

Welcome to Quiet Courage – September 2005

The online newsletter for navigating life's changes and transitions from Bailey Coaching and Mary Ann Bailey, MC.

Feature Article: Getting Started is Often the Hardest Step

A couple of weeks ago I was at the Seattle Danskin Triathlon cheering on a good friend who, at the age of 61, was participating in her first triathlon. It was a beautiful Seattle summer morning and sight of 5400 women of all ages and athletic abilities lining up in their respective age groups to begin the race was an incredibly inspiring sight.

As I was watching the participants get ready, I noticed a group of women and their supporters who were all wearing bright pink tank tops. On the front of their shirts was the name of their group and on the back of the shirts was a quote that read, "The miracle isn't that I finished. The miracle is that I began."

What a great quote! We live in a society that emphasizes outcomes and endpoints, but as this quote so cleverly states, the tricky part really isn't finishing something, the tricky part is having the courage to start.

How often have you found yourself not doing something because of the fear that you might not be successful in reaching the endpoint? How many times have you put off trying something new because you think you don't have enough information, the right skills or resources to ensure that you will reach your goal? How many things have you not started because you couldn't be a hundred percent certain of how it would end?

We all can find a million reasons for not starting something. But starting is what life is all about. Having the courage to take that first step on a new path is what opens new doors and opportunities for us. When we start something new, we can never be sure where the experience will take us.

Maybe the path will lead to the logical outcome, or maybe the path will lead somewhere we hadn't even thought about – someplace new and even more exciting. But if we hold ourselves back from starting, we will never know what life might have held for us.

Is there something that you've really wanted to do, but have been putting it off because of fear, doubt, or lack of confidence? Do you find yourself perched at the precipice of a new adventure, but can't quite seem to take that first step? Starting something new can be very difficult, but there are some steps you can take to make sure you get out of the starting gate.

1. Before you begin, be very clear on why you want to do this activity. Are you doing it for yourself, or are you doing it to please someone else or because you think you should be doing it. It is much easier to start something that truly holds value, interest, and passion for you.
2. Make sure that you have, or that you are willing to acquire, the skills, knowledge, and resources you will need to successfully navigate this new adventure.
3. List the concerns you have about this adventure; and then from that list develop a plan of action that addresses each issue and how it might be resolved.
4. Create a network of supportive friends and family who are willing to cheer you on, as well as hold you accountable, along your journey. Depending on what you are setting out to accomplish, it might be useful to find someone you could "buddy" up with. It is much harder to back out of a commitment when you have another person counting on you.

5. Publicly announce what you are planning to do and what your goals are. Making other people aware of your intentions will give you extra incentive and motivation to follow through on your plans.

6. Select a specific start date and make sure your support team is aware of this date. Choose a date that will give you enough time to adequately prepare, but not so much time that you begin to over-think and over analyze the situation. When that day arrives, close your eyes, throw caution to the wind, and jump whole-heartedly into your new adventure.

Doing new things requires willingness, courage, and a blind leap of faith.

"Whatever you can do, or believe you
can do, begin it. Boldness has genius,
power and magic in it."

Goethe

Until next time, all the best,
Mary Ann Bailey, MC

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www.baileycoaching.com
maryann@baileycoaching.com