



By Silver Rose

CHANGE YOUR FOCUS CHANGE YOUR LIFE

Dancing with Opening Your Mind

I'm not sure at what age I stopped being physically adventurous but I'm very clear when it all came back—when I met Bill. There's something about being in love. Maybe it's showing off, wanting your intended to think you're open to trying anything they like. Maybe it's that falling in love makes you feel like a kid and kids are naturally adventurous. Whatever the reason, I'm grateful that it happened because in my mid-50s I discovered that I really enjoy outdoor activities.

My mind was closed to this possibility for decades. What a waste.

What have you closed your mind to saying (without actually trying it,) "I don't like to do that"?

I remember meeting people who lived for the weekend when they could be outdoors and their excitement mystified me. When people talked about camping I always trotted out that stale joke, "My idea of camping is Motel 6."

For over twelve years, my MasterMind group has met annually at various wonderful locations. Many members are outdoor enthusiasts. I would joke, "Wake me up *after* sunrise yoga in the meadow. I'd rather sleep."

What's mystifying is that I had always been adventurous in other aspects of my life. I'm an entrepreneur—not for the faint of heart. I adopted two at-risk teenage foster daughters when I was single. I performed stand-up comedy at my ten year High School reunion for heaven sakes! But risk looking stupid in a kayak? Never!

And that's the key. Trying to do something you're not sure you'll be good at requires the willingness to be vulnerable and that's what stopped me. Those other activities I had tackled were things I was reasonably sure I could do well. But I wasn't sure I could do physical activities without making a fool of myself. So I made up the story that I didn't enjoy them as a way to protect myself.

Where have you made up a story to prevent yourself from trying something you might not be good at?

I fell for someone who enjoys, boogie boarding, windsurfing, hiking and skiing (to name just a few). When he asked me (for example), "Do you like to sail?" I had to admit, "I don't know. I've never tried it." The magic opening came when I added, "But I'd like to." And I did and I love it.

What could you open your mind to that might turn out to be something you really enjoy?

Step 3 of learning to *Dance with Change* is: **Choose—will you dance or sit this one out?** There is nothing wrong with choosing to sit it out unless you've closed your mind prior to giving it your full consideration.

I come from a non-active family. We weren't a family who camped or went on hikes. My dad was too busy working to make ends meet and I followed his example for many years, using my leisure time to work more.

How have you become like one or both of your parents without consciously intending to? What were they closed off to that you are as well?

As I look for the clues I missed along the way, I realized I'd forgotten how much I loved water-skiing when I was in my teens. Then I remembered the thrill I got when I was able to make the rowboat my dad had built glide across the lake.

What did you love as a child that has slipped away?

For years I've loved to bask in the beauty of Nature, feeling the breeze and the warmth of the sun on my face. How is it that I'd never connected that to what people enjoy about outdoor activities? I didn't make the connection because I had closed my mind. By saying, "I don't like to do those things," the evidence that I *might* like them couldn't penetrate my otherwise intelligent mind. *There are none so blind as those who will not see.*

The next time someone asks you to do something you think you wouldn't like ask yourself, "Have I ever actually tried it?" If the answer is no, then I suggest you give it a go. What's the worst that could happen? Perhaps you'll confirm that you don't like it. On the other hand, you may be delightfully surprised as you discover a whole new aspect of the world.

Last week a group of us went kayaking down a river in Hawaii. In order to get there, we had to go through the ocean and some surf. The idea of being in a kayak when a wave hit used to terrify me. Then I tried it, got dumped and discovered that the worst that happened is that I got wet and had to swim to retrieve the kayak. As we paddled down the beautiful and serene river, I was so happy I had learned those magical words, "I'd like to try."

Are there things Bill does that I don't? Absolutely. He's an amazing downhill skier and I have opted for the safety of snowshoeing. He windsurfs and I'm not willing to put in the time it would take to do it well. But last week we went paddle boarding and lo and behold! I was able to stay on my board much longer than he. That would not have been possible if I hadn't opened my closed mind (did I mention it took some WD-40 and a crowbar?)

There are amazing things out there just for the asking. Don't be like me and wait for someone else to come along and open your mind. Give yourself the gift! Back away from the TV or your computer and take a look around. When you open your mind, all sorts of wonderful changes are available for you to choose from. Some you will dance with and others you won't but isn't it nice to have so many more choices than you'd previously known?