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Why Elephants Don't Run and Eagles Don't Fly

REFLECTIONS by...

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A number of years ago, while attending a circus with my children, I noticed a group of elephants in an open area. Each of these gigantic beasts was being held by only a small rope tied to their front leg. There were no chains and no fences around them. It was pretty obvious that the elephants could break away from their bonds at any time, but for some reason they did not. I went over to one of the trainers and asked why these beautiful, magnificent animals just stood there and made no attempt to get away.

"Well," he said, "when they are very young and much smaller we use the same size rope to tie them and, at that age, it's enough to hold them. As they grow up, they are conditioned to believe they cannot break away. They think the rope can still hold them, so they never try to break free."

It struck me as amazing that these strong, gigantic animals could at any time break free from their bonds but because they believed they could not, they were stuck right where they were.

Every now and then I think back to the elephants and I wonder how many of us go through life hanging on to a belief that we cannot do something, simply because we failed at it once before? How many of us are being held back by old, outdated beliefs that no longer serve us? Have you avoided trying something new because you felt that you would fail? Worse, how many of us are being held back by someone else's limiting beliefs about our ability to succeed in a different venture?



Particularly in starting or running a business, or in changing careers, we are

often cautioned not to take risks, to play it safe, to keep the status quo, usually by well intentioned friends and family. How many of us have heard, "You can't do that?" These are the dream stealers who, due to their own limiting beliefs, attempt to discourage you from living your own dreams. The 'dream-stealers' are like the small ropes that hold the elephants. You can break away from them at any time, but you have been held by them for so long that you never try – just like the elephants.

There is only one way to handle "dream-stealers". You must ignore them at all cost. Instead, find people who have accomplished what you want to accomplish, discover what they did and model their behavior. Remember back to times in your past when you were successful and use that experience to propel yourself forward.

The next time you doubt your ability to accomplish your dreams, or you are challenging yourself with your own limiting beliefs, pull out the following story.

WHY SOME EAGLES DON'T FLY

Once upon a time, there was a large mountainside, where an eagle's nest rested. The eagle's nest contained four large eagle eggs. One day an earthquake rocked the mountain causing one of the eggs to roll down the mountain, to a chicken farm, located in the valley below. The chickens knew that they must protect and care for the eagle's egg, so an old hen volunteered to nurture and raise the large egg.



One day, the egg hatched and a beautiful eagle was born. Sadly, however, the eagle was raised to be a chicken. Soon, the eagle believed he was nothing more than a chicken. The eagle loved his home and family, but his spirit cried out for more.

While playing a game on the farm one day, the eagle looked to the skies above and noticed a group of mighty eagles soaring in the skies. "Oh," the eagle cried, "I wish I could soar like those birds." The chickens roared with laughter, "You cannot soar with those birds. You are a chicken and chickens do not soar."

The eagle continued staring at his real family up above, dreaming that he could be with them. Each time the eagle would let his dreams be known, he was told it couldn't be done. That is what the eagle learned to believe. The eagle, after time, stopped dreaming and continued to live his life like a chicken. Finally, after a long life as a chicken, the eagle passed away.

It has been said throughout history that what ever you believe, with conviction, you can achieve. Don't be like the poor elephant and go through your life stuck because of a limiting belief you were given or developed years ago. Don't be like the eagle and go through your life listening to the words of a chicken.

Take charge of your life and live it to the fullest. You deserve the best! You will become what you believe you are.