

What if the Hokey Pokey is what it's all about?

No matter where you are in life, every so often you need to stop and ask yourself the philosophical question this article poses: What if the Hokey Pokey is what it's all about?

Think about it.

Seriously.

What if, when we get up to those pearly gates, they don't ask us how many awards we received or stuff we accumulated or software programs we finally mastered? What if we are asked how much singing and dancing we did with our friends and loved ones?

The Hokey Pokey is a great metaphor for focusing on the goals that matter.

Not the stress and structure goals of youth, but the self delighting goals that come when the hard stuff is done and a new world stretches before you. Here are a couple tips on how to use the wisdom of the Hokey Pokey.

Put your hand in and shape the life you want.

Be active about putting life into your life!

The emerging field of psychoneuroimmunology (PNI) tells us our emotions directly influence our immune system. Where stress inhibits our immune responses, decreases bone density and accelerates memory loss, atherosclerosis, and a host of other problems, laughter and joy reverse those effects.

An easy goal might be to seek out humorous, joyful people and allow yourself to be inspired by them, or. . . you could. . .

Put your hand out - to others.

The Hokey Pokey is a dance best not done alone! Create your own legacy of laughter and draw upbeat folks to you by sharing funny books, swapping jokes on the internet, or making wry observations in the coffee shop. Oh, and one caution on this humor business: don't be picky. People who are easily pleased, get pleased a lot!

Next, **Put your whole self in!** When you know what you want, commit to it. Set a time limit and keep focused. Life really is like the Hokey Pokey: whether it's your head, your heart, or your left foot, you only get out of it what you put into it.

Marketing consultant Gregg Arnold talks about cheetah marketing strategies. The cheetah is incredibly fast, but only for a short distance. It's meal of choice, the giselle, is not quite as fast, but can run much longer. When the cheetah picks out a giselle for dinner, the giselle heads into the herd -- not as a gesture of solidarity, but in an effort to distract the cat with someone else. The giselle yells the antelope equivalent of - "How about Lardo Larry over there?" or "Look! There's Lame Linda!" The cheetah knows that she doesn't have the speed to mount more than one chase. If she is distracted, she goes hungry. The pay-off for the cheetah is in focused commitment. That's where it is for us too.

Equally important, **Take your whole self out!** Don't get so committed to a goal that you lose sight of everything else. In life, as in the Hokey Pokey, the objective is always to come back to a point of balance. As the title of one of my speeches observes, "If you don't pause, nothing worthwhile will catch up with you."

There is more to the Hokey Pokey than simply putting body parts in and out. Case in point: When my parents were in their thirties they thought the most romantic way to die would be to fly a small plane into a mountain together. They vowed to do this when they reached the ripe old age of fifty-five.

At fifty-five, however, they spotted some flaws in the plan:

1. Suddenly, fifty-five didn't seem all that old anymore.
2. They were still playing pretty decent tennis.
3. Neither one had remembered to get a pilot's license.

They decided to retire instead.

Today they are in their 80's and the same three "flaws" continue to hold true!

Here, the Hokey Pokey reminds us that sometimes our goal is inappropriate, and we have to **"turn ourselves around!"**

The difference between success in life and simply not failing, is how often we take risks, refurbish postponed ideas, or try new adventures. You can cling to the comfort of a motto like: Eagles may soar but weasels aren't sucked into jet engines. Or explore a more adventurous slogan like: You can't steal 2nd with your foot on first!

The young say the early bird gets the worm, but as we get older we recall that it is the second mouse that gets the cheese!

Take some risks! If a journey of a thousand miles begins with one step, make it a dance step and Hokey Pokey into the next chapter of your life!

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Dr. Patt Schwab is a Seattle based professional speaker and trainer. She speaks internationally on the topics of managing change and using humor to enhance workplace competence. She may be reached by e-mailing pattschwab@aol.com