

WHAT AM I TOLERATING?

Women certainly have learned to tolerate a lot! We put up with, take on, and are dragged down by other people's behavior, situations, unmet needs, crossed boundaries, incompletions, frustrations, problems, and even our behavior.

Tolerating isn't a sign of flexibility or resilience. It is allowing something in your life to stop you from achieving your full potential. Tolerating is not dealing with an issue that could eventually become critical. Tolerating hurts your growth. You are tolerating more than you might be aware.

Stop now and begin to think: What am I tolerating?

As you become aware of things, write them down. Just raising your awareness by articulating each will bring them to the forefront of your mind. You will naturally start handling, eliminating, fixing, growing through, and resolving these issues.

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- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
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BOUNDLESS ENERGY

Boundless energy is available to you as you allow your body, mind, and spirit to be transformed. You can't be selfless with energy!

Spiritual formation is less about dispensing information and more about asking questions. Jesus asked 307 questions in Scripture. You must let go of bitterness, embrace forgiveness, and open yourself to growth by asking yourself questions. Start with these:

1. Where do you see God most at work in your life?
2. Where are you growing the most?
3. What fruit of the Spirit is most abundant in your life?
4. What fruit of the Spirit is least abundant in your life?
5. What changes do you want to make in your life that only God can make?
6. What is God teaching you right now?
7. What is stopping you from doing what you know God has called you to do?
8. What do you want?
9. Where is God in that situation?
10. How does the Bible address that?
11. What do you see in the Scriptures that leads you to that conclusion?

12. What about ministry gets you really excited?

13. How are you and God doing?

14. How is God developing your character?

PRACTICING PRODUCTIVITY AND RESILIENCE

Blessed is the one who perseveres under trial because, having stood the test, that person will receive the crown of life that the Lord has promised to those who love him. James 1:12

The dominate thought in a determined woman is, Why am I doing this? The need for determination may be a defense posture—dealing with opposing views from others and knowing you must stand your ground. Alternatively, it may be an offense position—holding true to your values and pressing through hard times and battling discouragement. Either way, the end result is resilience.

Where do you fall on the scale? Do you lean more toward a defeatist attitude or are you on the stubborn end of the spectrum? Are you impetuous, circumspect, or non-responsive? Are you resilient? To help keep focus, ask yourself these questions:

1. What's the point? Remind yourself why you are hanging in there when resistance or discouragement set in. When a leader is vision-focused, the reason for perseverance isn't about self. Remind others why it's important to persevere in the face of opposition and difficulty.

2. What will happen if I give in or give up? If the reason for pressing in and pushing on isn't about you, what's the worst-case scenario if you give up? What could happen if you gave in . . . just a little? Discouragement comes to all. Depression issues and fatigue aren't as significant when you have a clear view of what it looks like if you give up. Sometimes it's catastrophic, and like Churchill, you just can't succumb to Hitler. At other times, you have to remember life isn't a football metaphor. You don't have to win every game. What will you gain by taking your foot off the accelerator? What will happen if you stop digging in so hard? Leaders aren't cowards, and they aren't quitters. However, stepping back for a bit may bring you closer to the big vision/mission win.

3. What does my "opposition" need? How can you include this in your strategy? Remember, in most cases, others aren't your enemies—Satan is. Don't demonize people. Don't personalize your opposition unless the opposition is you. Personalizing, finding fault, criticizing, and complaining suck up energy and focus and obscure your path to real solutions. If your opposition is your fear, procrastination or lack of resolve, what do you need to buck up?

4. Am I staying determined because this is important for me? Is your focus on you or the mission? If it's only about you, then your determination might be selfish stubbornness. Putting your team's mission first will always lead to the highest rewards for everyone.

These questions will help you keep your focus, but make sure you don't become so focused that you lose sight of your vision. Balance your determination with patience. An unmanaged driving conviction can result in impulsive acts. King Saul lost his kingdom to a shepherd boy because he refused to back off the throttle and wait on God. A rash countenance is an unwillingness to hold on, to loosen the determined grip in spite of signals to the contrary.

There's an old African story of how to trap a jungle monkey. The trapper drops a banana inside a narrow-necked jar. When a hungry monkey sticks its arm into the tiny opening it grabs the luscious banana. Even though it hears the trapper approaching to capture it, the greedy monkey cannot bring itself to let go of the banana. With frantic desperation, the chimp tries to pull the banana through the narrow top of the jar, but its clenched fist is too large to come out the top. This simple monkeycatching trap has been used for centuries.

There's a dynamic balance between the two extremes of being either impetuous or non-responsive. Circumspect—careful to consider all circumstances and possible consequences—is the best word to describe the leader's sweet spot of holy determination.

Determination is an intention to do something. As a leader, encourage others with these words: "I can do all this through him who gives me strength" (Phil. 4:13). Your source of strength is found in the power of the Holy Spirit and reminding yourself about this is the first step to appropriate your supernatural source.