

SPARK 081

(Matrix Code: **SPARK081.00** for StartOver.xyz game.)

DISTINCTION: If you are not doing your art it is because you do not have to.

NOTES: Did you ever have this nagging sensation that if you are not expressing your artistic abilities then your life is not satisfying? Deep inside you are sensing a secret potential to be great – a great singer, writer, painter, film maker, adventurer, designer, actor, leader, teacher, etc. If you are not expressing your greatness then it feels like your days dribble out through your fingers, wasted. It seems you are disappointing yourself, your parents, your teachers, maybe even God. Living as a frustrated artist is almost as difficult as living with one: you never get to have that person as he or she is, nor life with them as it is, because neither they nor their life are quite “it” for them. They are dissatisfied both with themselves and their daily drudgery.

Here is an interesting question to consider. What if the conflict between thinking you have artistic potential and not expressing that potential is only an illusion created by your Box to keep you in a familiar state of frustration? It is easy to explain. You could not be yourself as a child. Feeling deep frustration became normal. To sustain the familiar normal your Box generates ongoing irresolvable frustration for you now.

How do you get to the bottom of this? How can you determine if the source of your desire to do art is authentic or not? Does the Box strategically spin out artistic desire like a spider weaves its web? Or does the desire arise from the core of your being as a true necessity?

There is a test that you can use to find out if your artistic impulse is authentic. The test is whether you are doing your art or not. Artists do art because they have to. They are helplessly driven. They are moved by the art itself. Sure it takes discipline to complete pieces. Sure it takes persistence to endure numerous physical, mental, emotional, social and spiritual discomforts to do the art. But these are just circumstances. The real test is simple. If you are not already doing your art you do not have to.

If your art is horse riding then your feet rarely touch the ground and your saddle grinds holes through your riding pants. If your art is rock climbing your hands are like spring steel and people can only find you stuck to a rock face. If your art is clothing design you dress yourself only in outfits that you produce. If your art is writing then you run pens dry before you lose them. You write even if nobody reads it, even if you never get paid, even if publisher after publisher rejects you. These SPARKs for example have been written on toilet paper rolls when I wake up in the middle of the night, on greasy napkins in noisy smoke-filled restaurants, on trains so bumpy I cannot read my own handwriting, on my bare hand while standing in line at the post office, even now on an old laptop that crashes seven times a day. For me writing is a stressful frustrating, irritating and hopelessly difficult struggle. The only thing worse than writing is not writing.

EXPERIMENTS:

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Use this “deny and assert test” to evaluate your desire to do art. When you do this experiment watch your body. Your body can respond like an indicator to tell you the truth about considerations that are too complex for the mind to wrap itself around. The method is to deny and then to assert. Start with denying. Arrange a few moments of privacy for yourself. Get centered, and then say out loud in full detail, “I will not do _____,” or, “I do not want _____,” all the while noticing if your body relaxes or tenses. If you deny and your body *relaxes* then stopping may be your true choice. If you deny and your body *tenses*, continuing may be your true choice. Then do the reverse test: assert, for example, “I will do _____,” or, “I really want _____.” If you assert and your body *relaxes* then continuing may be your true choice. If you assert and your body *tenses* then stopping may be your true choice. Most often the deny and assert body results confirm each other. The body knows.

SPARK081.01 Deny. Forget the nagging little voice in the back of your mind mumbling day and night that you are supposed to be expressing yourself artistically. It is probably someone else’s voice anyway. Your life is none of their business. Choices like this are totally up to you. To stop the voice just recognize that it does not belong to you. Give it back to its maker. Cut the idea loose and let it drift down the stream of time into the past like a book you decide not to read. There is just as much satisfaction in creating moment-to-moment relationship as there is through creating art forms. Even saying, “Good morning Darling! Did you sleep well last night?” while preparing breakfast for the kids, if done consciously, involves your full creative intelligence. Doing your work, paying your bills, maintaining the house and car, developing your relationships with partner, family and friends, is completely engaging. You can relax totally into your life as it is and forget the whole impetus that has been neurotically driving you to be a millionaire, a movie star, a Dali, a Jimi Hendrix, an Olympic athlete, a top manager or president of your country. Forget equating Alexander The Great, Picasso, Pavarotti, or Einstein. Do not give that fantasy any more of your energy. You do not even have to wonder if you are some undiscovered miracle genius or Tibetan Tulku. Almost all Mozarts reveal themselves in early childhood. If it has not already happened to you it probably will not. You can just let it go completely and redirect all that energy into being yourself living the rich experiences that are provided every day in your life. If the universe needs you to be a Mother Therese it will make one out of you. Meanwhile you can cleanly slice off the thought tumor murmuring, “Perhaps I should start an acting school. Perhaps I should be in a band. Perhaps I will never amount to anything important.” It is neurotic mental chatter, someone else’s voice. Slice it off and let it go forever so you can enjoy your immensely enjoyable present life experiences. Is your body tensing or relaxing?

SPARK081.02 Assert. Get it that your art is not about you. It is about you being used by a force of nature that is greater than you. Take responsibility for your life being subsumed by this force and arrange to get out of the way so it can reveal itself even more through you. Then learn about art. Real art is scary as hell because it comes out of the unknown. Raw imagination will not be tamed. Real art may be ecstatic, but it is not necessarily understandable, fun or easy. Art does not happen in a few finished pieces. Art comes as a flood, a Tsunami. It overwhelms any kind of personal considerations about comfort. A singer I know was given a chance to record his own music CD and he wrote 90 lyrics in one week so his arranger could choose what to record. Art has no concern for reasonableness, practicality, popular opinion or social

acceptability. Van Gogh was an unknown who sold only one painting while alive. Galileo was put under house arrest for his research. Mozart's sister was reportedly even more talented than her brother but none of her works remain. Choose to let your life be consumed by your art form. Is your body tensing or relaxing?