

:: Dana's Weekly Insight ::

06.09.08 – RSVP



It is arguably because we receive the signal so early on that it is necessary for each of us to establish our net worth as a human being, that many of us have difficulty grasping the notion that we can simply be accepted just because -- we are. We find it harder still to comprehend the possibility that we could honestly be celebrated, and dare I even suggest pursued, because -- we are unlike any other.

When we fail to realize the power of just being ourselves - that we are and so we are great - we run the risk of perpetually striving in vain; we run the risk of living a failure's truth.

It was really one of the most stunning rejections that I have ever had to endure...

The brown chicken stew simmered gently on the stove; that perfect blend of hot, spicy and sweet resulting in a heavenly aroma had rendered me proud. The rice and beans were laced with coconut, the salad was waiting to be tossed, the wine was breathing and the chocolate dessert was homemade. It was 7:00. Dinner was ready. We were excited for our guests to arrive.

He was the pre-school teacher who every kid loved, his wife had her hands full at home taking care of their three year old and a six month old - both girls. They had both taken care of Gussie for us once or twice. We liked them and Gussie liked playing with their girls so we imagined that having them over for dinner would be a cool way to spend a warm Friday night in June, only after waiting for what seemed like forever -

our guests decided not to show up.

It wasn't until after 9:30 and it was well after several failed attempts to reach them by phone that we finally had to accept the fact that we had just been stood up? As I glanced over at my dinner, still wanting to be served, I was not at all amused. In fact I was down right ticked off and I stayed that way all through the night, as I sipped my morning coffee and until they answered the phone just before noon.

"Um, well, something sort of came up", he offered in a limp attempt to atone for their sin. "We didn't call because we didn't think it was such a

big deal."

Imagine.

I struggled to find a way to strike a delicate balance between allowing myself the luxury of being completely offended by what he was admitting, and trying to understand. I succeeded in my attempt, for the most part, because I decided to be honest about just how much we had looked forward to enjoying their company and to sharing a meal. I let him know what and how I had prepared and then I decided to really listen.

What I heard in spite of the words he chose to use was the curious reality that they hadn't necessarily been looking forward to an evening with us because they had somehow concluded that they were not in "our league" and that we were probably just "being kind".

Rather than insisting, in an effort to be convincing, that his assumption could not have been further from the truth, I chose instead to stand for a minute in his shoes where I had to admit - the shoes fit, so I wore them, for a minute more. And, in reluctant surrender, I was quietly compelled to acknowledge to myself that:

While I don't recall ever blowing off an invitation to have dinner, there may have been a time or two when I might have maybe declined to accept an invitation because I felt somehow that I might not measure up.

And you?

Have you ever been guilty of retreating because you weren't feeling so good about yourself; of laying low until you felt you could be certain that you had done enough and won enough to measure up in the real world? Ever felt that you were okay to hang around as long as you were certain that you could sufficiently demonstrate that the pleasure of your company would yield some kind of value or exact some sort of social benefit later on?

Why not consider that -

Just because you are, you are all that you can be! Because you can never try hard enough to be good enough and because any attempt at trying to measure up will only result in living an exhausting and unforgivable lie, why not risk just being yourself?!

I ended my conversation with my absentee guest by extending a sincere gesture of forgiveness, and with a fresh and unexpected compassion for myself. As a result of being on the receiving end of someone else's self uncertainty, I was able to take a good long look at the man in the mirror where I was confronted with a fragile sense of self confidence about what it is that I bring to the dinner table, and where I began to grapple with the possibility of embracing the notion that I could honestly be celebrated, and dare I even suggest pursued,

just because I'm me.

We are!

Therefore -

WE ARE GREAT!

And, when we can emerge from the shadows of the disempowering suggestion that we are not already okay and shatter the myth that we must always be tirelessly establishing that we are worthy and that our company is worthwhile, then and only then will we experience the kind of freedom that will allow us to breath; to deeply and finally -

BREATHE.

Dana

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