



MENTORING PROGRAM

BY ALL MEANS PAINT

*"If you hear a voice within you saying
'You are not a painter'. Then by all means paint.... And that
voice will be silenced."
Vincent Van Gogh*

I first read this statement in the Fifth Anniversary version of O, the Magazine of Oprah Winfrey. It had a powerful impact on me, and I knew that I would return to it over and over again.

This quote led me down a certain chain of thought. I wanted to understand why it had such a strong impact. What is it that really caught my attention? I concluded that there were three things which fixed my attention on this statement.

1. The encouragement to challenge our inner critic
2. I also thought to myself, there is always a voice whether it is an inner or external voice/s. That will be there saying that you cannot do something. There is also another voice saying you can.
Of course we can all relate to this in terms of the situations where we tell ourselves that we cannot do it. We will never do it, what ever the task or situation maybe.
'You remember the last time you did this.....
'Don't give up the day job'

Consider.... if we paused for a moment we can remember the voices that say you can do it (Give example, ride the bike, paint, and new assignment)

3. The third thing triggered by his statement is the pursuit and engagement in defining our own script. The great writer Stephen Covey refers to this as one of the most necessary habits of highly effective people.

Challenging our inner critic

Particularly when we are faced with the hard facts sometimes of underachievement, or a sense that we are not worthy. A number of things can come to mind.

For a short time let us sit down in front of the Easel as Van Gogh the great artist would have done so many times.

If we take this in 3 steps, what did he have to do to challenge his inner critic?

1. He had to visualize and interpret the image of the real Sunflower.
2. He then had to deal with the internalized image
3. Can he translate the vision into the same image that is perceived by everyone?

The First Draft (Practice)

A few mistakes and the image is rather contorted not what he or anyone would expect a sunflower to look like.

He keeps moving on until he is adding color and texture.

I don't think for a minute we can image the number of boards that we broken in his attempt to create the powerful recreation of the Sunflower.

As stated in his quote it is not the number of mistakes that he makes that is critical to his success. It is the number of times that he visualizes and internalizes the perfect picture of the flower. This is combined with the occasions that friends and other voices may have commented on the imperfections in his creation.

In the pursuit to define his own talent and creativity.... image Van Gogh taking time to objectively stand apart from his painting. Then returning to the Easel with more courage and vigor than the last. Thus silencing the inner critic and writing his own script. By pursuing and engaging in defining his talent he became one of the great painters of many generations.

Now let us apply the same principles to our own painting, writing, assignment, adventure, relationships.

- I. Silence the inner critic

- II. Learn to listen to the voice of encouragement
- III. Re-write our own scripts

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