**Escaping the Land of**

***"I DON'T WANT TO!"***

***by Aimee Bernstein***

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You've probably been there. You look at your messy office and think *I should organize this place.* And then, as you stare at the mountains of files and the bits of paper scribbled with information scattered around your desk, you hear your inner voice declare, *I DON'T WANT TO!*  So you don't.

Or maybe you tell yourself you should exercise more. Next thing you know the demons of *I Don't Want To* have stolen your motivation and you find yourself procrastinating while spinning stories of being too busy. After all, you should finish that work project. And you know you should write more blogs. Plus, you should clean your refrigerator. But although you're in a *should* storm, you're deep in the land of *I Don't Want To*, so you veg out by the television or lose yourself in Facebook.

Many years ago I noticed *I DONT WANT TO!* would sound off before I went out on a date with some hot guy. Although all week I was looking forward to it, a few hours before the date I'd hear my inner voice say *I'd rather stay home and read a book.* Before I knew any better, I'd listen to my *I Don't Want To* and cancel the date. Then I met Robert Nadeau, an 8th dan aikido and energy master who showed me how the land of *I Don't Want To* functions. He opened an escape hatch to a more expansive and brighter future. All I had to do was to step through it. Here's what he taught me.

Whenever there is a job or task to do, energy comes into your mind/body system, in the amount needed to do the job. Let's pretend the job requires 100 volts of energy and your usual capacity is 50 volts. If you welcome this extra energy by opening and aligning to it, you will feel alive, spacious and experience high performance. But if you close down to it, you will feel discomfort and stress. Resisting the energy inevitably generates unremarkable performance and/or a case of *I Don't Want To.* Ergo, a lot of cancelled dates.

When the energy starts coming into your mind/body/energy system, at first you may experience it as pressure and view it negatively. Pressure, however, is actually the energy of change intended to shift you into a finer, more functional and evolved version of yourself. In fact , without pressure there would be no motivation and no fuel to become as big as the job. So how do you welcome it?

Become more energetically spacious. Sure you can stretch, exercise or listen to music , all of which works; however, there is an easier way that can be done any time and within any activity.

First, allow your energy to settle down through your body into the ground. Just as there is an energy flow up that you may notice when you are excited or under pressure, there is a energy flow that beats down, which many people forget to sense/feel. Similar to how a waterfall flows with gravity, let yourself soften and surrender to this natural downward flow.

Next, sense/feel how much your energy extends into the field around your back, front and sides. Do you feel small, contracted and/or tense, or do you feel comfortable in your skin? No judgments. That's just your starting place.

Then from your center, extend your energy outwards and radiate like the sun, 360 degrees. Do you sense the circle that is generated from your energy outflow? I experience it like being in a big bubble that extends under the ground and over my head. Then, however you experience it, put your attention past the circumference of the circle, (in actuality there are no boundaries), and beam out further. It also helps if you smile as that triggers the brain to release feel good hormones. Now how do you feel? What qualities are coming through you in this more spacious version of you? The more you practice, the greater your energetic capacity, presence and confidence, and the less power *I Don't Want To* will have over you.

*" But I Don't Want To* become more spacious," my usually energetic best friend told me." I don't want to do anything." I understood her malaise. Been there myself. Going through the energy transition from inaction to action can feel daunting so why bother? After all, sometimes it is fine not to do what you think you should do. Sometimes you need to take downtime and re-energize. And sometimes it's important to your spirit to do what you want to do rather than what you think you should do. However, if *I Don't Want To* has become a habit, then you need to break free. *Developing your skill to move with a strong energy flow rather than being pushed away by it is an empowering, masterful way to live life.*

So I began to think of what has motivated me in the past to walk through the escape hatch when *I Don't Want To* was loudly calling. And then a memory arose.

Back in my early thirties, when I was six years into an intensive aikido training and spiritual inquiry, my friend Stephen offered to guide me through an inner map to discover and experience my archetypes. Stephen was a more advanced aikido student and a very generous and tough teacher to me. All was going well until I called up one of the archetypes and immediately felt uncomfortably hot and light headed. The energy that was pulsing through me was more than I was used to, so I lay down on the floor to recover.

"Get up," Stephen said.

" I don't feel good," I responded

"Get up ," he demanded forcefully.

"*I Don't Want To*. I don't feel well," I replied as my anger began to rise.

**"A spiritual warrior gets up"**

Those words stunned and triggered something in me. A moment later I rose to continue the inner journey.

Being a spiritual warrior was meaningful to me. It was the me I wanted to become. Or maybe I already was it and just needed to say Yes to it. Either way, as I had a strong desire and intent, the energy was available to shift me out of *I Don't Want To*.

When you are caught in *I Don't Want To*, it is your smaller self that is speaking. The smaller identity does not want to die so it clamps down tight when the thought of becoming more spacious and birthing a larger more capable identify knocks on your door. To escape, it's helpful to recognize that the choices you make, even the little ones, inform and ultimately define your character. Who do you want to be? It matters.

If you chose to escape I *Don't Want To,* then go slowly and take just one small action. You don't need to clean your whole office, just put the files away. You just might experience a sense of satisfaction and the impetus to keep going. If so, take the next little step and decide what to do with the scraps of paper. The more you take little steps forward, the more momentum is created to keep moving ahead. Before you know it, you've become more empowered and masterful. Before you know it, you're free.