread my wings and fly forward, refusing to stay stuck in the past any longer.

My transformation has not been overnight and, I dare say, it will continue for all the years of my life. I plan to remain ever-growing and ever-changing because I trust in myself to embrace whatever comes. I have learned to forgive the part of me that couldn't speak, that hid from the world for so long. It's what I knew at the time and now I know better.

From the past, I had carried the shy and quiet little girl who never quite felt good enough. Now I've set her free.

When I look back on my journey and how far I have come I always return to the image of a chrysalis. I have been melted down and transformed through all of the pain and the beauty in my life. From someone who didn't believe I had anything to share with the world, to someone who shares openly and joyfully.

I've come to own my weirdness and embrace my creative gifts. I have found the antidote to the poison. And while Self-doubt may still rear its beastly little head on occasion, it no longer clouds my mind or stifles my heart. I no longer feel the need to fit in or be like anyone else. Thankfully, I have laid that burden down. I rock my own unique style and radiate my own brand of passionate mojo. I use my life's experiences

to (hopefully) inspire others...

So, that being said, you are not alone. You can do this. The world needs your light, so dare to let it shine. I'll be waiting, reflecting your light back to you so you can find your way.

For more self-study, [The Urban Howl](#) recommends [The Inner Voice of Love: A Journey Through Anguish to Freedom](#) .

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[How I'm Finding Myself, Even When I Don't Know
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