

Two Bit Thinking of Comparison

Getting caught in comparison can kill creativity and dampen vital energy. So this is a serious action to consider. The legendary modern dance teacher, Martha Graham, put it this way.

"There is a vitality, a life force, an energy, a quickening that is translated through you into action, and because there is only one of you in all of time, this expression is unique. And if you block it, it will never exist through any other medium and it will be lost. The world will not have it. It is not your business to determine how good it is nor how valuable nor how it compares with other expressions. It is your business to keep it yours clearly and directly, to keep the channel open."

Martha's thoughts speak volumes to me. But I want to focus on the part that "It is not your business to determine how good it is nor how valuable nor how it compares with other expressions."

"There is a vitality, a life force, an energy, a quickening that is translated through you into action, and because there is only one of you in all of time, this expression is unique. And if you block it, it will never exist through any other medium and it will be lost. The world will not have it. It is not your business to determine how good it is nor how valuable nor how it compares with other expressions. It is your business to keep it yours clearly and directly, to keep the channel open. --Martha Graham

Martha's thoughts speak volumes to me. But I want to focus on the part that "It is not your business to determine how good it is nor how valuable nor how it compares with other expressions."

This says to me that we must leave comparison in the ditch along the road that we're walking. To compare ourselves to others freezes our creativity, it undermines our confidence, it flattens our energy, and leaves us in a state of fear diminishing our power, or heading in the other direction of inflated ego and diminishing of other's power and gifts. None of this gets us where we want to go.

Several years ago my son was considering a writing career. This was something I fantasized about myself every once in a while, but always thwarted my efforts with perfectionism. He told me that I was trying to write for someone else and that I needed to write for myself if I was ever really going to express what was within me. (He was always wise beyond his years. He might have been channeling Martha G. for all I know!)

Essentially he was saying to me that it wasn't my business what others thought of what I did. I just needed to do it. I needed to stop comparing what I did with what others did and stop fearing whether I measured up. As my friend Gay Hendricks says, "Comparison is 2 bit thinking." It's cheap and small and we're all of much more value than that.

When you find yourself in the comparison trap, remind yourself of the uniqueness of your expression. Consider the wisdom of nature's expression. Flowers, for example, bloom freely, expressing the potential innate in each seed. There is not comparison in nature. Each flower blooms as it is. That's our potential and possibility as well.