

What Are You Running From?

I recently had someone tell me they were questioning their love for writing.

When I asked for a reason, they said it was because they didn't write enough. "If I really loved writing" they said, "then I would be more consistent with it."

Well, I guess I don't love reading then. For my entire life, I genuinely believed that it was my #1 pastime. It gives me more pleasure than anything else. But ever since I got married, started running a startup, and got old enough to lose my ability to pull all-nighters, finding time to read is one of the hardest things for me to do. Sometimes, and I'm truly horrified by this thought, entire days get away from me without me picking up a book. So that settles it, folks. I don't really love reading because I would be more consistent if I did.

Here's the assumption we're making when we reason like that: *If you truly love something, the power of your love will compel you to behave in a manner that's consistent with your priorities and principles.*

Is that really true though? Is "love" truly enough to ensure our ability to do the right thing? Is there anyone on this planet who has never ever behaved in a manner that was inconsistent with their claim to love someone or something?

This kind of logic fails to take into account what Steven Pressfield calls "Resistance" with a capital "R":

Have you ever brought home a treadmill and let it gather dust in the attic? Ever resolved on a diet, a course of yoga, a meditation practice? Have you ever felt a call to embark upon a spiritual practice, dedicate yourself to a humanitarian calling, commit your life to the service of others? Have you ever wanted to be a mother, a doctor, an advocate for the weak and helpless; to run for office, crusade for the planet, campaign for world peace or to preserve the environment? Late at night have you experienced a vision of the person you might become, the work you could accomplish, the realized being you were meant to be? Are you a writer who doesn't write, a painter who doesn't paint, an entrepreneur who never starts a venture? Then you

know what Resistance is.

Resistance is the most toxic force on the planet. It is the root of more unhappiness than poverty, disease and erectile dysfunction. To yield to Resistance deforms our spirit. It stunts us and makes us less than we are and were born to be.

Look in your own heart. Unless I'm crazy, right now a still small voice is piping up, telling you as it has ten thousand times, the calling that is yours and yours alone. You know it. No one has to tell you. And unless I'm crazy, you're no closer to taking action on it than you were yesterday or will be tomorrow. You think Resistance isn't real? Resistance will bury you.

Here's the idea in a nutshell. If you're just goofing around and wasting your time on things you know you'll regret, the seas will part for you and let you through to the other side of mediocrity. Take one step in the direction of your evolution, however, and life will start to seem like it's trying to drown you.

C.S. Lewis once observed that you never get to experience how strong the wind is blowing until you try to walk against it. That wind is Resistance. And whenever you "go with the flow" by living as if nothing matters, you're cooperating with Resistance. But once you decide to live purposefully, you're walking against the wind of Resistance and all your weaknesses will be brought to the surface.

Too many people treat the process of "finding what you love" or "following your passion" as if it's some kind of golden ticket that exempts them from the otherwise normal human experience of self-doubt, temptation, stress, risk, and adversity. "If I can just figure out what I love," people think, "then I will have the confidence, clarity, and inspiration I need to do the right thing all the time." No you won't.

When you figure out what you love, your responsibilities will double, your distractions will quadruple, you'll have moments where you forget why you fell in love, you'll have expenses that make you wonder if you can afford what you love, and you'll experience a few insecurities and fears you didn't know you were capable of having. That's not just how life works. That's how love works.

If you want to take the easy way out, go ahead and tell yourself that you don't really love what you know you love. Go ahead and let yourself off the hook while you wait for some

magical thing called “passion” to come along and save you from the uncertainty, fatigue, and discouragement that eventually knocks at everyone else’s door. If you want to defeat the resistance and live the adventure you came here for, then start listening to your conscience and get after the things you know you need to do.

Instead of telling yourself “If I really loved X, I would have found a way to do X”, ask yourself the following:

“If I didn’t really love X, then why am I’m utterly incapable of ignoring X without being continuously haunted by the conviction that this is something I need to do?

Sometimes you know what you love not by what you run towards, but by what you can’t run away from.

What are you running away from? Better yet, what’s the thing that won’t let you run away in peace?