Why do we let insecurity run our lives?
by Elizabeth M Young

Insecurity rules our lives when we do not find out what has caused our insecurities and when we do not go through the arduous process of undoing them. Of course, some insecurities are temporary and others are deeply seated in repeated trauma or reinforcement of insecurities during our upbringings. Some insecurities are sourced in individuals who get some form of control or satisfaction in inducing insecurity in others. Some come from finding out that we are suddenly in over our heads as we try new experiences and experience challenges and changes in life.

As a result, like any broad, umbrella like term, the ways in which insecurity affects our lives varies on the lines of the origins, the strength the on-going reinforcement and the resources that we have in dealing with them.

One of the most profound areas of insecurity lies in fear of engaging in the arts. For some reason, a person can be an uninhibited artistic machine as a small child. Then, around puberty, there are folded arms and shaking heads as the inhibitions set in. Later in life, either a brilliant artist or performer breaks through the chains or a chronic complainer/do nothing develops. There are no comprehensive sets of answers as to why some people get over their periods of insecurity to practice the arts and why others do not, but failure to explore the arts is one of the ways in which insecurity makes our life experience less than it can be.

Insecurity about education is the same. Some families actually discourage "getting too big for yourself" and that may trigger deep resistance to going to college or technical school. Experience creates educational insecurities, especially when the first semester of school involves social disaster, some terrible trauma or great failure. Teachers are, after siblings and parents, the biggest sources of educational insecurity.

Teachers are the worst authority figures to be allowed to make an off-the-cuff statement to an impressionable person that they will NEVER (fill in space). It would be wonderful if any child who is told that gets to have a second, third and fourth opinion at the expense of the school district, and perhaps such damaging words would never be thoughtless tossed out.

Whatever the cause, insecurity about education creates limitations to career opportunities, income, life experiences and goals in life. Such consequences bother a person for life, especially when the person desires to get more education and feels pain over inability to get over their insecurities.

Social insecurity can cause us to avoid events and situations that would enhance our lives and would create wonderful memories. There are so many sources of social insecurity that range in seriousness from complete agoraphobia to on-going discomfort over differences between the self and the others who will be present.
Even the most powerful and arrogant CEO in the world will become quite insecure if they find themselves at a local park, surrounded by a family reunion of perfectly friendly and inclusive people of another race or social class. Academics who have never taught below the Master’s Degree level can find themselves completely in over their heads in a classroom full of 7 or 8 year olds.

The good news about insecurities that limit our lives comes when we realize that we have conflict and problems with the limitations. If we are fairly healthy, we can choose to resolve the matter by overcoming our insecurities, usually with the help of some form of advice, classes or counselling. Otherwise, we can choose to resolve the matter by accepting that there are some things that we just do not like to do, and that we are no longer acting because of insecurity, but because of resolve.

In summary, we generally do not deal with our life-limiting insecurities because they are too profound and deeply seated and we simply do not get help. Or, we resolve to live with the limits, having resolved that we do not like the endeavour or exposure and are happy anyway. Or, we convince ourselves that it is too arduous and too late in life to conquer our insecurities.

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