

Staying the Course

By Louise LeBrun

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Author's note: Living a balanced life requires that you include, in your day-to-day routine, not only the things you must do but the things in which you find joy and delight. The following piece was written specifically for "Staying the Course" of a dream to create a successful business. Identify your dream and fill in the blanks, following the same principles to help you 'stay the course' of your intentions and take you to where you want to go. And remember - if you don't believe in yourself, why should anyone else?

It's been almost 10 years now, since I first started my own small business. All those romantic notions of independence, freedom and great wealth have been overtaken by long hours, hard work and the uncertainties brought by never knowing what tomorrow will bring. Sometimes, I long for the "good ole' days" and the pay cheque, paid holidays and child-care leave that went with it!

And yet, truth be told, just like you - I wouldn't go back for all the money in the world! To build something from nothing; create and invent on a daily basis; and to contribute how, when and why I see fit are far greater rewards that I could ever have imagined. The key is to keep moving through and past those undeniable, inevitable moments of self-doubt and fear.

Home-based business operators often spend large chunks of time alone. Although telephone contact may be frequent, sometimes two or three days can go by without seeing another life form that has fewer than four legs. The end result is a sense of disconnection from the world. However, this sense of disconnection is minor compared to the sense of disconnection that I sometimes feel from myself: from my hopes and aspirations; from my plans; and from the very dream that started the whole thing, so long ago.

What I've learned over the years is that holding the dream is one thing - continuing to believe in my ability to breathe life into it is quite another. My greatest challenge has been to continue to believe in myself when others didn't; when the evidence in my bank statements, for all intents and purposes, screamed "Give it up!"; and when even my most ardent fans and supporters looked at me with great concern on their faces. Who would hold the dream?

If any of this rings true for you, perhaps the following thoughts will prove to be as meaningful for

you as they have been for me. I share them with you with the hope that, in your darkest moments - as they ebb and flow like the tides - you will remember to:

* Breathe! How easy it is to forget to breathe. Notice when you are holding your breath; and when your breathing has moved high in your chest. Whatever you are doing in that moment, STOP! Sit back in a chair; make a conscious decision to drop your shoulders, put your feet flat on the floor; let your arms hang loose by your sides, and take three, long, deep breaths. Focus all your attention on the sound of your own breathing moving in and out of your body. As you hear this sound, know that the Life Force is present, moving and vital; and that as you invite it to move freely through you, you will know exactly what to do.

* Pay attention to the impulses in your body. Notice where your attention is drawn; let your attention go to those places in your body where you are aware of sensations: the knot in your stomach; the tightness in your throat; the knit of your brow. Breathe directly into these places and allow yourself to notice whatever sounds or images come to mind. Use your breath to move into the information, expand that area of the body, and open and release that information into the larger system, meaning the whole body. Your body is the instrument that thinks.

* And finally, allow yourself to know the truth. Even if you never utter a word to another soul, or share this truth with anyone in any way, let yourself - deep inside you - know what is true for you. As you embrace and honor this truth, you will begin to notice that the images and the sounds move and change. As they do, become aware of your desire to contribute; to make a difference; to have meaning in your life; to care. And as that vision that caused you to become who you are today begins to reform, allow all of those other images and sounds to melt into it. Keep your body open and relaxed - and breathe.

What it has taken me many years to come to understand is that the very thoughts I feared were the ones that held the greatest value. When I allowed myself to hold those thoughts, and let them move through my body, they became the markers on the road into the future. I leave you with the following thought, to guide you along your path.

"Everyone has talent. What is rare is the courage to follow the talent to the dark place where it leads". (Erica Jong)

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