

The Wasp in the Window: Finding Freedom and Happiness

Not too long ago while in my living room, I spied a wasp clinging to the window. Not liking wasps all that much I went over to see if he was on the outside or the inside of the window. As it was, he was trapped between the glass window and the window screen. He had obviously flown onto the screen while the window was open and when it was closed, it trapped him.

I had no idea how long that wasp had been there. And while the wasp was not something I wanted around my house, I had no desire to see him suffer so I opened the window so he could fly away. I stood there, window open, waiting for the wasp to fly away...but the wasp didn't leave. Instead, he stayed clinging to the screen for dear life. There was a whole wide world open to him right behind him if he just looked in a different direction. Finally, when I had just about lost patience with the wasp he started to crawl up, down, sideways, looking for a way to get out. He was struggling to get free...he wanted to...but he couldn't seem to leave the screen even though right behind him was a world of opportunity.

After watching the wasp a little while longer I was coming to the point where I either had to close the window on the wasp or take drastic action. I took drastic action. I banged on the screen with my hand to scare him. He jumped away from the screen, hesitated a moment, and then figured out he could fly and he was off. A happy ending for both of us.

The image of that wasp's plight has stayed with me because it's such a big reminder of how we often cling to what's comfortable and what's known rather than take those leaps. As with the wasp, there are wonderful things waiting for all of us if we just do something differently. Everything we could possibly want is ours...if we are willing to change our way of thinking, our behavior, or our circumstances. We all have things we want from this life but too often what we want would cause us to have to take a risk, change something, or face a great fear: the fear of the unknown. So we wait...we wait until we have the money, or the timing is right, or the economy gets better, or a hundred other reasons we come up with as to why we can't go after what we want now. But will the time ever be right? I remember years ago wanting to start my own Training & Development Company and, like the wasp, clung to my full-time job until I thought the way was "safe". Safe meant when I had the money, after I had gone to night school long enough, when I felt that I knew enough about the areas I wanted to work in. The truth is that day was never going to come and if I had waited until I had acquired what I felt was enough money and knowledge to start my business, I still wouldn't be in business. I'd still be working full time and miserable.

You can have what you want if you're willing to take a risk. All change requires risk...some big, some small. What keeps us stuck is we want to wait for the reward before we take the risk...thereby eliminating the risk. Unfortunately, the Universe doesn't work that way. You take the risk, and then you are rewarded, not the other way around. The reward may not be exactly like the picture in your head, but it will be a reward. My experience in this life is that the Universe rewards action. In-action just gets you more of the same old stuff you're complaining about in the first place.

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So what's a person to do? Take a risk. If there is something in yourself or your life you aren't happy with then change it. Will it be easy? No. Will there be risk? Yes. Will it be worth it? Absolutely! And before you go off saying to yourself "yes, well, I can't divorce my spouse" or "I can't change jobs in this economy", or whatever else it is you think you can't do, my answer to you is YES! You can. You just have to want to. You just tell yourself you can't because you don't like what comes with the change. If you want to leave your spouse you will have to have a difficult conversation or two, there may be unpleasant emotions, people will be upset, and it may cost money, time and hurt feelings. But you *can* leave your spouse. You don't because you don't want to risk the unpleasantness, you don't want to risk the unknown of what the judge will do about property and possessions, and you don't want to risk what might happen with a custody agreement with the children.

You *can* change jobs in a bad economy if you want to. It doesn't matter what's happening in this economy, people are still hiring. If you want to find a new job you can start to look. Why don't you? Because you're afraid, that's why. You don't want to risk finding another job and not making as much money, or not liking it, or having them not like you...or a hundred other reasons. You *can* find another job, one that you would be happier at...if you really want to.

Of course there is more to it than this. It's not easy, and you need support, but you can start small. Take small risks. Do something different, whether it's having a conversation you don't want to have, or going on the internet and looking at employment websites. Step out of your comfort zone once a day. Start to get comfortable with the unknown. You never know, just like that wasp you might hesitate for a moment and find that it's not as scary as you think and you can, in fact, fly! I should know, I've risked everything on more than one occasion and I certainly didn't go from homeless to where I am today by accident. I did it by taking risks, doing things that scared me, and stepping out of my comfort zone on a regular basis. For me, the ultimate risk is not taking risks, because then I risk not knowing how great my life can be.

Susan Armstrong is a Professional Speaker, award winning Trainer, Author and Coach. She spends her time helping others overcome their barriers to success. Her book "*An Invisible Prison*" is available at all major online booksellers.