

Face it | Christin Smith Myers

 christinmyers.com/single-post/Face-it

At our company holiday party, we brought in teachers who helped us stencil some of our favorite quotes onto pieces of wood. The beautiful artwork we created will decorate our new office space. It was a terrific team activity, and of course it was fascinating to see the quotes people selected. Some were those you would expect ("Be the change you wish to see in the world" and "A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step"). Others were less predictable but equally inspiring ("I can and I will" and "If you want to take the island, burn the boats").

One of my newest employees walked by, saw what I was stenciling onto my sign, and said, "That is so you."

I used to listen to Oprah Radio on XM, and one day sitting in traffic on Route 422, I heard Dr. Phil's voice telling the woman he was counseling, "If you can't face it, you can't fix it." I don't remember what her particular issue was, but I remember hearing him say it like it was yesterday. There's nothing particularly profound about the statement, yet I think of it all the time. And that's why I chose it as my quote for our new office wall.

I have a history of avoiding uncomfortable conversations and situations. I subverted my own preferences and needs so as to not make waves. And then resentment would eat away at me, whether it was about the lousy entree I didn't dare send back or about what I wanted my husband to do for me but wouldn't actually ask him to do. And then I'd get mad. And then I'd feel bad about it.

I spent most of my time dancing between guilt and resentment. It was exhausting and harmful.

I still get caught up in this pattern from time to time, but I have made huge strides. And I have to give that mini-pep talk from Dr. Phil some credit. At work, at home, and in all different types of relationships, I keep reminding myself, "If I can't face it, I can't fix it. So I've gotta face it."

This gives me the courage to open the credit card bill when I'm afraid of how high the total will be, to initiate a difficult conversation with my boss or employee, to say something to my husband even when it might start a fight, to dig deeply into a project to figure out where I messed up, to tell someone when I think they've crossed a line.

I heard the expression recently that "Sunlight is the best disinfectant." It's not easy to bring things out into the light. But it's effective. And the relief that comes from handling something uncomfortable is extraordinary.

What reality do you need to face?