

“Overcoming Fears....”

Do you remember your younger years when you pull something interesting out of your pocket and ask your Mom, “Mommy, what is this?” And she would say, “Well, honey with all those legs I’d say that was a spider!!” Or walking up to a complete stranger and saying, “Hi, my name is Suzie! What’s yours, want to play?” or Mommy, watch this....and doing a triple flip off the high dive!!

But now, the thought of a spider or walking up to a complete stranger or even heading up the ladder to a high dive stops us dead in our tracks. Somehow we have collected fears. So as I think about why I’m afraid to ride a horse or of even being near a horse I wonder how did I get this fear. How did I move from confidence (ok, so it wasn’t a triple flip) and curiosity to fear.

Fear in the dictionary is defined as anticipation of misfortune or pain, something dreaded. And the thesaurus shares other words that are similar which include: timidity, diffidence, solicitude, anxiety, worry, care, apprehension, misgiving dread, doubt, suspicion,.....you get the picture. Back to my horse I have all of these as I think of a possible misfortune (that is a long way down) or doubt (that I could even get on one) and apprehension (will I lose control!!).

As we have gotten older and a bit wiser perhaps it isn’t fear that keeps us from doing things but wisdom. we understand the risks, we have responsibilities and we do know our limits and our abilities. We have our own personal experiences (bit by a spider, rejection, fell from a horse) and we have watched others. We have had encouragement to keep on going . Steven Spielberg use to tear up the house creating “movies” when he was young and was constantly encouraged by his mother. Imagine if his mother discouraged his play and said to young Steven, “Would you quit making those messes” or “You must be careful,....”

But what do we do when our fears really keep us from doing something that we want to do? And this fear paralyzes us?? What if you didn’t take the risk to increase your confidence by doing something like climbing a 35 foot pole, or ride a horse or heal a relationship? I once heard someone say that once you get past the fear.....it (whatever it is) can be fun!! Imagine that....

In the book, “Overcoming the fear of riding” (Jordan & DeMichele), the authors provide some ideas to help us. And these ideas can be applied to anything. Understanding nervous energy is the first thing that they discuss. Nervous energy is just a sign that your body is getting ready to do something. The energy itself is neither good nor bad. We decide that for ourselves. So, the first thing we must do is to accept that this energy is helping us to adapt to a challenge. That the energy is there to help us fuel our fire not put it out. Personally I find I have this each time I get up to give a speech and I give hundreds. My dad use to tell me it was butterflies running around, I just needed to get them in order. So, now I have learned how to do that...it does help. This positive self talk helps to move you toward a more positive attitude which typically will move you to improved performance and feelings of affirmation. If you think you can you are probably right and if you think you can’t you are probably right again.

Next you must size up the situation. What are you about to do? Then, assess the risk. What is the worst that can happen, how difficult is this really, how have others done? Then, assess your own ability. Do you know enough , have you trained enough, prepared well enough? Now assess the cost of the activity to the benefits. Is the risk worth it? Are you ready?

So, do I really want to learn about horses? How to groom them, how to ride them, how to understand them? Do I want to run away from a perception of failure or run to possible success? Why do this? I am almost ____years old (you fill in the blank). Why do I need to do this (whatever it might be)

My belief is that we all have dreams. We stay alive and connected to life by setting goals and challenging ourselves. And knowing that if you can do this that it could propel you to do many other things. Eleanor Roosevelt said, “You must do the thing you think you can not do.” What is it that you think you can not do? What is it that you fear? Are your fears real? Do you have to buy into them?

I have an appointment May 9th to meet with Stacey. She is going to introduce me to her horse. It's a start!!
I'll keep you posted on my success!!