



WHY CHANGE IS SO HARD

We humans are creatures of habit. We hold onto relationships and conditions as tightly as we can, even if they hurt us. A move towards the unknown is only made with reluctance. A year lies before us like unknown territory. Magnificent! Here is room to discover new beauties, enough time to leave restraints behind and free ourselves from past burdens to shake off all pressures. To let go promises relief, but is undoubtedly hard. In the end, we often find good reasons to cling to a bad relationship, a stressful job, or a bad habit. Sometimes we realize that a fresh start would do us good. However, in the final moments between the end of the old and the beginning of the new, oppressive feelings find their way into our thoughts and we put on the brakes. Many of our lovely plans and good resolutions remain unfulfilled, simply because we can't let go of the familiar. But why? Why can't the desire to change and the chance for personal growth simply be enough? What goes on inside of us when we're sitting on the fence - stay, or go? Take a risk or hold tight to the familiar?

"Clinginess is in our nature"

The act of letting go is made up of incalculable components. Security is a biologically-driven need, which is why insecurity tends to cause trepidation and fear in most people. In such situations, children will search for protection and physical or eye contact with their parents or others they trust. Although the reaction in adults may not be so obvious, the basics remain the same. "Whenever fear appears in life, it activates our bond system", according to Munich psychiatrist and bond researcher Karl Heinz Brisch. This means that, when we find ourselves on the brink of change, we have to feel a real connection to the thing or goal we're moving toward.

Alternatives to complete separation

In some cases, it may not be necessary to make a huge change, but rather slowly let go of little things: change your perception, lower expectations (for your partner, perhaps, who is 'supposed to do everything'), and reevaluate certain aspects in life that are maybe too high on the priority list. The following questions can help in the process of letting go:

What is really important to me? What goals am I chasing? If I can't get motivated, is it because I'm trying to motivate myself in the wrong direction? By observing our goals from this perspective, we are also able to discover how to let go of them. "The bond to a vision lends life security, meaning, and structure", says Veronika Brandstatter-Morawietz, professor of motivation psychology at the University of Zurich. The closer we associate this vision with our concept of self, the more it defines who we are and the harder it is to let go. We have to find realistic alternatives to the all-encompassing goals of career, a happy relationship, or the desire to be helpful or beautiful. By redefining and reprioritizing our goals, we can avoid the larger, more painful separations. We must ask ourselves: Is my life really showing no signs of progress? How important is a company car to my happiness, really? Am I not just as satisfied, if I can work in a way that best suits me?



Overwhelming goals

Some of the goals that we chase are not even our own – we often have the examples and standards set by our mothers, fathers, and teachers to thank. In these situations, we often work ourselves sick, put ourselves under enormous pressure, and do things to make others happy but cost us our last nerve. With such overwhelming goals that don't match up with our real desires and passions, we find ourselves in a permanent state of conflict. How can we characterize a life situation that we really should let go of? Veronika Brandstatter-Morawietz recommends asking yourself these questions: Do I feel like I'm running in circles? When I think about this particular thing, is my mood relaxed or perpetually strained?

Why do I go on?

"I should disregard my instincts, when the main reason why I hold on is because I'm afraid of the costs and negative consequences of letting go", says the psychologist. "It is counterproductive to hold on to a marriage simply to maintain a living standard, or to continue a course of study simply to appease your parents." It is productive, however, when we come to the hard decision to stay with a partner and to fight for the relationship because the positives outweigh the negatives. No matter how well we prepare ourselves, separation and new beginnings go hand-in-hand with anxiety. Or, as the American motivation psychologist says: letting go of goals and the separation from something important is the equivalent of a psychological earthquake. The hidden treasure that this earthquake can unearth can first be seen after the dust has settled.

CONTACT

Cross Cultural Fitness
Margret Paulmichl
Pettenkoferstrasse 3
10247 Berlin
Mobile 0176 35495728
contact@crossculturalfitness.com
www.crossculturalfitness.com