

You Might Be Overlooking This All-Important Key to Your Transformation

“Pastor Reina, there’s something different about you.”

I heard these words, and I knew something had changed. This woman who greeted me after church may not have known what about me had changed, but I knew. I had gone through a spiritual metamorphosis. I had gone through conviction and confrontation, had received a revelation and now transformation was inevitable. I had a newfound passion for God, ministry and life. The God I had served for so many years had complete dominion over my life. I had surrendered to His pursuit over my entire heart.

Everything I needed, I found in His presence as I came face to face with the very essence of who God was in my life.

God had created a new heart and renewed a right spirit within me, which launched me toward my assignment with a new and improved attitude. Don’t be fooled, however; my transformation did not just happen. I had to be honest with myself and with God. I even had to make some confessions along the way.

It is difficult to live life pretending to have it all together only to come home and have to deal with the real self.

What we often do not realize is that we can be engaged in ministry or work and not be satisfied. If we are not nurturing our souls with the Word of God and with a time of conversation with Him that goes beyond a “give me” prayer, we can become weary.

Ministry had become a burden too heavy for me to carry, so I

did what people who are not fit do: I justified my inability to take time to strengthen my spiritual stamina. It was kind of how I had approached exercise. The thought of exercising was exhausting, and for the most part, I justified my lack of exercise with being too busy.

I couldn't understand my husband's enthusiasm when he first received his *Insanity* workout videos. Well, his enthusiasm was so contagious that I decided I was going to try it myself. Why not? *How hard could it be?* I thought. Besides, I thought that taking the time to exercise with my husband would be an added benefit to our already wonderful marriage.

Well, let's just say that when I was done with Day One of this video, it confirmed my relationship with exercise—I never had one. Physically, I was hurting. Every part of my body cried, "Help!" I had convinced myself that I could do this without preparing my body. The difference between my husband and me was that he often exercised, and I didn't. His body was prepared for the leaps and bounds of this video.

It dawned on me, after the fact, why my husband often felt it necessary to tell me, "Reina, you need to stretch before you work out. You need to get your body ready and your muscles loosened."

I usually responded, "I'll stretch while I work out!"

Sometimes husbands know best. He would tell me that stretching and warming up would lead to optimal performance and fewer injuries. But would I listen? Of course not.

Here is the correlation: God wants us to be in optimal spiritual shape so that we can do and be our very best. I have to confess there were some assignments in my past that I should have done better. God had provided all I needed; I had chosen, however, to jump into these mindlessly. I just wanted to get them done and move on. Doing this kept me blind to understanding God's vision. There were plenty of times I was

injured while on assignment. I realize now that many of those injuries could have been prevented had I taken the time to prepare accordingly.

My exercise fiasco with the *Insanity* video was congruent with my approach toward spiritual fitness. I cannot believe I survived some of my assignments without preparation. I may have survived them, but let me be honest, I felt the aftermath of going in unprepared. But God was forever gracious.

God wants us to prepare and train for the assignment before us. He too wants us to warm up our spiritual muscles in preparation for the task ahead. This is why God desires for us to be in relationship with Him. He wants to speak to us, prepare us, stretch us and align us for the task. Through prayer, times of meditation and reading the Word, we build resistance and muscle endurance.

I thought I could get away with my lack of training and preparation and quickly jump into the task. Injury awaited.

While there are things we may not be ready to confront, such as the loss of a loved one or a job, or the end of a relationship, God does tell us that there is a time for every season under the sun (see Eccl. 3). We may not know how we are going to react in certain seasons of our lives. Yet we know that these seasons are inevitable.

How we endure and how we end up on the other side—spiritually, emotionally and physically—are dependent on how fit we are in these areas when circumstances present themselves. This is why God transforms us. He changes our thinking, priorities and self-sufficient attitudes by aligning our hearts and connecting our earthly vessels (self) to His divine sovereignty. {eo}

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