

"You Made That Up"- Exposing the Myth

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by Jodi Hume

On the inside cover of my journal I wrote four words: "You Made That Up!"

It's a reminder that what sometimes feels like absolute reality is in fact something I have made up—or at least something I am *choosing* to believe.

Think for a moment of something you want, and notice how quickly the obstacles cloud your vision. Every obstacle appears to be a Truth, but many are fabrications that have been accepted without scrutiny. What I call Personal Myths, much like urban legends, are false but alluring because of their power to keep us safely in our comfort zone. And those with names like Expectations, Should or Practicality, feel stronger than Desire, Longing or Want. But what if they aren't true?

Beginner's Luck Debunked

Many believe that success comes from forecasting obstacles, but brilliance is part innocence. Some of my greatest accomplishments were during my early twenties. I'd barely begun to catalogue my library of personal myths, so I wasn't aware of all the obstacles that might get in my way. The result was that I approached the things I wanted fearlessly and without hesitation. I was naïve and innocent and it was magnificent. When you begin to talk yourself out of something you want, try asking "What would I do if I didn't know any better?"



Jodi Hume is a catalyst, facilitator and coach who is passionate about personal empowerment and saying YES to The Life You Want. She works with individuals and groups to cultivate living with balance, fulfillment, passion and purpose.

Shifting Your Perspective

Imagine standing in a field gazing towards a lake. A tall pine tree obstructs your view. You can barely see the edges of the lake for the immensity of the tree. But if you walk several steps in any direction, you have a clear view of the lake, and the tree becomes irrelevant. Personal Myths can paralyze us because from where we stand they seem insurmountable. But from another perspective, they may appear trivial.

Karen, a woman in her late 30s had been searching for her birth mother for nearly 10 years. When they finally spoke on the phone, her elderly mother invited her to visit. But before Karen would agree, she “needed” to lose nearly 50 pounds. Her Myth was that she should be thin before meeting her mother. It seems silly and illogical, but how many class reunions, days at the beach, and cute flirty skirts have been skipped because of embedded rules about appearance?

Mark was a successful airline pilot with a loving family and an enviable lifestyle. He came to me because in spite of it all, he wasn't happy. Eventually, he confessed that he'd always wanted to be a librarian. Mark believed that he knew what was best for his family, but that was only part of his Myth. He also harbored Beliefs about financial obligations, social status and what people would think. “Crystal Balling,” or assuming culpability for all the possible implications of a choice, is guaranteed to bolster Personal Myths. When he finally talked to his wife, she was thrilled!!! As a librarian, Mark now spends more time with his kids, his wife doesn't constantly worry about his safety, and he loves his job.

Linda was a woman in her mid-50s whose health was deteriorating because of stress from threats of downsizing. While the logical approach would have been to look for another job, she would not even send out a resumé. Her Belief was you do NOT look for another job while you are employed. But her loyalty was in fact a Personal Myth. Such myths can be the hardest to identify, because they are disguised as closely held values—such as loyalty, trustworthiness or dependability. Those core values define who we are, but can be misinterpreted to do us harm.

Recognize when your rules choose for you, and consider their cost. How many compromises are you willing to make in the name of propriety, obligation, comfort or safety? While Karen eventually did meet her birth mother, it was only after many wasted years. Mark thought he knew

what was best for his family, and that Belief almost prevented him from creating more harmony in his life.

Acknowledge and Harness

Begin to notice when your Myths cheat you out of rich and rewarding experiences. By acknowledging that you control what you believe, you can begin to distinguish between Truths and Myths. For instance, needing capital to start a business is a Truth. The Myth begins when we imagine what will interfere with raising that capital.

Then harness that power. Use your imagination to make up things that inspire you. Imagine what could be possible if instead of making up things that hold you back, you could make up—and believe—something that supports you and propels you toward what you want.

You get to “make it up”—so make it *good*...