

PUTTING MY WHOLE SELF IN

When was the last time you put your whole self in? I fondly remember the Hokey Pokey, the giggles that would ensue in gym class while performing this in a circle with 28 or so of my peers. You learned quickly who to stand next to, after a few rounds of putting in your left or right leg. Not everyone is able to balance on one leg and shake the other without toppling into their neighbor.

I wondered if I could do the Hokey Pokey now, and so I gave it a go. OH, not in a group of peers, but quietly behind a closed door on my own. Amazingly I can still balance on one leg and shake the other. Of equal amazement is the smile it brought to my face. For a few brief moments I was transported from the daily grind of what needed to be done and allowed myself to be immersed in pure playful fun of “putting my whole self in!”

As children that is what we did, we got wrapped up in the moment so much so that often we did not want to go in when our parents called us home. We put our whole self into whatever we were doing. We wanted that moment to go on forever. By the same token, we did not want or need to have that moment replay the next day. Even if we thought we did, and tried to recreate it, somehow it was not the same, did not satisfy us like it had during the moment and we soon went onto other more exciting things. Ideally that is what should happen, going from one experience to another putting our whole selves into each experience

It seems to me that somewhere between childhood and adulthood we change up the “game” and all too often it seems like we are only putting half of ourselves, or less into any given moment. For some reason we decided we should be multi-tasking individuals and attempt to conquer many tasks at once. But are we satisfied?

My thoughts then turned to how everything seems to be a regurgitation of what has been, we adopt the “Chicken Dance” as our norm. We have routines, out of necessity, and we follow them without much thought to the process. I believe we become disconnected. At least that is how I felt, disconnected.

My mind view gave me a giggle as I envisioned a circle of adults stuck and staring off in space with an arm or leg in or out, much like a toy robot whose batteries had run down.

I decided at that point to start paying attention to when I pulled part of me out. An amazing thing happened, routines changed, I noticed that when I pulled myself out, it was because I was finished with that task. I felt more relaxed. I did not stress about what needed to be done, I started to fully enjoy whatever task I was performing. The task took less time, it was done properly, and dare I say, better when I was focused. I had more energy. I actually felt empowered! I had time to attend to what really mattered to me, what I found important, and when I chose to put my whole self in.

By putting my whole self in, in each moment, there was no room for regret or disappointment, there was no, should of, would have, or could have happening because I was not thinking of my next move, I was just going with the flow. The Hokey Pokey starts off with putting a hand in, and then taking it out. As you work your way through the song, you flow from one stanza to the next. Soon the song is done and you go onto the next one. It is not the Chicken Dance where you keep doing the same actions over and over going faster and faster each time. Trying to see if you can shave off minutes so you can move onto the next task. Has your life become the chicken dance? Each day the same, hurrying to get

through one task so you can go onto the next that you have been thinking about, while completing the current task.

Take a few days in the upcoming week and observe how your life flows. Is it the Chicken Dance or, the Hokey Pokey? Do you feel satisfied with your life? Being satisfied is about feeling content. Give yourself permission to put your whole self in, no matter what you are doing. Be totally focused on that event. Notice how you feel while you are participating in it. It can be as simple as brushing your teeth in the morning and totally focusing on getting all nooks and crannies whisked with your brush. It can be the drive to work, what might you notice if you are totally focused on your commute. Time spent with friends, or your exercise routine. Time spent cleaning your home or preparing your meals. Put your whole self in to each moment of your day, focus on the task at hand, no thinking about the next task. By putting your whole self into each moment of your day, you start to understand yourself better as a person. It will allow you to see where you are truly just going through the motions and have disconnected. If you are like me, you might discover that you are just doing the task because it is part of your routine, and you don't actually enjoy it all that much or really need to continue doing it.

The chicken dance will still be part of our lives in certain moments. It is unavoidable, unless your time is truly your own to do as you please. We will always have responsibilities that must be taken care of whether we enjoy them or not, but by being present in those times, we grow stronger. It means we are not going on auto pilot; we are attending to matters with our whole selves. This to me is what being "in the now" is all about. The good, the bad, and the ugly are all part of life. We cannot avoid any of them, so we might as well enjoy them, and if not enjoy them, at least be present and focused so as to ease the chaos and walk through it as soon as possible.

Now ... put your right hand in, put your right hand out, put your right hand in and shake it all about... you do the Hokey Pokey and you turn yourself about... and that's what it's all about!

Namaste

Marlene Cobb

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