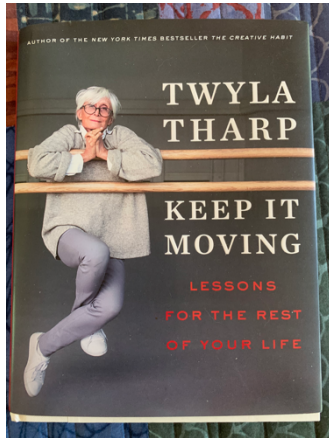


To: Spring 2020 Restorative Justice Group #25
Title: Musings on “Keep it Moving”

Over the years I have mostly read “self-help” books only when necessary... for work, for a class. I much prefer reading mysteries! But then a friend gave me this book:



Twyla Tharp: *Keep it Moving, Lessons for the Rest of Your Life.*
Simon & Schuster, 2019

Twyla Tharp is a dancer. She is known for her choreography and for the dance company she began, Twyla Tharp Dance. Her work is energetic, original, and captivating.

And her writing is just the same! And because she and I are of the same age, I figured it would be good to pay attention.

I confess that I have not finished the book, just the first three chapters, but so far, she makes sense to me and I am hooked!

The idea (see the title) of keeping it moving, is not just the idea of moving the body. There is lots of information telling us to do that, especially as we age. Tharp lays out the ways that we need to keep moving in mind and spirit, as well as body.

Since I consider myself a person of good intentions, I sat up when I read, “Intention is the umbrella term for our desires, ambitions and designs for the future. Intention defines our next move...and the next...and the next.” That is certainly a bigger idea than whether or not I intend to exercise my body or go for a walk this morning.

Tharp is all about looking ahead, “Why not evaluate your accomplishments as beginnings rather than endings?” Think of your experiences and grow into the person you were meant to be. But more...you can’t just think about it, you need to practice growth, train to become what you are meant to be. Part of that training is an honest appraisal of the past, how we dealt with the setbacks, failures, and embarrassments that life hands us. Without this assessment, we cannot self-correct or recover.

Then Tharp urges us to “Make a contract with your future.” Facing new habits requires accountability. Here are the terms and conditions of that agreement:

- Acknowledge you have choices. Make them.
- Your body will be a big part of this deal and you will be read and able to use it.
- You will be okay to re-identify yourself often along the way.
- Obstacles – you will meet many – go around, over, under, or through. Again often.
- Bounce back – yes, many, many times.
- Up is preferred to down.
- Stamina is your bailiwick. Train. Train more.

- Bend in the wind.
- Get stronger for the mending.
- Dance is being in motion. You are doing it. Do it more.

Wow!!! She is laying this out as an “older woman,” not looking to a whole lifetime ahead, not as a 20 or 30 something. But then it has occurred to me that what she says applies to us of any age and in any place.

Her philosophy makes me think of Restorative Justice...are you surprised? The only part missing in RJ is the dancing (some of you may remember when we used to do the Hokey Pokey in RJ!)

Choices: Think of *Jumping Mouse*, items to share in Show & Tell, choosing to come to RJ, choosing the stories that you share in the circle.

Obstacles: Think again of *Jumping Mouse*, the true-to-life stories of ripples of crime, the stories told by victim-survivors, shared family stories.

Re-Identifying yourself: Think of the whole RJ experience, your choice to try RJ, your learning in the RJ circle, finding creative possibilities we didn't know we have.

Bouncing Back and Stamina: You all are surviving incarceration, you worked to not get a ticket before and during RJ, you keep coming back for more of the community and the circle.

At the end of the book (yes, I skipped to the end!) Tharp also talks about the need for community. And I think we all realize that it is difficult to work on ourselves all by ourselves. We need each other: for support, for new ideas, for someone to hash it out with, for someone to have fun with.

In the midst of the pandemic, it is hard for those of us who are mostly house-bound to stay in touch with our various communities. You already know that it is difficult to stay in touch with family, friends and former colleagues. But you also live in the midst of a community and you have other people nearby.

Those of us on the outside (RJ volunteers) have enjoyed working on these written pieces, because it helps us keep in mind all that we have learned from Restorative Justice and from you. It also keeps us in touch with each other, even if by email, phone, or zoom.

Reading Twyla Tharp reminds me that we are seldom in just a holding pattern, that we must keep moving to keep living. It is good to know that we can keep moving with you!!!

~ Ms. Pugh, Restorative Justice volunteer