

Pretending is ignorance playing dress up.

Often we pretend that everything is okay, even when it isn't. How often do you ask someone how they are doing, and hear anything except a variation of "I'm fine thanks, how are you?" We don't just pretend that everything is fine, but we also expect it from others. When we were children, we would put on a pretty dress and pretend to be a princess. As adults, we hide behind a mask of "everything is fine." We become willfully ignorant. I sometimes find myself overly optimistic, perhaps even to the point of pretending. I realized that I want a life based on truth, reality, and the fact that I can change my own circumstances because pretending won't get me there.

All week we've been discussing our mindsets, and how to shift from a fixed to a growth perspective. Our minds gather 11 million bits of information every second. Imagine a huge sieve, trying to separate the critical from the trivial. Because we are created for survival, our amygdala (the fear center of our brain) works hard to assess potential risks and threats.

In other words, it actively searches for FEAR!

Think about the big rocks in our lives- things that have happened, traumatic experiences, etc. If we let the big rocks take up too much space, we don't leave much space for anything else. It is so important to extrapolate the lessons and techniques that we have learned, and then move on. Studies say that negative thoughts hit us with a ratio of 9:1 - that means 9 negative thoughts to 1 positive one! We need to purposefully set up a system to beat this negativity.

How do we do this?

- Be aware of your thoughts. When you monitor and discard them, it is very much like fishing. There is a big sign at our lake that tells us which fish can be caught and which fish need to be released. Similarly, we should vet our thoughts for the ones that need to be discarded, and the ones that should be allowed to stay. Set up your environment for success - it beats willpower every time.
- Have a gratitude practice and start each day by writing down three things that you are grateful for.
- Bring the calm into your life. Be intentional, practice meditation, and find your center. There are body chemicals involved- serotonin and dopamine. We can bring the calm at any time, and meditation will make all the difference.

- Practice your breathwork. Inhale through your nose for a count of four, hold for four, let it out with a whoosh through your mouth for eight, and then repeat four times.
- Lean on your community. We are not meant to do this life alone - don't isolate yourself. We have a wonderful, supportive community in our Hot Melt Sprint Group - find friends and be a friend. We are all in this together!

