

As is Your Desire, So is Your Destiny

Pump it up.

Most of us have a warm-up ritual to pump ourselves up to go out. We make plans to hook up with friends at the bar or arrange to go together with the gang. We shower, fix our hair, and, if so inclined, put our faces on. We play our favorite dance hits while we dig through the closet for the "right look." We take a sip of liquid courage or partake of a stronger "better living through chemistry" party enhancing substance. We boost our self-esteem by singing anthems to our reflections in the mirror. Some of the best are, "I'm too sexy for my shirt, too sexy for my shirt, So sexy it hurts *," "R-E-S-P-E-C-T. Find out what it means to me. R-E-S-P-E-C-T. Take care, TCB,** " and, "I'm beautiful. I'm beautiful. I'm beautiful, damn it***!"

These physical actions help us with the more private warm-up most of us engage in. Even if it's not conscious, before stepping out, we set our intentions and hopes for the evening. Maybe the goal is simply to shake it like our mamma made it and have a good time. Maybe the goal is to get drunk, stoned, or go on some other chemically induced trip. Maybe the goal is to get together with friends. Maybe the goal is to feel the intoxicating power of looking hot and feeling sexy. Maybe the goal is to have a one night stand, no strings attached. Or maybe the goal is to meet Mr. or Ms. Right.

Of course, we don't usually want to admit these deeper desires. Making moves on the object of our desire can be mortifying if they don't feel the same spark. Admitting that we are simply looking to get laid can make us feel cheap and tawdry especially if we have it together enough to watch our standards get lower the closer it gets to closing time. Accepting the fact that our goal is to get drunk or otherwise chemically impaired implies that we're either not interested in sex and/or that we have a substance abuse problem. And admitting that we want to find our soul mate is a set up for disappointment.

But just because we don't want to admit our inner truth doesn't mean we shouldn't. The Scout motto: "Be Prepared" reminds us that it's important to plan ahead. If you want to get laid, it's important to have the accoutrements for safer sex accessible. STD's don't care that you weren't really planning to "do the nasty." They are even more focused on reproducing and spreading the love than we are. The same thing goes with pregnancy, just in case you get the love jones for someone on the other team. And if you don't really know the person you are traipsing off with, it's not a bad idea to let people know you're leaving with him or her to make it less likely that things will get ugly. Aaron McKinney and Russell Henderson probably seemed like nice enough guys when they offered Matthew Shepard a ride home from the Fireside Lounge in Laramie, Wyoming. Clearly that didn't turn out so well. We don't need any more poster boys or girls to raise awareness about the problem of hate.

If you are driving, you have to prepare for this as well. Given the current political climate, driving drunk or otherwise under the influence can land you in jail, force you to take your vaca at rehab, grant you a set of "party plates" at best, or more likely cost you your driver's license. There's also the not so hidden financial cost of driving under the influence. After your attorney's fees, higher insurance premiums, court fees, probation, the interlock for your car, your stint at rehab, and assorted other related fees, you probably won't be able to retire or buy that dream house anytime soon.

As is your desire

Beyond making you a good Scout, consciously setting your intentions before you go out can have profound consequences. According to the Upanishads, the texts which form the core of Hinduism,

*You are your deepest, driving desire.
As is your desire, so is your will.
As is your will, so is your deed.
As is your deed, so is your destiny.*

Even if you don't believe in *The Secret*, the laws of attraction, or anything else you consider to be New Age hype, this idea makes sense. For example, anyone who knows me well knows that Hawaiian Shaved Ice snow cones are my ultimate drug of choice. If there is a shaved ice snow cone to be found within 15 miles of where I am, I will find it. I have found them in Harlem, Savannah, Rehoboth Beach, and in dozens of small towns I've passed through on my way to someplace else. This is not merely good luck. I desire snow cones so I look for them. And because I look for them, I find them. The same principal applies to going out. If you put it out there that you are looking for drugs or sex or a relationship, you are likely to find it, eventually.

Before you start getting ready to go out, take a moment to ask yourself, "What is it that I really want?" The nice thing about making your desires conscious is that you get a chance to weigh them out. It's not unusual to have desires that look like they conflict. For example, one part of your brain may be saying, "I want cheesecake." And another part of your brain may have its sights on fitting into last year's swim suit that seems to be more than a smidge tight after all the other cheesecakes you've already had. Here's where you have to dig a little deeper. Is the craving for cheesecake a substitute for the kind of comfort that would best be delivered in the form of a great big hug? If so, go for the hug, solution solved. But sometimes a girl just needs cheesecake, no matter how much her clothes have shrunk. Either way, that little bit of digging helps you get to your answer.

The key here is that you have to really want it. Desire doesn't count if it's a lie. If, in your heart of hearts, you really don't want a boyfriend, but tell yourself you do because you think you "should," you're probably not going to end up in a relationship – at least not a satisfying one and not for long. Likewise, if in your heart of hearts, you really don't want to lose weight or cut back on your drinking or substance use, depriving yourself isn't likely to work. (However, facing a second heart attack if your diet doesn't change or facing jail time if your pee tests positive for probation can make weight loss and/or sobriety much more appealing.)

Once you've figured out what you want and made your intention conscious, crank up the stereo, dress for a night on the town, remind yourself how absolutely fabulous you truly are and make your mark on the dance floor.

* Right Said Fred

** Aretha Franklin

*** Bette Midler

To ask Regina a question, propose a column topic, read about her approach to counseling, or check out her books and other writing, go to: www.ReginaSewell.com

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