

Yoda Got It Wrong

by Kim Switzer

“Do or do not. There is no try.” ~Yoda



There's a lot of talk out there about getting rid of the word “try,” kicking it out of your vocabulary, replacing it with other words. Lots of people seem to hate that poor little three letter word; they seem to think it's a bad word filled with underachievement and failure. I blame Yoda for this.

Oh, I understand what Yoda was trying to say. Luke was being all wishy-washy about things as usual. “I'll give it a try,” he said, but you could tell he wasn't really planning to put in much effort. Yoda had to say something, of course, and it does make for a good line, I'll give him that. But I think Yoda really helped malign a perfectly good word and an incredibly useful concept.

Because “try” doesn't mean go through the motions, act as if you're doing something, but never really put in any effort and get off the ground. That's not trying, that's faking.

Trying is about stretching yourself, doing something that makes you a little uncomfortable and unsure of the outcome, reaching for something you might not get. If you are trying, it means you are putting in the effort, aiming at an outcome, but you're not sure if you can actually do it or not. If you can do it as long as you set your mind to it even if it's hard, if there's no uncertainty, then you aren't trying. You're working hard, which is important, too. But it isn't the thing that will take you to new heights and into territories you never imagined. That's what you get from trying. Trying is for those big things that you might not be able to pull off, and it will bring you things you never dreamed of.

I'm sending out a call right now. Let's reclaim “try” for our very own. Let it stand for stretching our limits, moving outside our comfort zones, reaching past our boundaries into the unknown, into the exhilaration of doing what we weren't sure we could and the satisfaction of knowing that we did our best even if we miss the mark.

I don't know if I can live this bravely all the time, always reaching for what I want, always living with uncertainty, never knowing for sure if I'm going to get what I'm after. That sounds like a vibrant and energetic way to live, but I don't know if I can do it all the time. But I do know I'm going to try.

Somebody once asked me if I ever went up to the plate trying to hit a home run. I said, 'Sure, every time.' ~ Mickey Mantle