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INTERNATIONAL



## Making Peace with Messiness

This month we're staying with the topic of messiness. It's that important – and that deep.

I want to reiterate that when I talk about making a mess or messiness, I'm *not* talking about wanting to wreak havoc. This isn't about leaving messes for others, throwing trash on the side of the road, or doing sloppy work because we don't care. All of that speaks to disengagement and disconnection from ourselves, the people and the environment around us.

I'm talking about the messes that come from being engaged and being human. And it isn't about *trying* to create a mess as much as being *willing* to, being okay if it happens.

You're encouraged to take a few minutes and re-read last month's content, called Embracing the Mess. You might have a deeper understanding of the ideas after this past month.

(Did you do it?)

Here are a few things I want to add.

### Perfectionism

In this context, **the opposite of embracing messiness isn't cleanliness, it's perfectionism.** Perfection is a static state. You can't be alive and changing and growing and also be in a state of perfection. Perfection is a straight-jacket. The ability to be messy is freedom.

As a kid, did you like to color outside the lines? Did you decorate something with glitter and get it *everywhere*? Did you dig in the dirt, roll in the grass or climb trees? Kids are messy when they're free to be themselves.

### Leadership

**Being at peace with the possibility of making a mess is a component of leadership.** A very common phrase in the leadership program I did was, "**Leaders dare to know.**" Knowing, and saying what you know, means you risk someone disagreeing with you. You risk someone being upset, or disappointed. You risk someone thinking you're silly, foolish or wrong. You risk feeling embarrassed.

You also stand to gain. You might gain collaborators and allies. You might have richer relationships. Your group may come to a solution that's more effective and efficient. You might have more fun, and discover gifts you didn't know you had. You'll almost certainly have deeper connections and more meaningful interactions.

## Pleasure

What brings you pleasure is deeply personal. It's based on what aligns with your soul, senses and system, not anyone else's. Think of loving *your* person, pet or place. No one else has that connection with them. Seeing your dearest friend coming toward you will bring you more real pleasure than seeing an adored celebrity.

**If you're stuck in perfectionism, you don't have the capacity to experiment and discover what you do and don't like.** Instead, you're simply following along with what seems acceptable and "normal". That will rarely ever spark joy or make you feel giddy.

Pleasure itself can be messy because so much of it is body-centered – putting on lotion, eating with your fingers, having sex, dancing, taking a bath, etc. Sensuality often plays a big part in pleasure, and that's *always* body-centered.

## Intuition

It's not unusual for intuition to point you toward the unknown. Because it shows up when you're off course or aren't aware of something you need to know, it typically requires you to change directions. If you can't risk mess, you can't risk following it into mysterious new territories.

You may have denied your intuition at times in order to avoid messy situations. You may have been guided to do something uncomfortable that risked embarrassing you or someone else, and you chose to disregard it. Even things that feel exciting can also be potentially messy, making them out of reach if you can't tolerate mess.

## Love

**Having the capacity to love and be kind to yourself when you make a mess allows you to stay engaged when a mess happens.** Instead of going into a fight-flight-freeze cycle, or down a shame spiral, you can remain present. You can work toward a solution, or simply move on. This helps keep you from adding more S.T.U.F.F.\* to your system, and lets you keep taking your next step.

## Trust

You can't truly be connected if you're not willing to sometimes say the wrong thing. You can't know your desires if you're not willing to be awkward and in the mess. If you can't risk being messy, you can't risk being yourself.

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\* **Stuck Thoughts, Unprocessed Feelings, and Fears**

**Tolerance for messiness requires trust.**

**Trust in yourself** – that you can handle whatever happens and that being messy isn't fatal or a permanent condition.

**Trust in the process** – that everything is working out and working *for* you.

Those are enough to help you make peace with messiness. If you additionally trust that someone or something larger than you is at work, that will support you, too.

**What's bigger?**

If you're having trouble with trust, you can refer back to "your word". Remember it? It's like your word of the year, but is more like the word of your life. It's what's most important to you, and speaks to the heart of who you are and why you're here.

It could be something like:

- love
- peace
- exploration
- creativity
- expression
- naturalness
- forgiveness
- connection
- joy

If you're having trouble making peace with being messy, try focusing on your word. Are you willing to be awkward, to potentially make a mess, in service of **this**? Can your commitment outweigh your fear?

Are you ready to explore your relationship with creating a mess a bit more deeply?

*What was your experience for the past month in regards to messes?*

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*What would change if you truly trusted that you can handle whatever happens and that being messy isn't fatal or a permanent condition?*

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*What would you love for your relationship with mess and being messy to be?*

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*What kind of messes might be great fun to make?*

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*What's a mess you've created in the past? Do you see it differently now? If so, how?*

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***What's the kindest thing you could tell yourself about that experience?***

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*What do you choose to work on (play with) this month in regards to being willing to make a mess?*

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