

ARE YOU EXISTING OR LIVING?

How to Move Past the Blahs

BY CINDY PAVELL, M.S.

Some mornings I wake up wondering, “What the heck am I doing?” Feel lifeless inside. Not sure what my purpose is. Not much joy. Ho hum about my life.

I want a change, but not sure what that means. I want to feel excited about living. I have been in those places before where I could not wait to wake up and get going in my day!

Then, something happens. Circumstances around me may change, or relationships may change.

Regardless, how does this shift me to “existing” instead of “living”? What I have experienced in the past, during these times, is that I am receiving a loud message from myself: time to do some inner work and re-evaluate what puts a spring into my step! I either need to add something to my life, but more likely, I need to let something go.

What I tend to do first is go to “old faithfuls”: eating and spending. (You may already know this, but most overeaters are also over-spenders). I qualify for both. In spite of my efforts to soothe my angst with these past methods, they no longer work. I am just miserable! I find myself working very hard to stuff down my feelings with food and spending, or I keep those feelings at bay by becoming “hyper-focused.”

The over eating and mindless spending have obvious negative effects: weight gain, low energy, big credit card bills, and self-loathing.

However, being hyper-focused brings many positive gains. I will generally put my focus on one of two areas: building my business (until my head is spinning around) or losing weight and exercise. Both bring good feelings, endorphins, accolades, and a sense of accomplishment.

So what’s the problem? I am effectively distracting myself from myself. My feelings will wait for me. I am exhausting myself with my hyper-focused goal *and* keeping these feelings buried deep within. In time, I crash and burn, and I find myself waking up feeling listless and joyless. Solutions?

Pay attention. I need to observe how restless I feel, how much I want to distract. If I find myself doing less and less, wanting to get into a cave, wanting to zone on TV or a book day after day, I am in my “avoidance zone”. Then comes the eating, spending, and crazy level goal setting.

Once I become familiar with my red flags, I can take a breath and ask for help. That help may come in the form of journaling, a therapist, letting a friend know what is really going on with me, taking a leisure walk with my wonderful dog Pepper, or possibly prayer.

A couple of questions I ask myself: What do I really need? What is scaring me? What am I feeling? What can I do *in this moment* to take care of myself? My physical being is crucial. Am I getting enough sleep? Eating healthy food? Exercising moderately? (Not Coo-cooville; I know the difference.) When did I last have fun and really laugh?

Repeatedly, I have learned these “blah” times mean tears and change. There is something I need to see, really see. I need a change that I have been willfully resisting. I need to let go of something or someone that I have been hanging onto. Changes in my inner life, feeling my feelings. See myself differently, more accurately.

Outside changes will result, but they will come because they are right for me, not because I am forcing them or running from myself. I will be a better me! I will be alive! I just need to be willing to be willing to take a leap *for me*. ❖

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