

EXPLORE YOUR ENTHUSIASM

EPISODE 208: HOW TO GET STUFF DONE WHEN YOU DON'T FEEL LIKE IT.

This week I'm going to talk about something I haven't figured out yet. I'm still working on it, and I know we ALL go through it. How do you get stuff done when you really don't feel it and when you know your best work comes from your enthusiasm?

Here's the thing: I know, for sure, after much experimentation that my best work comes when I'm feeling enthusiastic and in the flow. Whether I'm excited about the actual project I'm working on, or I just feel driven to get stuff done - being in a place of WANTING to work is when I'm most effective, fast, and creative. and I feel so blessed that I am in the mood of wanting to work, or being in the flow, maybe 98% of the time when it's "time" to work.

Except, **sometimes I'm not**. And when it's just every once in a while, it's no big deal. But, there are times in life when not-wanting-to-work or total-lack-of-enthusiasm is a chronic problem. After a friend or family member dies, when you get bad news, when you are recovering, hormonal issues, or when you're having a bout of anxiety or depression.

And it's in these times that my "just don't work when I don't feel like it" becomes a real problem. This winter I experimented with just resting (or reading) when I truly had no enthusiasm for work. And I feel like I recovered faster, and got in the place to work quicker than if I had powered through, but I also felt AWFUL for the time I didn't work. I felt like I had really slowed down my biz progress by just checking out for those days. I felt massive guilt and that, of course, made me feel worse.

And recently I've been dealing with another bout of anxiety that often ends up in a kind of not-wanting-to-do-anything, and I started to ask if this not-working is the right way to go? or does it just exacerbate it?

For example, after you lose a loved one, or when you're ill, you DEFINITELY need to do whatever you need to heal. That might mean totally stopping all work or it might mean doing the work that brings you joy.

But what about when the un-enthusiasm just keeps going? What if your work could be a source of joy to make yourself better? Do you just push yourself to do it, because sometimes just showing up will get you in the flow? Or do you keep resting until your enthusiasm returns? Does not-working help you get to that point faster? Or does it stretch it out?

Here's the thing - I honestly don't know. I do know that everyone is going to have a slightly different answer and each situation will probably require something a little different. This is one of those situations where just having a blanket statement (like: only work when you're feeling great) is not going to work.

I experimented with

I was talking about this with Jay yesterday and he made some suggestions that I am going to start experimenting with. I realized today that I wanted to share them with you, so you can experiment with them too. I hope that you ask yourself some questions about what is going to work best for you. And don't try to figure it out when you aren't feeling your best.

1. Don't keep asking if you FEEL like working.

This is the worst thing I can do for my anxiety is to let it constantly question the nature of my reality. It will drive me crazy. Set boundaries around when you will and won't work and stick to them. Show up to work, even if you don't feel it.

2. Have a list of things to do that don't require enthusiasm

For me this is: clearing my inbox of all those "not pressing" emails, making up essential oil samples, signing and sending books, updating my accounting software. For you this might be: printing shipping labels, updating your monthly tracker, production work that is kinda boring (bonus to boring tasks: listen to a podcast, audio book or music that cheers you!)

That way, you can show up to work and know what to do without flailing around much.

3. At the end of the day, even if it's a day you took "off", make a list of what you got done

I am going to answer FB messages every day M-F and that's where I do some of my best customer service and mentoring, so it's important and worthy of celebration. If you post on IG, if you make dinner, whatever, but celebrate it.

This is SUPER important, because one of the things that makes me feel bad about feeling bad is when I feel like I've already rested "too much" or not worked "enough". If one of you told me this, I'd tell you that made no sense, because you need whatever you need, but honestly this is what I say to myself.

4. Notice when you feel guilt, and work at letting it go

Consciously forgive yourself like you'd forgive someone you loved. (It doesn't matter if you NEED forgiveness for resting, but taking a minute to forgive yourself can diffuse that guilt around it).

5. Do stuff that makes you feel good before and during your workday

For me that's listening to Spotify playlists, walking the dogs and looking at flowers, reading books, drinking coffee, making a chocolate smoothie. Your list might be totally different, but make up a list that you can refer to again and again.

6. Quit whenever you want

If you showed up, did anything on your list, did something that felt good and you still don't feel great and/or you can't focus, give yourself total permission to celebrate the fact that you showed up, then give yourself total permission to do something else.

Like I said, these are just suggestions, for us all to experiment with. I still want you to focus on working on important stuff (and especially goal setting!) when you feel your best and resting as much as you need to.

I'd love to hear what works for you - share it with me on Instagram using the hashtag #exploreyourenthusiasm or come share it in our FB Group: Take Care of Yourself with Tara Swiger.

Thanks for listening and have a restful, enthusiastic day.