

Tricia Boulet – 1 Step 1 Journey

Love or Fear? I've come to realize if I'm not making a decision based in love, than it is one that is driven by fear. In my experience, fear constantly worries about money, favors pragmatism, and has kept me in more unhealthy relationships than I care to admit. Love, however, is this inner spark of knowing of what would make for a most meaningful life, often, at the expense of logic and pragmatism. Until my 30's, this part of me was mostly buried, concerned with staying safe and playing by the rules.

Emboldened from working with a life coach in 2009, I had declared 2010 would be my last at a job whose expiration date had long passed. I was determined to take a leap toward a life that felt more vibrant and connected. But of course, fear got smarter by dealing me more costly issues with my car and draining my meager savings. Then there was my social life, which had never been better, also advocating for the status quo. These things, along with a handful of others, told me to stay just a little bit longer. Thankfully love recruited some reinforcement in the form of Gab (my boss and a dear friend) and my colleague, Matt. At the end of our monthly finance meeting, they rolled out the plan for my departure and I pushed back. I was terrified and was unable to sleep a wink that night.

Once again, I was clinging to what was safe and denying that thing inside of me that knew it was time to leap.

The previous summer, I had jumped out of an airplane, the scariest thing I could imagine doing with the hopes it would give me the courage to leave the only job I had held since college. The plan backfired - the exhilaration and fun of jumping out of the plane far overshadowed any fear that surfaced. Leaving my job didn't involve a group of buddies, the juiciest slice of watermelon I'd ever had, a freefall that opened up to the quietest quiet I have experienced, and a hunky dude strapped to my back to make it happen safely. Leaving my job involved me feeling incredibly small, afraid, and alone.

Marianne Williamson's poem "Our Greatest Fear" ends with the question "Who are you to play small?" This question was a regular fixture in my psyche. While something in me knew I had more to offer than running monthly financial reports and doing basic design projects, I just had no clue what. I really wanted a clear plan of attack or an irresistible offer. Not just a longing to live my life more creatively and independently.

The day after the meeting, I was utterly numb from not sleeping the night before. As I washed my dishes, I paused and looked around me. In that moment it was abundantly clear that I didn't want to be there a moment

longer than necessary, that playing small had become too painful. I realized that this life that was calling me, the one that I couldn't see needed to know that I wanted it, too. And the only way I could think to do that was by jumping and trusting that I would eventually land safely on the ground by taking one small action after another, paying close attention to each step along the way.

That leap of faith led me to listen to a desire to ditch my car and move to a city and then to waitress for the first time in my life ... at 35. Which led me to meeting Merrill. Which led me to taking one of my bigger, and more rewarding, leaps when I married him in the fall of 2013! That Christmas, he suggested we attend the ASC candlelight service on Christmas Eve and something in me quickly identified with this community and saw that I had found the spiritual home I didn't think existed - a place where I felt welcome as I am, and that lived up to its beliefs through its actions. I'm so grateful to be part of the ASC community, to have these continual reminders to keep acting from a place of love. As appreciation for this, I'm happy to give back, both through acts of service and in pledging to covenant renewal.