

What Is Holding You Back?

Many times we hear the question, “What would we do if nothing could hold us back?” Answers vary from ending poverty, working toward world peace, and ruling the world to name a few. If you think about it, most answers are actions that someone can take within their current reality. What about us? Regardless of our wealth, we can give something to the poor, we can make efforts toward peace in our own neighborhood, and we can start to become involved in associations or causes that make a difference in our city or state. So what is holding us back? The key to this thought is at the end of the question “What would we do *if nothing could hold us back?*”

It seems that we are being held back by the unknown; by fear and/or by what we think is out there that we cannot overcome. However, we were never asked to change the world – only make a difference where we are with what we have. We may not change the world. Who has? However, we can carry out our plans in “our own world.” It may not be in an instant but we can make a difference.

The first key to making a difference *now* is realizing that we do not have to wait until that magical moment where we reach our potential or have it all. If we see “potential” as a distant future point, we will not make a move now. What we need is to access the options and the flexibility to take on unexpected opportunities as they arise. This requires people who are already developing more of their potential as current roles demand. This means we need to expand potential at every chance. As in a Family Voices Conference last year, we learned that there are many things that we can be doing to share “our story.” We must start speaking out and telling others about our children’s disabilities and the need for more financial support, better legislation, and more research. What is holding us back from initiating communication with a public official or mailing letters to our state legislator or senator?

Another key to making a difference *now* is realizing our contribution cannot be measured against or compared to others’ contributions. Thoughts such as “If I have what he has” or “When I am in a position like they are” only hold us back. Our contribution is not measured against others but against the problems we overcome or positive differences we make. As in a Family Voices Conference two years ago, we learned that there are many things that we can be doing to lead. We must make a choice to be a leader in our neighborhood, city and state now. What is holding you back from making

an appointment with a community official or starting a new group that shares the opportunity to love a child with disabilities?

A third key to making a difference *now* and overcoming “what holds us back” is to believe in yourself and reframe from labeling your efforts. “My contribution is not good enough.” “I will look stupid.” “I am not able to do enough.” What is enough? You can do what you can do – here and now. That is enough. If you are honestly giving it your all, all you have at this time and place – then it is enough. So what is “not enough”? Not living up to your current abilities. As in a Family Voices Conference last year, we learned that “our story” is enough.

It matters that you want assist in leading your community. It matters that you want others to know about your child’s disability and capabilities. It matters that you have a dream. It matters that you want more than what everyone else is settling for. It matters that you are upset or unsettled or craving expansion in your life. It matters because those things are signs that you are on the right track, signs that something is out there calling your name, signs that you are ready to discover it. Those thoughts should always be taken seriously. Listen to your inner voice. It is there for a reason. So what do we do? One, examine options and possibilities you might think “could never happen.” Two, replace habitual actions with deliberate choices. Three, use natural strengths to go beyond our current “comfort zones.”

Marianne Williamson said “Love is what we were born with. Fear is what we learned here.” What is holding you back?

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