



Imagination rather than Indoctrination

I want to start today by reading a short passage from the book *Untamed* by Glennon Doyle, who is a New York Times bestselling author. A friend of mine dropped this book off for me last night, and I am already well over halfway through because it's just so amazing. It's a great book and I highly recommend it.

This is the passage I want to read to you. "We are all bilingual. We speak the language of indoctrination. But our native tongue is the language of imagination. When we use the language of indoctrination with its shoulds and shouldn'ts, right and wrong, good and bad, we are activating our minds. That's not what we're going for here, because our minds are polluted by our training. In order to get beyond our training. We need to activate our imaginations. Our minds are excuse makers. Our imaginations are storytellers. So instead of asking ourselves, what's right or wrong. We must ask ourselves, what is true and beautiful. Then, our imagination rises inside us, thanks us for finally consulting it after all these years, and tells us a story." I absolutely love that because it feels so, so true.

Most of you know that I come from a fundamentalist Christian background, which I'll just say, in many, many ways saved my life because I had a messy childhood and I'm very sensitive. I probably reacted to it a little more dramatically than I had to but that's how it was. I became involved in the church at 11 years old and it was wonderful to have a place of belonging, which is what I think the church does best. Giving a sense of community and belonging. I'm so grateful for many of those years.

That said, the rigidity, the black and white answers and the way that it has to be was difficult. I suffered from quite a bit of shame as a result of that. The message I got very loudly and clearly was that my heart is deceitful above all else. And that led me to a tremendous amount of pain and suffering and absolutely not trusting myself. I carried that with me for many, many years. And, yes, it's taken me about 20 years to undo that indoctrination, and I still have some friends now who are trying to pull me back into the fold. I know it's because they love me and they're concerned. But I want to say that there's so much more available to us than that small, tiny black and white rigid cage of indoctrination.

Again, I'm not suggesting that there's anything fundamentally wrong with Christianity itself, but the fundamentalism is a problem. Of course, we see fundamentalism in every walk of life. We see fundamentalist conservatives, we see fundamentalist liberals, we see fundamentalists of all religions. And that's what I'm speaking to so I'm not dissing Christianity as a whole. But I am saying that the indoctrination, the shoulds, the shouldn'ts, the black and the white, the rigid little box of how we're supposed to be.... And of course we get this culturally too; how we're



supposed to be as women. We're supposed to look a certain way. We're supposed to sound a certain way. We're supposed to act a certain way, with a certain softness and beauty, that's acceptable. But to stand up in our power? Well, then we might be called a bitch.

Now men on the other hand, get a very different message. They aren't allowed to tap into the softer, more sensitive sides of themselves. And this is wreaked havoc on our men. And it wreaks havoc on our women, how we've been indoctrinated to be in this world.

Your native language is imagination. Your native language is story. I think you're going to find so much more from your imagination. You're able to find so much more freedom and life and joy and opportunity and possibility than from your indoctrinated ways, whether that be from dysfunctional family system, from our religion, or from a very dysfunctional culture. There's something beyond that. There's something beyond that when we look for the good, the true, and the beautiful in our lives, which is around us all day every day. And when men start to tap into their sensitive sides, and women start to tap into their strong powerful sides, and the two come together, then I think that we can change the world. We can certainly change ourselves.

Today, I want to encourage you to wake up to your own indoctrination, and to be aware that it's there, and to step into a place of imagination. Step into a place of imagination. Give yourself time throughout your day and weeks and months to dream, to imagine the most beautiful life possible for you, and use that imagination to begin to open and soften and embolden you. Play with that. And then, let me know how it is for you. Thank you for being here today.