


Think Tank March 2015

Focus: The Importance of Being Brave



If you type in "The importance of being..." into Amazon's search bar, you'll quickly land a host of results on the following topics: earnest, foolish, wicked, honest, famous, monogamous, observant, married and even the Kennedys. But strangely, there's no mention of bravery.

By definition, being brave is having or showing courage. But there's an added element to bravery that differentiates it from sheer boldness, and that is the element of uncertainty. Even with our bravest endeavors, we often aren't certain of the outcome.

Maybe we're not facing physical danger...but finally saying "no" to a person who takes advantage of you is brave. Letting go of familiar but unrewarding relationships is brave. Being open to new and more fulfilling relationships, especially when you're feeling lonely, is brave. Facing feelings that you've unsuccessfully tried repressing is brave. Asking for help when you need it is brave.

But just because you *ask* for something doesn't always mean you'll get it. And just because *you* take steps to move forward doesn't mean your loved ones will join you.

Without a doubt, true bravery involves risk. We must be prepared to accept the consequences, come what may. However, if you exercise bravery with careful contemplation, respect (for both self and others) and yes, love, the reward will be great. Be brave.

Reconnect: Be Your Partner's #1 Cheerleader

A wise (and divorced) friend once said, "I can always tell when a couple is nearing the end of their relationship. They put each other down every chance they get." There's some truth to that. We don't always realize when we're nearly constantly critical of our partner. Perhaps the barrage of negative comments started out as a "humorous" way of venting frustration about small grievances. But how quickly and easily our words turn a relationship that was once full of praise and flattery into one that sounds like an insult comedy routine! It's just as easy to thank your partner for unloading the dishwasher as it is to complain about his socks on the floor. Even a person who says he doesn't like or need praise benefits from knowing his partner appreciates him (and won't embarrass him at a

dinner party). Positive words tend to reap positive results. Words carry weight. Choose yours wisely.

Bibliotherapy: *The Blessing of a Skinned Knee* by Wendy Mogel, Ph.D.

In our helicopter parenting society, it's easy to forget that our children's inevitable hurt feelings, disappointments and tough lessons can actually be *good* for them and are necessary steps on the path leading to self-reliance, compassion and more mindfulness. Dr. Mogel uses Jewish teachings as well as clinical psychological insights to address both small and larger parenting issues, from meal and bedtime struggles to instilling respect, better listening skills (for parent and child) and ethics. A must-read for parents and anyone who loves children.

Time-Out: "I'm Having a Really Bad Day"

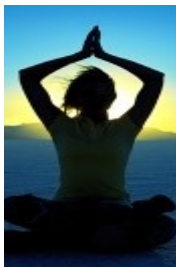
It's not uncommon to hear a young child say these words. They're still learning how to process feelings and events, and sometimes the best way to describe a seemingly small disappointment is to extrapolate it into a "really bad day." (For confirmation, just ask Alexander). But grown-ups are just as prone to an occasional bout of short temperedness, fatigue and generalized "being off your game." Maybe your child isn't even the source of your frustration. And maybe you aren't yelling at your child but oh, how you'd like to. And kids pick up on our "bad days", even when we try to hide them.


It's time for a parental reset. A timeout, if you will. Take a few minutes and find a quiet place. Breathe deeply ten times. Stop feeling guilty that you're cranky and accept that you're human. Then, go find your child and explain in simple terms that you're just having a bad day. Reestablish his sense of safety with you by asking for a hug or sit next to each other on the couch and read or talk. If you're still feeling frustrated, ask your child to join you in a few minutes of silly exercise like, "Who can do the most sit-ups in thirty seconds?" The simple act of blowing off steam together will reconnect you in no time.

For more insight on how these suggestions can relate specifically to your family, please contact **Laura Elpers** to schedule a parent coaching session.

Self Care Strategies: Journaling

Journaling is a tool we often use in therapy as a way to record and process events and feelings between sessions. But not everyone enjoys the process of traditional journaling, particularly those who don't like writing. Good news! Your journal doesn't have to be a written diary. It can be hand-drawn artwork, a mixed media collage including magazine photos and various textiles, or even a collection of photos you've taken that capture a certain mood. Journals can also be a one-sentence statement that reflects the day, abstract






poetry and recorded dreams. Choose the type of journal that works best for you and get started today.

Take Two: *Still Alice*

Based on Lisa Genova's 2007 bestselling novel, *Still Alice* stars 2015 Academy Award winner Julianne Moore as Alice Howland, a Columbia University linguistics professor diagnosed with a rare genetic form of early-onset Alzheimer's disease. The movie documents Alice's increasing struggle to find and remember words, even as she lectures on the topic. It also shows an interesting contrast between her loving husband who has great difficulty staying present with his once brilliant wife and their youngest daughter, who hasn't spent much time with her mother in recent years but once diagnosed, moves back home to care for her. Moore's moving performance honors the victims of this still misunderstood disease and how it affects both patients and their loved ones.

Insights Happenings:



Addiction Recovery Aftercare Group Insights has a mixed-gender group for recovering individuals. The group provides support and skills to help with relapse prevention, thus enhancing the odds of long-term recovery. For more information, call 214.706.0508 or email thinktank@insightstherapy.com

Inner Evolution Group Coaching Inner Evolution Group Coaching is an ongoing women's group designed to enhance a women's fulfillment, harmony, and inner peace. Our mission is to empower women in their emotional and spiritual evolution through education, guidance, and support. The group will be facilitated by Amy Egan and Robin Knuuttila. To read more about this supportive and healing women's group please visit the Insights website. If you are looking for a deeper connection with yourself and other women call 214.356.7646 or email amy@innerevolutioncoaching.com to reserve your spot.

Our Time is Up: Stay tuned for our April issue...