

S-t-r-e-t-c-h your imagination to open new, unexpected possibilities

Have you ever wondered what it'd be like to pack your bags and travel the world for a year? This may be a s-t-r-e-t-c-h but I invite you to take a moment and imagine letting go of all your belongings (while you're traveling), bringing nothing but your clothes and the money you need to travel. Imagine what it'd be like to wake up in the morning and have a completely different schedule (or no schedule at all). What would you look forward to each day and how would this be different than what you look forward to today? What new structures and routines might you put in place as your traveling? What do you notice as you imagine yourself in this new place? Maybe it feels exciting....or maybe it feels scary because it's unknown and new. Maybe it's hard to even go to this dreamy place because you have too many responsibilities right now. This particular example is more extreme but my hunch is at some point in your life you've questioned the routine and structures that you've designed your life around by stretching your imagination into new, uncharted territory. Maybe you've dreamt of starting your own business or moving in with a partner or relocating to a new country for a job. But then you wind up not taking the action to actualize this dream. What happened? What got in the way? If you're like most people you have stories and beliefs that influence the way you see things in your life from which you tend to make most of your decisions from. Where we can tend to get stuck is in going unconscious with our operating beliefs, thus not challenging our imagination or creativity. We can get stuck in the mundane and shut ourselves off from possibilities not even knowing that we're agreeing to it.

Every day we're given the opportunity to see things the same way we've always seen them or we can go another route. We can go into the land of imagination, creativity and playfulness. How we choose to see things is how they appear to us. So, if we chose to see things as serious and hard, they will in fact be just that. As a life coach, working with my clients to help them see things in new ways, I notice that many of them cling on to the ways they've always done things – which, for many results in a feeling of being stuck or stagnant. Now, this isn't to make structure and repetition good or bad, in fact, for many repetition and structure provide guidelines from which within we feel safe and thrive. It provides a sense of having control and it also allows us to count on certain outcomes which, in turn builds our trust. For many people, especially children, structure is essential for them to function at their best. Likewise, repetition of something lends itself to gaining a sense of mastery – this is especially apparent in children as you will see them play with the same toy or game over and over and over and so on. People love the feeling of being masterful at something. It feels good and comfortable and eventually this innate sense of knowing you can do something well becomes reliable -it may even become a way we identify ourselves. Think about it ... you probably don't even think twice about driving places today – in fact, I would go so far as to say most of people feel masterful enough to talk on their phones and sip their coffee while driving from point a to

point b. Routines and structure show up in a variety of ways – for some it may include making coffee in the morning at a certain time before you shower, for others it's stopping at a certain coffee shop that they've made part of their route to work. You get the drift? Think of all the routine habits you've created in your life and how they work for you. Then notice if there are any routine habits that have stopped working for you but you continue to do them anyhow. Maybe it's that you're really trying to save money but you've gotten into a routine of stopping at your local café. Many times change means not only changing one particular action we're taking but also changing the mind-set that accompanies the action.

One of my objectives as a coach is to help people begin thinking and acting from a new place - outside of the 'routine box' they've created for themselves. This challenge can feel a bit daunting for some as they've gotten quite used their routine way of doing and being in their lives. What I've found more often however, is that for many this shift feels new and exhilarating, and is often the push that many people have been waiting for. It's amazing what possibilities can open up from looking at things from a new perspective.

Small changes to your routine – just to shake things up a bit can make a BIG difference in how you view your life. This week *I challenge you to s-t-r-e-t-c-h your imagination see what new possibilities surface for you.*

Here are some suggestions to start with:

1. Shake things up: It's Monday morning. Make believe it's Friday morning just for a few minutes. *What's different about the way you view your day from this place?*
2. Change your route: Walk a new way to work. If you drive – drive a new route or take the bus or some other form of transportation. *Notice the new people you come into contact with.*
3. Practice saying “I don't know”. Not knowing is the opposite of ignorance. Each time you say “I don't know” your curiosity grows – and the universe expands. *Notice where your curiosity takes you.*
4. For one day dress inappropriately or wear something that doesn't match
5. Do your day out of order
6. Put on some fabulous music and take a dance break in the middle of your day
7. Give yourself FULL permission to do everything badly today
8. Take a “Sunday” drive in the middle of the week to someplace new

9. Stay in your pajamas for an entire day
10. Go test drive all the fabulous cars you've always wanted to own – just for the sake of it.
11. Make a collage of all the fabulous things you want in your life
12. Go to the SPCA to play with the animals

"Imagination is more important than knowledge"

~ Albert Einstein

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