

:: Dana's Weekly Insight ::
05.05.08 – Yes I Can't



I like to know ahead of time if a story has a happy ending so sometimes I cheat and fast forward to the end of the movie or I turn first, to the last page in the book. Unfortunately it doesn't work that way in real life. Try as we might, it's impossible to know ahead of time how things will turn out in the end and we can't anticipate with any accuracy the things we might encounter along the way.

Between the first scene and that last line, between "*Once upon a time*" and "*They lived happily ever after*" is when all hell usually breaks loose -- just like in real life. And, just like in real life, the middle is the mystery; the place where the adventure plays out. The beginning is when we can choose to opt in. In the end is where we look back triumphant. But, the agony of not knowing how or whether every little thing will be alright -

happens in between.

My eager hand shoots skyward with authority when she surveys the room for a volunteer. I am feeling lucky as I imagine that I might actually hear her say my name this time. I concentrate hard in an effort to increase my chances - hoping and quite frankly, fully expecting, so when she calls my name, I'm not at all surprised.

I stand up victoriously and head to the back of the class room. Every one of those other fifth graders watches me with envy. I dutifully accept my prize -- two fat and furry guinea pigs - as I proudly agree to assume my responsibilities -- to take those guinea pigs home for the weekend with the pledge of getting them back to school safe and sound on Monday morning. In this moment, I feel like there's nothing I can't do.

But I will soon discover that winning the right to take care of a couple of guinea pigs for the weekend was not at all what I thought it was cracked up to be. I imagined in the beginning that I would be the hero at home, worshipped by my brothers and sisters for my fearless abandon as I handled those pigs like a pro, admired and appreciated by my classmates upon my Monday morning return.

What I could not anticipate however, was that home alone after school, beyond the borders of my classroom, without my teacher and those kids looking on, those pigs would scare me half to death, escape from my grip, assume the run of the house, force me to seek refuge in the

bathroom, reduce me to a screaming cry baby who now needed to be rescued by Brenda Roley's mom who could hear my drama playing out from next door.

Caught somewhere between, "*I can conquer the world*" and "*What in the world was I thinking*", the desire to somehow rewind the clock, erase the tape and lobby somebody, anybody for a do-over was overwhelming because -

All hell had just broken loose!

Imagine.

Somehow those guinea pigs seemed a lot less scary at school. With all the kids standing around the cage fighting for a turn to hold them, I was confident. When the teacher called my name I could imagine, with certainty, returning to school on Monday proud that I had done a good job. Only, trapped in the bathroom, I couldn't figure out how the heck I would ever get to the end of what was supposed to have been a good time.

And you?

Have you ever started out excited and confident about doing something, heading toward a happy ending because that is the way we are taught it's s'posed to turn out, only to find yourself caught in the middle of it? Feeling in the beginning like there's nothing you can't do, it's easy to imagine yourself the hero in the end. Trapped now and on your own, might you secretly be hoping to be rescued by anyone who might somehow notice that you need a little help? Forced to question your initial resolve, will you choose to stay in 'til the end?

Mrs. Roley helped me round up those guinea pigs and she stayed with me until my mother got home, and although I never fully got over my fear of holding small domesticated little rodents, I did manage to rise to the occasion and honor my commitment and I was, in the end, applauded on Monday at school.

Finding yourself in the middle of what only used to seem like a good idea and one that you hope can still turn out okay, is a pivotal place to be. It's where we question why we ever said "yes" in the first place and it's often where we grow.

In the end the opportunity to look back, triumphant will emerge and the chance to acknowledge with pride that we survived, that we did what had to be done, will establish deep within us the desire to -

say "yes" all over again.

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