

ENCOURAGEMENT FOR *Real Life*

109. How to Succeed at Something Difficult

You are listening to episode 109 of the Encouragement for Real Life Podcast titled, How to Succeed at Something Difficult. Welcome to the podcast today! I'm so glad you are joining me in this episode as we discuss the subject of doing something difficult. When was the last time you stepped out of what's comfortable to do something maybe you had never done before or to do something you've always wanted to do? Is there something on your heart or something deep down you secretly want to try, but you think it may be too difficult or that you don't have what it takes to do it? Well today's episode, I believe, will positively challenge us and maybe even motivate us all to step out and do that difficult thing. So hang with me here for this next short while and together we'll find help and encouragement for our real lives today. Let's get to it.

A few weeks ago my adult daughter, Alissa, nonchalantly said to me, "I'm going to run a 5k Friday night."

I wasn't aware she had returned to running.

What? You're running a 5k? Why? I know, those weren't the most motivating or moving words a mom could say to her daughter at the time. But I was honestly curious. She had hidden the fact that she had been rising at 5 a.m. every day to walk, jog, and run outdoors through the summer. Finding that out, I was so proud of her for doing that, because I know the kind of effort that takes with two little ones under the age of 3, plus working full time and running a successful side business. That's a lot. But I was more proud of her for making her health a priority. Because I believe establishing an exercise routine in our younger years of life will benefit us in the later years.

She went on to say she had listened to a podcast recently about giving herself permission to "do hard things." The woman on the podcast encouraged the listeners to step out, to be brave, and do what's difficult. Her words impacted my daughter, so much so, she committed to running in a 5k race! I mean come on! The second one of her 29 years of life. I was there for the first one, and you bet I was going to be there for the second.

She was inspired, committed, and a little nervous.

Her longest run happened one morning the week of the race, clocking in at two miles. She said she felt good. She was ready. Nervous, but ready.

This race was taking place in her small town during the Friday night of their annual summer celebration weekend. The fun thing for us was that the route of the race included going past her family's home. So we could be her cheering section mid-route! Her family of three boys (her husband and two sons), my husband and I dropped her off at the starting line and headed back to their front lawn to take our places. Her husband, Morgan, and sister-in-law made a big cardboard sign. Our two-year-old grandson was giddy with excitement. We were ready.

Runners began appearing around the corner, and one-by-one they ran by. Some faster than others. Pretty soon, we saw Alissa. As she turned the corner to jog past us, we all cheered and waved and screamed with excitement. Her two-year-old jumped up and down and yelled with excitement for his mommy. She videoed the moment and so did we. The motivated and encouraged look on her face was priceless! My daughter was doing something difficult. She was proving to herself she could do hard things. And she trusted God to help her finish. It was a beautiful moment. I think for us all.

Here's the secret:

To succeed at something difficult is simply just to do it.

Alissa didn't finish first. She didn't finish in the top ten. Those weren't her goals. Her goal was to simply do it. To do that something difficult. To stretch herself. And to prove to herself she could do it again. At 29 years old. And also to maybe inspire someone else to do something difficult too. She certainly inspired me... enough to make it the subject of this podcast episode.

She did something difficult. And I saw how it impacted her after. That was three weeks ago, and I still see the hope, the tenacity, the motivation in her eyes to be brave and not be afraid of things that are difficult.

Because aren't most of us afraid of doing what's difficult?

Don't we want to take the easy route?

Don't we want to shy away from the hard things in life?

And don't we do everything in our power to avoid what's uncomfortable?

Or am I the only one?

My daughter took to social media after and shared she felt amazing. She was tired and sore but said she could have gone longer if needed. She told us she felt like she could do anything, and she was so proud of herself! Yes, she was so glad she did it. And she said, "And I didn't walk any of it. I ran the whole thing!"

When was the last time we experienced this kind of feeling about something we tried or accomplished? Friend, like my daughter, we can do difficult or hard or uncomfortable things. In fact, doing them forces us to grow. Each time we step out and do something that's beyond what we think we can do, we change. We mature, expand, evolve. And our comfort zone expands.

I can speak to this in my own life. Each time my husband and I complete the week-long bicycle ride across Iowa in July, I come back feeling like I can tackle almost anything (with God's help)! Something happens inside of me when I challenge myself like that. I see the world through fresh eyes, and the difficult things I once shied away from don't seem so large and looming anymore. And as I say this, I'm realizing now after this ride each year is when I become the most creative and seem to get the most accomplished in my writing. That's interesting, huh?

Could there be more to this than we realize? Something in our brains or bodies that changes when we challenge ourselves? To then, afterwards, carry on that same kind of drive and determination we tapped

into to do that something difficult? I don't know, but it's something I've not thought about or realized until just now. I guess I need to do some research on this. I'll get back to you.

So, friend, what's your something difficult?

What, deep down, are you wanting to do but are scared to do it?

What is something new you'd like to try, but it appears too difficult?

Or what is your comfort zone keeping you from doing?

You know what it is, don't you? You know what your something difficult is. I invite you to not gloss over this, but to truly spend some time thinking and pondering. Not to the point that you talk yourself out of it, but that you talk yourself into it. What's the worst thing that can happen by giving it a try?

I'll share what mine has been for so long. It was to write a book. It seemed like a mountain of a goal. Too big and too daunting for me. Deep down I truly wanted to do it, but I was scared and nervous and all those things. But I felt the tug that didn't let go. It kept pulling at me and pulling at me, until one day I said, "Okay, I'm going to write this book."

So, I did. As I say this, I'm in the final, final edit of it this week, and I submit it to the design people on Friday. And let me tell you, I couldn't be more thrilled. It releases on October 17! I'll share more details with you soon.

It wasn't a piece of cake, and some days I truly wanted to give in. It took a lot of time and focus, and I had to say no to doing other good things so I could write and edit and finish it. But friend, it feels good to know I did something I knew God wanted me to do. He was that tug I felt. And frankly, I was tired of saying I was going to write a book and not following through.

Is there something you're saying that you're tired of saying it? And maybe right now God is prompting you to follow through?

Remember, to succeed at something difficult is to just do it.

You can do whatever your something difficult is. Yes, it will take effort. It will challenge you. But it will bless you and grow you beyond what you cannot expect now. God will use it in your life for much good and for His glory. And you'll be so glad you did it.

Just like my daughter is. I'm guessing she'll run another 5k again soon. I'm thinking she's much less afraid of trying something else new as well. Stepping out and trying new things opens the door to new possibilities and opportunities we may have missed otherwise.

I say go for it, friend. I can't wait to see what you give yourself permission to do. May these Bible verses encourage you:

Trust God from the bottom of your heart; don't try to figure out everything on your own. Listen for God's voice in everything you do, everywhere you go; he's the one who will keep you on track. Proverbs 3:5-6
MSG

The path we walk is charted by faith, not by what we see with our eyes. 2 Corinthians 5:7 VOICE

Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand. Isaiah 41:10 ESV

I will continue to tell my girl how proud of her I am. She stepped out in faith and left fear in the dust. She succeeded in doing something difficult just by doing it. And she inspired others to step out and do difficult things too. Because that's what happens. When others see you stepping out, they will believe that they can do their something difficult too. It's a ripple effect of sorts.

What we do (or don't do) makes a difference.

We are taking this conversation over to our private Encouragement for Real Life Community on Facebook. Why don't you come on over and join us? It's a fun, uplifting space, full of hope and encouragement. The link to this group is in the show notes.

Also, if you found encouragement or inspiration in this episode, would you please consider leaving a rating or review from wherever you're listening today? It'll take just a minute or two, but it will help others find this encouragement too. Subscribe to the podcast so you never miss a new episode.

In closing, I pray we each give ourselves permission to step out and do that thing that makes us uncomfortable, that feels difficult or scary, that makes us a little nervous when we think about it. I pray God guides us in it, if it's His will, and may it give others hope and encouragement as well. You can do it, friend. I'm cheering you on! God bless you.

Links in this episode:

[Proverbs 3:5-6](#) MSG

[2 Corinthians 5:7](#) VOICE

[Isaiah 41:10](#) ESV

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