

Living Creatively: Permission II

"Make absolutely whatever you want to make. It's nobody's business but your own."

~ Elizabeth Gilbert

In living creative lives even with every good intention, the act of granting permission can be paralyzing. Even with a healthy dose of courage summoned and the magical spell of enchantment you can find yourself engaged with an old continuous soundtrack. This tape may claim any of the following: you are not skilled, prepared, perfect, credentialed, as good as, or even deserving of taking the next creative step. Due to this you will wait, as if there is an official office of creativity that must issue a clearance stamp to proceed. This sadly is exactly what too frequently halts the creative process. As if your own will or desire is not enough you will begin to search outside for confirmation and more important an authority to approve your taking action.

Do you know what is so heartbreaking about this barrier to creative living? Not only are so many prevented from the beautiful experience of bringing forth their idea but the world as a whole misses out on the unique way in which you were destined to deliver that idea.

In discussing the theme of permission in her book *Big Magic*, Elizabeth Gilbert states,

"Never delude yourself into believing that you require someone else's blessing in order to make your own creative work."

That line my friends, needs to be written on your bathroom

mirror and across your computer screen. Give yourself permission and do so without trepidation. We don't create with the expectation of bringing forth a masterpiece, we create for the joy of the making. Whether that making is arranging words into a poem or short story, ingredients into a meal, or color into a painting- we do it for the love of the process.

Gilbert also offers sound advice to those who struggle with originality.

Most things, she says, have already been done- but they have not yet been done by you. Did you hear that? Your personal spin on whatever you create makes it original because no one, trust me, no one sees it and can produce it just like you. Here's a simple illustration of this. In the region of Germany that my husband comes from, potato salad is made from a precise handful of basic ingredients to include broth, vinegar, salt, onions, potatoes. Yet, absolutely dependent on the ratio of each ingredient and the type of potatoes used, the dish will take on it's own unique characteristics. Each Taunte or Oma, makes the recipe her own and serves it up with the love of a maker to the delight of her family who can no doubt can pick her salad out of a lineup of identical looking salads. Just imagine their disappointment should she decide hers was lacking originality and not worthy to share. So take note here, as it is not about originality but rather it is about making your mark by contributing what you can make no matter how big, small, complex or simple.

Perhaps you grew up being told you were not enough or that creativity is only for those who can achieve perfection. While that is tragic for sure, you can choose to live out a different storyline. You are the permission granter. You control the gas pedal and are the force for the brakes behind your own creativity.

Looking for a way to find or get back your groove? Start small. Possibly begin in the kitchen with trying your hand at some new recipes or maybe attempt to capture an image each day of

natural beauty that touches you. Whether you revive an old skill or learn one you've always longed to try is your choice, but the pleasure won't begin until you give yourself permission to act. And please, whatever you choose to do, let yourself be messy and fail miserably at times, it's all part of the process and pleasure.

It really is a lot like meditation practice. As my teacher Susan Piver says,

"We don't do it because we are good, we do it because when you are relaxed amazing things happen. When we choose to live creatively, accepting the invitation that is presented, and grant ourselves permission, something pretty magical happens.

Doesn't that sound lovely? Let that be your personal invitation. Choose to grant yourself permission and begin down your own path of creative living.