



KARYN SHANKS MD
Heart, Hope, Healing

How We're Fooled By What We Can Measure

BY KARYN SHANKS MD | OCTOBER 26, 2019



"We don't know how to measure what we care about, so we care about what we measure."

-Richard Tapia

Whoa. *That's* powerhouse! And from the mouth of a mathematician!

I think he captures how uncomfortable we are with the uncertainty of our lives (what we care about), so we cling to what we *think* we know. Isn't that part of what we get from measuring things? A feeling of certainty? Even if we really can't know a thing for sure?

But there's something terribly wrong with that as a life strategy, isn't there?

First mistake: we put our faith in what we can measure, even if our measuring tools are flawed, our questions are flawed, or we're trying to measure the unmeasurable.

Second mistake: through the measuring, we fool ourselves into thinking we know something

for sure and forget to wonder what else there may be. We trade mystery for what we can quantify and slam the door on what's possible.

Just like the fruit flies who forget they can escape from the wide-open jar after a period of confinement. Having already tried, they know "for sure" they can't get out.

Or like the doctors who forget to search for the deeper meaning of their patient's illness once they've named "what's wrong" (the diagnosis). They lose the deeper context, root causes, and rich solutions to their patient's problems.

Or just like us—how we give our power away to the "experts," who've measured us in their expert ways, but still don't know us as well as we do.

Don't get me wrong, I love measuring things! But why can't we do both? Collect data *and* stay present for what we don't know, for the mystery of life, for what our data may not tell us? At the same time? Acknowledging how life is messy like that?

I'd love to hear your thoughts!

Have a gorgeous day!

Karyn

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Karyn Shanks, MD, is a physician who lives and practices in Iowa City. Her work is inspired by the science of Functional Medicine, body-mind principles, and wisdom gleaned from the transformational journeys of thousands of clients over her twenty-five-year career. Her work honors each individual and the power of their stories, their inner wisdom, and innate healing potential. She believes that the bones of healing are in what we do for ourselves. She is the author of *Liftoff*, a manual of energy recovery and healing through essential self-care practices.

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