

ADVICE

The Power of Being a Pioneer in the Unknown of Your Life

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“Hard is trying to rebuild yourself, piece by piece, with no instruction book, and no clue as to where all the important bits are supposed to go.” – Nick Hornby

Starting over is strangely liberating. It scares and excites in equal measures. It strips you of your ego. It makes you confront your worst fears and insecurities, forcing you to look them in the eye and work through them. It reminds you that the thing you left behind is not the be-all and end-all of your existence. There is more to you than the composite of your past achievements and experiences.

But still, you feel frozen. You're at level zero, and when you look up, you wonder how you will ever get where you need to be. The goal seems so far away. For a moment, all you can think of is running. You'd rather be back in your sanctuary, doing exactly what you had been doing till now, safely traversing the trajectory you set for your life.

But the ground beneath you has already shifted. That trajectory is fading. Life as you know it has already morphed into the unknown, and you know in your fluttering heart that you need to change, too. You've done the math. There is no turning back.

Sometimes, starting over is just as straightforward as learning to count from zero to 100. You put in the hard work and progress from zero to 10, then 20, then 30. You acquire new skills on the way and notice that counting is a simple pattern of zero to nine repeated over and over.

Soon, your speed increases and, eventually, it becomes instinctive. By the time you get to 100, you no longer have to think through each number. It comes naturally. You can even extrapolate further without any help. And just like that, you are no longer a beginner, and your fear of failure is long gone, vaporized by your confidence in the known.

If only it were that simple.

More often than not, starting over is not at all linear. (Life isn't either, for that matter.) It is a devious, meandering route – a board game of “Snakes and Ladders”. The target is the same, but the path is anything but smooth. On a good day, life sends you skyrocketing from two to 55 in one step. On a bad day, you find yourself bitten by a snake, spiraling down from 97 to 40 in one move. You sprawl there wondering if you're destined to fall short of your goal.

To you, I say, stop right there with your negativity and self-doubt. Go rediscover your spirit of wonder and adventure. Seek out your inner child and channel her sense of resilience, awe, and curiosity.

Do you remember the first time you were handed a keyboard or a paint brush? Did you turn pale with fright because there were so many notes to play and so many rainbows to color before you could call yourself an artist? Or were you excited by the possibilities held within those black and white keys and those little magic paint bottles?

I bet it was the latter. If the snakes in the game did not bite or the ladders did not climb, wouldn't it be a drab and lifeless game? Where's the fun in that?

So, to you, the brand new mom, fiddling with the send button on your resignation email, wondering if you're cut out for a domestic life, or if you're sacrificing your identity at the altar of motherhood...

To you, the SAHM, biting your nails as you dust off your old resume, wondering how you'll ever explain the “gap” in your work history and whether you're even qualified anymore...

To you, the WAHM, who's decided to move your work life from home into a new full-time office setting, wondering whether this feeling of being an imposter will ever leave you...

To all of you, I say it's okay. I know you are afraid. I understand. It's scary. But please, please, GET ON WITH IT. Leave behind your fears and bring your inner child to this game of chance.

Then start over.

Yes, you're at level zero – a rookie again. And yes, it's a humbling feeling. But that is a good thing. You're a newcomer, a pioneer in the unknown. There are no benchmarks to surpass, no preconceived notions of what your kind of success should look like. You may not feel it now, but this is the best place to be because you are free from expectations, yet brimming with life experiences.

Go find your groove. Go strike your balance. Go with pride, go with confidence, go with child-like enthusiasm, one baby step at a time. But please, do go.

The next time you start over, remember this exhilaration, these butterflies in your stomach, and know that you have been here before, and that starting over is not so bad, after all.



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Daisy Suman spent more than a decade as a Techie. Though she still enjoys dabbling in code, she spends most of her free time reading and writing, and persistently ignoring housework. Besides Parent Co., her work has appeared on BabyCenter Blog, BonBonBreak, Mamapedia Voices, BlogHer etc.



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