

MATTMCWILLIAMS

Live with Passion. Lead with Purpose. Leave a Legacy.

Living Without Embarrassment

Our three-year daughter Aracelli sings, dances, shouts with abandon, like no one is watching. At a recent concert, all of those were on display.

We recently took Aracelli to her first concert. She danced like it was a private show, just for her. No embarrassment. No wondering whose watchful eyes were judging her. No fear of pointing fingers or snickering voices.

She sang at the top of her lungs, sometimes when the music wasn't playing. She shouted in response to the artists. She felt no shame.

I Do! I Do! I Do!

At one point in the show, they spoke of the need to support adoption. A speaker told the story of his own adoption and how later in life his family adopted a beautiful little girl from China.

The emotions bubbled up inside of me and I knew what I was supposed to do. I could feel a battle raging inside of me. I knew where this was going. He was going to ask people who wanted to help to stand. In front of everyone.

Couldn't we just go home later and get on the internet and give them some money? Couldn't we do this the easy way? Then he asked the question, "Who wants to help these children?"

That's when it happened...Aracelli shouted, "I DO!" And I was doomed. I had no choice but to stand with this little girl who has a heart of gold.

She feels no shame. I think all eyes are on me.

She sings because it makes her happy. I don't because I hate the way I sing.

She dances because that's just what you do when music plays. I stand still because...

Because of What?

Because I am embarrassed. Ashamed. Self-conscious.

All things that Aracelli hasn't learned yet.

Singing comes naturally to her. Dancing is just what you do. Shouting is how you communicate in a noisy concert.

Embarrassment is something we learn.

One day she may learn to be embarrassed. Her friends may show her how to shy away from attention or potentially looking foolish. But my hope and my prayer is that she chooses not to act on that knowledge. Just because you learn something doesn't mean you have to put it into practice.

What are You Afraid of?

All of the greats in all of history were ridiculed for something. Every great scientist, every great inventor, and every great artist had to overcome being labeled a quack, a weirdo, or worse.

Others tried their best to ridicule them into conformity, force them to comply with their norms, or talk them out of their dreams. They'll do the same with you.

And when they do, remember they only do so because they let someone else do it to them. They didn't live out their dreams, so they can't let you live out yours. They will shame you, embarrass you, tease you, and haunt you.

But if you want to be one of the greats, if you want to live out your calling, and live a life of passion, you have to overcome those voices. You have to reclaim your authentic self, the you before you worried about the naysayers, the haters, and the finger-pointers. The you before you thought twice about dancing, singing, or shouting. The you who you were born to be.

Ask yourself: What am I afraid of?

That fear forced you into the shadows. It shamed you into the corner, far away from your dreams and far away from the life you were meant to live.

You have a gift that the world needs. Don't hide it anymore. Don't let fear or embarrassment or anyone or anything hold you back from sharing it with the world.

Dance with abandon.

Sing with joy.

Shout when your heart says "shout."

The world will thank you for it.

What has embarrassment kept you from doing?