

Are you experiencing that feeling of being "stuck"?

By Renee Norris, MBACP 25 March 2018

Have you ever felt that you were not living to your full potential? Would you use the word "stuck" when describing how you feel in life? Do you wish you could just "get on with it", like you see others do?

I like to use the analogy of a bird that stays in the cage, even though the door is open. Invisible barriers. While the bird can fly, and other birds do fly, one does not, but longs to.

What gets in the way? What is that invisible barrier? Why does the bird not fly, even though there is no physical barrier?

Outdated messages

We are conditioned from childhood to be cautious, to keep us safe, and perhaps rightly so. "Don't jump on the bed, you will fall off and break your arm" or "Don't talk to stranger". These messages serve us when we are kids, however they serve to limit us when we are older and want to achieve more with our lives.

The child who was told not to jump on the bed, may survive youth intact, however they might not grow up to be risk takers. The child who does not talk to strangers may be safe, however may not feel overly confident in speaking in public.

False messages

Have you ever said "I can't do that" or "I am not good at that"? Again, like outdated messages, false messages can be unhelpful and inhibitive. We can often tell ourselves things that are actually not true. When I hear "I can't" I always think of the phrase "We can put a man on the moon, so why can't...".

How does the bird leave the cage which he is imprisoned by? The following steps could be useful:

- Be clear about what it is you would like to do that you are not currently able to do.
- Look at the message that comes up when you think of doing what you want to do.
- Challenge the message, "is it true"? Sometimes the answer is yes, which means looking for alternative ways to achieve what you would like. If the answer is no, then...

- Begin to test the theory and learn to replace the message with a helpful and more accurate message, such as "I can do it, if I have help", etc.

In most cases "can'ts" are in the mind and are not accurate. We know when something is truly impossible and struggle less than when we know deep down that things are possible.

I would invite anyone who experiences a feeling of being stuck to examine the evidence and challenge the outdated and false message that are holding you back from doing or achieving your desires.