

Week 43: Don't Do Something More Meaningful (Do Something More You)

I wrote a book called *Loveable*.

At first, every time I sat down to work on it, I was hit with the same sinking feeling. Every time. And every time it came in the form of a question: What if these words don't *matter*? It's a crippling thought, a dreadful feeling that keeps you looking back at every sentence you've written, questioning, doubting, sinking deeper and deeper into the rhetorical quicksand. What if my words don't matter? It's a question that disguises another question:

What if *I* don't matter?

It's the question on the tongue of every human heart. For millennia, we have tried to *prove* we matter with success and status and stuff. But what if we finally decided there was nothing left to prove? What if we decided our worth was no longer in doubt? What if we decided "mattering" didn't matter anymore? Maybe we'd be free to quit the game of *proof* and get into the game of *life*.

One day in the midst of writing *Loveable*, I sat down to write and something different happened. As I began to sink into the quagmire, I heard the still, small whisper of grace: *Kelly, you don't write a book because you think it will matter—you write a book in spite of the fact it probably won't matter. You do what you love because the desire has been written on your heart, implanted in your soul, and engraved into your DNA. You do it because you aren't you unless you do it.*

Author Madeleine L'Engle recalls being rejected by yet *another* publisher on her fortieth birthday: "I covered the typewriter in a great gesture of renunciation. Then I walked around and around the room, bawling my head off. I was totally, unutterably miserable. Suddenly I stopped, because I realized what my subconscious mind was doing while I was sobbing: my subconscious mind was busy working out a novel about failure. I uncovered the typewriter. In my journal I recorded this moment of decision, for that's what it was. I had to write. I had no choice in the matter. It was not up to me to say I would stop, because I could not. It didn't matter how small or inadequate my talent. If I never had another book published, and it was very clear to me that this was a real possibility, I still had to go on writing...Success is pleasant; of course you want it; but it isn't what makes you write."⁵

Our secret insecurity is always focused on *outcome*, while our heart of hearts is always focused on *coming out*. Stepping out. Trying out. Striking out. And trying

⁵ L'Engle, Madeleine. *A Circle of Quiet*. New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1972.

again. Because there is joy in showing up, because there is joy in becoming more who we already are. No goals, no expectations, just freedom. Revelry. Play. Hearts finally moving to the music they've been hearing all along. Souls transformed from wallflowers into dancers, falling into the arms of grace and being reminded: there is nothing to prove, our worth is not up for grabs, all that's left to do is to enjoy who we are and to live it out in the world.

On that particular morning, as I heard the voice of grace, a different kind of sinking feeling happened—the thought sank from my head to my heart, and my fingers came alive on the keyboard. Meanwhile, outside my window, the wind blew fallen leaves like autumn tumbleweed. And I watched as a gray-bearded, retired man from down the block pushed a massive lawnmower up the middle of the street, toward the home of an old-ailing woman whose yard was buried in un-raked leaves. I watched as he ran his mower over the lawn and solved her leaf problem in a matter of minutes. She wasn't home. She'd never know who did it.

Did it matter to her? Maybe.

Did that matter to *him*? Nope.

I watched as he pushed his mower home. He wasn't caring for his neighbor because it *mattered*—he was caring for his neighbor in spite of the fact it probably *won't* matter. Because it's *who he is*. Because he wouldn't be himself if he didn't do it. Because growing up doesn't mean becoming more mature—it means becoming more *you*.

If you were given permission to simply be more *you*, what would you do? Start speaking up? Standing up? Standing out? Walking out? Reaching out? Pouring out? Sitting in? Giving in? Giving up? Opening up? To what? Dance lessons? Photography school? Medical school? Dropping out of school? Starting a band? Starting a business? Starting a movement? Dominoes?

Why wait?

After all, you weren't created to be successful. You were created to be *you*.