

:: Dana's Weekly Insight :: 04.21.08 – New Rules



It happened at Disneyland.

In a single moment, I realized that I had bitten off way more than I could chew and I discovered an ironic truth in the process:

Sometimes you have to let go in order to hang on and make it through.

As we approached Space Mountain, I took a long deep breath, fully expecting that the extra air would magically build my self confidence. It did.

Gussie was seven years old when we decided to fulfill our parental obligation by including a day at Euro Disney as part of our visit to Paris. Most of her friends had already participated in this rite of passage and so we conceded, realizing that we had put it off for as long as we should.

As I looked upward in an attempt to fully assess the risk involved, I had to take another long deep breath to dismiss the accusation that "roller coasters are not at all my thing" and to ignore the harassing desire to be sitting in a quaint café, eating a croissant.

Having successfully convinced myself that we were about to have a good time, I strapped myself in next to Gussie. Auguste rode in the car just behind. Gussie was revved up and excited. I grabbed her and dutifully held her tight, nervous AND now determined to conquer Space Mountain.

It was smooth sailing at first, which tempted me to feel a little bit silly for ever having been afraid in the first place when all of a sudden my world was literally turned upside down! When it turned right side up again, a voice inside my chest screamed "Uncle!" but before I could even finish hearing it, we were upside down again. "What day of the week is this" I thought. I couldn't even remember my name. That's when Gussie slipped from my grip and as I glimpsed her little face out of the corner of my eye I remember thinking, "Every man for himself!"

Wow. It was now that kind of game.

What do you do when you find yourself in the middle of something that you courageously convinced yourself you could handle, only to discover that you have no idea how to get yourself out of this one alive? What do

you say to yourself? How do you cope?

Hanging there upside down I felt helpless and completely out of control. I wanted to be there for Gussie, but she was now on her own. I hoped that Auguste would survive but that was his problem, not mine.

"When is this ride going to end?!"

I have always counted on the fact that I could find an answer to any problem. I have always relied on my ability to hustle up a way to get from "A" to "B". But here, on Space Mountain, there was no answer I could find and no hustle that would save the day. There wasn't a lesson I had learned that I could draw from or a friend that I could call to talk me through.

Hanging upside down on Space Mountain all I had were regrets. All I wanted was to get off. But all I could do was be still. All I could do was "let go" and reassure myself that "this too shall pass". This time I had no choice but to surrender in exchange for the possibility of expanding my capacity to -

Trust.

And you?

When life offers you the opportunity to escape the comfort of your safety zone, will you dare? When it gets tough and you get scared, will you let go and trust that everyone and everything will be O.K.?

We got off of Space Mountain in one piece and I'm sure that one day I will take that ride again because I believe that life should be thrilling. I believe that as long as I am alive, I might as well live -- crystal clear that if I dare, there will be days when my world will be turned upside down and I'll hear that desperate voice inside my chest cry "Uncle" again.

Is life worth living if you don't Risk? Is it possible to Risk and not trust?

Dana

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