

Stop Hoping for a Completion of Anything in Life

Most men make the error of thinking that one day it will be done. They think, "If I can work enough, then one day I could rest." Or, "One day my woman will understand something and then she will stop complaining." Or, "I'm only doing this now so that one day I can do what I really want with my life." The masculine error is to think that eventually things will be different in some fundamental way. They won't. It never ends. As long as life continues, the creative challenge is to tussle, play, and make love with the present moment while giving your unique gift.

It's never going to be over, so stop waiting for the good stuff. As of now, spend a minimum of one hour a day doing whatever you are waiting to do until your finances are more secure, or until the children have grown and left home, or until you have finished your obligations and you feel free to do what you really want to do. Don't wait any longer. Don't believe in the myth of "one day when everything will be different." Do what you love to do, what you are waiting to do, what you've been born to do, now.

Spend at least one hour a day doing whatever you simply love to do—what you deeply feel you need to do, in your heart—in spite of the daily duties that seem to constrain you. However, be forewarned: you may discover that you don't, or can't, do it; that, in fact, your fantasy of your future life is simply a fantasy.

Most postponements are excuses for a lack of creative discipline. Limited money and family obligations have never stopped a man who really wanted to do something, although they provide excuses for a man who is not really up to the creative challenge in the first place. Find out today whether you are willing to do what it takes to give your gift fully. As a first step, spend at least an hour today giving your fullest gift, whatever that is for today, so that when you go to sleep at night you know you couldn't have lived your day with more courage, creativity, and giving.

In addition to the myth that one day your life will be fundamentally different, you may believe, and hope, that one day your woman will be fundamentally different. Don't wait. Assume she's going to be however she is, forever. If your woman's behavior or mood is truly intolerable to you, you should

THE WAY OF THE SUPERIOR MAN

leave her, and don't look back (since you cannot change her). However, if you find her behavior or mood is merely distasteful or a hassle, realize that she will always seem this way: The feminine always seems chaotic and complicated from the perspective of the masculine.

The next time you notice yourself trying to fix your woman so that she will no longer (fill in the blank), relax and give her love by touching her and telling her that you love her when she is this way (whatever you filled in the blank with). Embrace her, or wrestle with her, or scream and yell for the heck of it, but make no effort to bring an end to that which pisses you off. Practice love instead of trying to bring an end to the quality that bothers you. You can't escape the tussle with the feminine. Learn to find humor in the unending emotional drama the feminine seems to enjoy so much. The love that you magnify may realign her behavior, but your effort to fix her and your frustration never will.

The world and your woman will always present you with unforeseen challenges. You are either living fully, giving your gift in the midst of those challenges, even today, or you are waiting for an imaginary future which will never come. Men who have lived significant lives are men who never waited: not for money, security, ease, or women. Feel what you want to give most as a gift, to your woman and to the world, and do what you can to give it today. Every moment waited is a moment wasted, and each wasted moment degrades your clarity of purpose.

Live With an Open Heart Even If It Hurts

Closing down in the midst of pain is a denial of a man's true nature. A superior man is free in feeling and action, even amidst great pain and hurt. If necessary, a man should live with a hurting heart rather than a closed one. He should learn to stay in the wound of pain and act with spontaneous skill and love even from that place.

Imagine failing at a major project, lying to your woman and getting caught, or overhearing her joke about your shortcomings in bed. How do you react with your body, breath, and eyes? Notice if you react to a person or situation that hurts you by withdrawing, hiding, or closing in on yourself. Notice if there are times when you find it difficult to look into someone's eyes, or times when your chest and solar plexus become tense and contracted. These are signs of an unskillful reaction to hurt. Contracted and closed in on yourself, you are unable to act. You are trapped in your own self-protective tension, no longer a free man.

The superior man practices opening during these times of automatic closure. Open the front of your body so your chest and solar plexus are not tense. Sit or stand up straight and full, opening the front of your body, softening your chest and belly, wide and free. Breathe down through your chest and solar plexus, deep into your belly. Look directly into the eyes of whoever you are with, feeling your own pain as well as feeling the other person. Only when the front of your body is relaxed and opened, your breath full and deep, and your gaze unguarded and directly connected with another person's eyes, can your fullest intelligence manifest spontaneously in the situation. To act as a superior man, a samurai of relationship, you must feel the entire situation with your whole body. A closed body is unable to sense subtle cues and signals, and therefore unable to act with mastery in the situation.

Live As If Your Father Were Dead

A man must love his father and yet be free of his father's expectations and criticisms in order to be a free man.

Imagine that your father has died, or remember when he did die. Are there any feelings of relief associated with his death? Now that he is dead, is any part of you happy that you need not live up to his expectations or suffer his criticisms?

How would you have lived your life differently if you had never tried to please your father? If you never tried to show your father that you were worthy? If you never felt burdened by your father's critical eye?

For the next three days, do at least one activity a day that you have avoided or suppressed because of the influence of your father. In this way, practice being free of his subtle expectations, which may now reside within your own self-judgment. Practice being free in this way, once each day for three days, even if you still feel fearful, limited, unworthy, or burdened by your father's expectations.

Know Your Real Edge and Don't Fake it

It is honorable for a man to admit his fears, resistance, and edge of practice. It is simply true that each man has his limit, his capacity for growth, and his destiny. But it is dishonorable for him to lie to himself or others about his real place. He shouldn't pretend he is more enlightened than he is—nor should he stop short of his actual edge. The more a man is playing his real edge, the more valuable he is as good company for other men, the more he can be trusted to be authentic and fully present. Where a man's edge is located is less important than whether he is actually living his edge in truth, rather than being lazy or deluded.

Pick an area of your life, perhaps your intimate relationship, your career, your relationship with your children, or your spiritual practice. For instance, you are currently doing something to earn a living. Where do your fears stop you from making a larger contribution to mankind, from earning a higher income, or from earning money in a more creative and enjoyable way? If you were absolutely fearless, would you be earning a living in exactly the same way as you are now? Your edge is where you stop short, or where you compromise your fullest gift, and, instead, cater to your fears.

Have you lost touch with the fears that are limiting and shaping your income and style of livelihood? If you have deluded yourself and feel that you are not afraid, then you are lying to yourself. All men are afraid, unless they are perfectly free. If you cannot admit this, you are pretending to yourself, and to others. Your friends will feel your fear, even if you do not. Thus, they will lose trust in you, knowing you are deluding yourself, lying to yourself, and are therefore likely to lie to them, consciously or unconsciously.

Or, perhaps you are very aware of your fears: your fear to take risks, your fear of failing, or your fear of succeeding. Perhaps you are comfortable with your life, and you fear the lifestyle change that might accompany a change in career, even though the new career will be closer to what you really want to do with your life. Some men fear the feeling of fear and therefore don't even approach their edge. They choose a job they know they can do well and easily, and don't even approach the fullest giving of their gift. Their lives are relatively secure and comfortable, but dead. They lack the aliveness, the depth, and the inspirational energy that is the sign of a man living at his edge. If you are this kind of man who is