

# Keeping on Keeping on

Developing your exercise mindset  
by Tamara Androsoff, Integral Solutions

## Stick with it

The hardest part of an exercise programme, or life for that matter, is sticking with something. Ah, well, we get told it's because we don't have enough willpower, we don't want it bad enough, we need to set better goals, we need to be passionate about it ... blah blah blah blah. Never mind the stuff we make up inside which tends to be like toxic waste and has us thinking we are truly the worst person on the planet and believe me, there's a lot of competition for that spot!

*"The hardest part of an exercise programme, or life for that matter, is sticking with something."*

The thing is, most of us did not get the crucial information necessary to understand our complexity and understand how to align ourselves with our goals/intentions. So we run around thinking that everybody has it together but us and we are just the biggest loser's that ever walked the face of the earth....WRONG! Phew eh?

*"So we run around thinking that everybody has it together but us..."*

## Starts with "the action plan"

Whenever we make a plan to do something we initially engage our intellect and cognitive processes. In other words, it's an idea. Ideas are free and easy and ever so accommodating. We can tinker with them, make them bigger, smaller, fantasize about how wonderful it's going to be whenever I ..... (you fill in the blank). Most of us are brilliant with this phase of a plan/goal.

*"Most of us are brilliant with this phase of a plan/goal. "*

## Next comes "the actual experience"

When we begin to execute the idea by making an exercise/diet plan and actually begin doing the idea we meet the lived experience of that idea. In other words, the idea meets life and creates a lived experience. This is usually when we go down in a screaming heap. Unconsciously we had some very fixed idea's about how this was going to go, and usually it meant we were going to feel wonderful, weight would drop off like leaves in autumn and going to the gym would be effortless. At this point we usually feel many uncomfortable feelings that we can pile into one word called badness. We feel bad, we think we are bad, life sucks may as well eat LOT's of Tim Tams. In order to avoid the bad feelings we stop going to the gym because that place has become associated with disappointment/shame. We stop the diet because it faces us into feelings of deprivation, loss and the disappointment that our lives have yet to be utterly transformed.

*"This is usually when we go down in a screaming heap."*

## Then come the feelings

The thing is, we can avoid these things till the cows come home and it will not save us from these feelings - they will just show up at work, in a relationship, somewhere else in life. Women, in particular, try to resolve these feelings through having a slimmer body. If I am thinner/more beautiful then everything will be wonderful. Yep, well, great idea but life does not stop and lie down like a good dog if you have a slimmer body or look like Elle McPherson! So often we are looking for a vaccination for life, rather than engaging with it, dancing with it, good, bad or ugly.

*"...great idea but life does not stop and lie down like a good dog if you have a slimmer body or look like Elle McPherson! "*

The antidote is a willingness to start again (*and again and again!*)  
The antidote to avoidance is willingness. Willingness to go through the process, learn, fall down, start again, and again and again. Being aware that you may feel bad right now and choosing to continue to move toward your desire instead of galvanizing avoidance and heading for the Tim Tams is a very powerful act. Over time what happens is that the bad feelings no longer control you and send you into avoidance tactics. You realize that you can feel bad and still get to the gym, feel bad and still make good healthy food choices, feel bad and realize that these feelings are like the weather; they come and they go.

*"The antidote - a willingness to go through the process, learn, fall down, start again, and again and again."*

You are not your feelings

You are not your feelings. Notice right now how there is another part of you that notices your feelings, these words, your surroundings. That awareness is effortless and constant and you can rest in that, but we tend to get all tangled up in the feelings and think that they are life threatening in some way and behave accordingly (like moving into avoidance tactics).

*"Feeling bad/anxious/fearful is not life threatening - just uncomfortable and it will pass."*

Feeling bad/anxious/fearful is not life threatening

Feeling bad/anxious/fearful is not life threatening - just uncomfortable and it will pass. Just imagine that these feelings are like troublesome passengers getting on and off the bus of your life. You have the wheel of the bus, they don't. They can be as troublesome and demanding as they want, you don't have to listen (and like the weather they will change and pass) and you can happily drive that bus right to the gym!

*"You have the wheel of the bus..."*

Tamara Androsoff

Life Coach & Psychotherapist

Bellevue Health Centre

Mt Eden, Auckland

(09)630-9282 or 027-601-8399