

What to Do When You Feel Stuck in Life

This is bound to happen to all of us at some point in our lives. It's happened to me a couple times too.

Being stuck in life is a hard place to be, to describe, and to understand.

You're doing the same thing every day, you want to do something else, or at least you think you do, and then you analyze the various future scenarios of those to death, which weighs you down, so you don't do anything, everything seems uncertain, you feel paralyzed, you don't know what to do, you feel like a car stuck in the snow spinning its wheels, and it's like you're a lump of apathy and fear put together.

Not a pretty place to be.

So let's get out of our proverbial car and look at the situation.

Now one of the major factors that contributes to getting us stuck in life is the vast array of avenues to pursue.

There's too many to choose from.

You don't want to pick the "wrong" one so you take a TON of time analyzing to find the "best" one to go for.

But since there are so many possibilities and each possibility branches into more and more branches, simulating all those possibilities fries our brain.

It's too much.

So we think if we just rest, take a break from the analyzing and go at it again to figure out the "right" choice, we'll uncover it but the cycle will repeat itself.

We don't want to invest all this time and effort and energy and money into the wrong choice and then regret it.

That's the reason why we THINK so much about it.

Here's the thing though.

You don't know what will happen.

Everything you ASSUME that will happen is based on your limited scale of experience, beliefs, things you heard, things you read about, etc.

What you mentally have to do is create a mental chainsaw and chop of all those clusters of branches that are stemming from each possibility.

You don't know what those "branches" will be. It's foolish to predict those futures.

If you do that, it'll feel like a huge weight is lifted off your shoulders. Your mind will physically feel lighter.

Now, you're just left with the "initial possibilities" list instead of the whole "branches coming out from each "initial possibility" and then more branches coming out from each of those branches", etc.

So how do you narrow down the "initial possibilities" list?

Having CLARITY as to what you TRULY want helps here.

So often, not knowing EXACTLY what you want keeps you from filtering the initial choices AND takes you down roads you don't really want to go.

You THINK you want something, but what you really want is something else.

For example, let's say you feel stuck in life because you're in a job you hate and you're just going through the motions. You want a career that's going to make you a lot of money so you come up with the usual suspects - lawyer, doctor, engineer, dentist, etc.

Then you immediately counter with the whole "it takes too much time and money and schooling" and then you're right back where you started.

Stuck.

WHY do you want to make more money?

Maybe the reason is you want to make a ton so you can retire early to have freedom to do what you really want to do during the weekdays and not just live for the weekends.

So it's not really money you want, but FREEDOM.

Ah, then that leads you down a different path.

A path of looking for flexible jobs, ROWE type jobs (result oriented workplace environment) where you can come in and go as you please so long as you complete your deliverables on time, maybe even late afternoon/night time jobs so you have freedom during the day.

Now you have a brand new list of opportunities to choose from but at least you have a list that fulfills what it is you TRULY want so you don't immediately "counter it".

Now we still run into the same problem of choosing from this "truly wanted" list.

There's a bunch there.

Now what?

This is where you can do your research but you might find after doing it all that they all sound good or maybe one sticks out and if it does, great, go for it.

If not, go over the list and choose one that "feels right" to you. Something that you can get excited about, that you really feel you could do, that gets your creativity juices flowing.

And then realize it's not about the choice.

It's about the HABIT of taking action on the best decision you can make from where you are and to keep moving forward.

To have a MACRO point of view, NOT a MICRO point of view.

Pick a choice. Move forward. If over time, it isn't working out, if it's not what you wanted, that's OK.

At least you know.

At least you're not STUCK anymore.

And more often than not, taking this journey will give you clarity as to what the best choice will be.

Over the long run, you'll find the direction you want to go in.

Breathe.

Don't be so tense and get panicky in the micro point of view where you zero in on the "oh my goodness what if it doesn't work" type visualization.

That's VERY limited thinking.

How many times did something happen to you in the past and you went in that MICRO point of view level and you thought your whole world was going to end, but over time, you could see it wasn't that big of a deal looking back.

You were blowing it up WAY out of proportion.

Same thing here with feeling stuck and hemming and hawing about taking that action.

Look at it from that "looking back/MACRO" point of view and it won't feel so "do or die".

Everything you do is GOOD. It will help you. It will point you in the right direction.

And one of the best things about doing this is that you will ALWAYS feel better when you just pick the best action you can from where you are and execute it rather than wallow in the "stuckness".

Remember, it's NOT about the MICRO point of view.

It's about the HABIT of taking action on the best choice you can make for now and to keep rolling forward, keeping that MACRO point of view in mind, and knowing how it will all eventually help you in the future.

Now while you're doing all this, there's a silent trap going in the background you have to be aware of.

Your routines.

Your routines keep you "safe" and comfortable.

Whenever you're thinking of deviating from your routine, your brain goes haywire and thinks it's not safe, so just notice that.

Expect it.

It's normal.

It's very ancient programming that was needed to help us survive in the old days, but not now.

So how do you deal with this "warning system"?

The antidote is obvious - to start small and shake up your routine a little bit each day and to be OK with it.

But then here comes your judging mind.

"What's the use of doing something different? Ok, whoop de doo, I drove a different way to work today, that's dumb, it didn't help my life one bit, this is stupid, I'm not going to do it anymore."

Again, micro point of view.

In the big picture, shaking up your routine exposes you to a lot of different things that can help you in ways you never would've imagined in the future.

Steve Jobs could've said screw it when he dropped out of college. Why bother to keep going to classes? Should just go home and plan my next move from there.

But he stayed and dropped in on a calligraphy class that would later prove to be the typeface we all use on our computers today.

Shaking up your routine will cause you to see different things, give you different ideas, meet new people, give you different ingredients to cook with in your life.

It'll also help you be present because you're not "future branching" all the time. A shake up in the routine FORCES you to be present because there's something new going on that you have to really focus on until it becomes familiar.

BUT the real value in doing all this is the HABIT.

The HABIT of getting comfortable taking ACTION despite the warning system going on in your head and NOT focusing so much on the micro point of view of thinking or the judging of how doing one thing different will not change your life, but instead, on the macro point of view of how it all comes together to help you.

Of just doing what's in front of you and letting it unfold and following that path, wherever it may lead you.

It's our judging minds that paints those nightmare scenarios, that judges things like doing something different in your routine as something that doesn't work, that keeps us stuck in life.

When you realize all that, when you're conscious of it, and act on it, you can stop spinning your wheels and get the traction you need to move on with your life and never wallow in that "stuckness" again.