



Using Pain as a Tool...the Good Kind.

Let me begin by stating, for the record, that I'm NOT a masochist. I do NOT enjoy pain. When I am in pain, I generally get cranky. I'm not fun. Things tend to get nasty. Not good.

But, there are different kinds of pain. The most successful people identify what pain really is and how to manage it for our benefit.

Pain is feedback. Pain is our body's way of telling us that we are doing something beyond our ability at the moment. Just a natural little "head's up". We should pay attention.

Sometimes the pain is physical: Like a hand on a hot stove. Good that we're experiencing that sensation of pain - it warns us to move our hand - quickly - before more damage can be done. It can also be physical pain, as in "my muscles are sore from my new workout routine". This is simply saying that we're enduring the pain of building muscle. Again, a good thing in moderation.

There's also mental/emotional pain as well. Recent example for me? Writing/publishing a book (At the printer's now - due out in a month!) Painful. But sometimes, learning (like building muscle) requires discomfort in the pursuit of growth. (Boy, have I learned a LOT during this publishing process!) This kind of pain can be caused by everything from guilt, to fear, to mere impatience (me and the publishing process). When we are tested, we can often gain benefits useful for us later in life. I feel like my (painful) lessons during this book publishing process fall into that category. Like eating right, exercising, and being disciplined in finances - not always fun, but almost always "good for you".

I guess the key is understanding when pain is the good kind or the bad kind. When is it too much? At what point does it become "worth it"?

To me, a big part of that answer is tied into why you are doing it. Does it align with your values and purpose? Does it support the greater (than self) good? Is the process making you a better person as a result?

All I know is that when I get over the "soreness" (whether physical or mental/emotional pain), I typically feel like I've gained something of value...even if that is learning never to do THAT again. The trick is to pay attention every time so we don't go too far down a negative path.

That is what set the most successful people apart: They are aware and take action to do something about it. Every day.

Some people say it takes discipline to do that.

I say it BUILDS discipline to do that.

What are YOU building?