

Better Living Through Creativity

As I have shared in other columns, heartfelt positive emotions, such as appreciation, gratitude, love, and compassion, have been linked to a state of being that promotes an inner harmony or psychophysiological coherence. This state has been associated with a range of positive health-related outcomes. In addition, this way of being promotes more emotional stability, an improved capacity to think clearly and an internal environment which both supports and stimulates spiritual experiences. This spiritual experience is perhaps linked to the fact that we are not only in harmony within. When we intentionally bring ourselves into psychophysiological coherence, we naturally experience a sense of greater connectedness because we step into harmony/coherence with the very matrix in which all Life exists.

Interestingly, while in this state of experiencing feelings of appreciation, gratitude, love, and compassion it has also been found that creativity flows much more freely and our intuitive insights become stronger.¹ This collation between our innate creativity and a state of being that promotes wellness and healing is useful to reflect upon as creativity is an energy of manifestation. In other words, when we are allowing the flow of our inherent creativity, we are exercising our abilities as Co-Creators.

In our culture, we often mistake the by-products of creativity for the energy itself. Creativity is an inborn ability that is responsible for, but different from, artistic endeavors. It is a process not an outcome. Paintings, inventions, dances, musical pieces and poems are just the traces that the energy of creativity may leave in its wake. They are like the streak of light a meteor paints across the sky as it makes its entry into our world. Just as that light isn't the actual meteor, so too the byproducts of our creative process aren't the "real thing."

Creativity is an aspect of our life force that drives manifestation in all its forms. As such, it must be nurtured to support the healthy continuance of our existence. Benjamin Disraeli said, "We are not creatures of circumstance; we are creators of circumstance." In other words, as a direct result of our inborn creativity, we have the capacity to participate in the creation of our reality. Pablo Picasso, arguably one of the twentieth century's most famous and prolific artists, once said, "Everything you can imagine is real." In other words, our creative imagination serves an indispensable role in this process, in that it is that which allows us to dream all that is possible! Truly understanding this means that we absolutely can have a rich life with deep fulfillment. In his honoring rituals, my Ulchi shaman teacher, Grandfather Misha would pray for what in English translates as "happiness." What he meant by this idea is having a healthy life that not only meets one's needs in terms of survival but includes joy, love, excitement and stimulating challenge. So if you aren't experiencing "happiness," that is, if your life circumstances aren't fulfilling--it is a symptom that you are not living creatively!

No matter how much we may long for it, as we consider stepping into the unknown territory of changing how our life looks and feels, we usually begin to feel fear. What is interesting about this stage is--if our fears are unconscious--we may not be able to identify that we are indeed fearful! So, how do you recognize a demon, you can't see? A wonderful method is compassionately observing our own behaviors. When we do so, we have opportunities to notice the signs when we are being run by an unconscious fear or motivation. Simply put, it is in those times we fall into the behavior patterns we use to deaden or push away "uncomfort-

able” feelings. These behavior patterns may include compulsively busying ourselves at work or at home, eating, drinking, taking drugs, exhaustively exercising, mindlessly watching television, surfing the web or even recreational shopping! While they temporarily make us “feel better,” these pain/fear avoidance strategies directly interfere with manifesting a more satisfying existence. They do this by deflecting or distracting us from the real work that needs to be done. That work is the sometimes embarrassing, inconvenient, and sometimes downright painful process of identifying and confronting our unconscious fears. In desiring a different life, we must have the courage and willingness to be “uncomfortable!”

The psychologist and humanistic philosopher Erich Fromm said, “Creativity requires the courage to let go of certainties.” Under these circumstances, looking to nature can be very supportive. For instance, there is nothing in the caterpillar that gives any clue to the butterfly it will eventually become. It can’t rely on a previous experience for reassurance. It is a leaf-eating, soft bodied creature that will become a nectar drinker with a rigid exoskeleton who can fly!! To accomplish this remarkable feat, the caterpillar has to be willing to completely surrender it’s old way of being and previous understandings about it’s world. In the shelter of the chrysalis the caterpillar becomes a “mush” of undifferentiated cells--nothing of the old way of being remains. To be able to enter our own “chrysalis phase,” deep self examination is essential. If necessary, we may even need to enter into a period of psychotherapy for the purpose of uncovering unconscious impediments to our desired life. In other words, we need to sort out how and why we unconsciously desire to hold on to our caterpillar form!

You can’t skip this step. There isn’t any short cut to this part of the becoming. However, once you have identified any unconscious impediments--once you really know your inner demons and how they operate--you can use generating feelings of gratitude or appreciation to loosen the grip they have on your spirit! With these feelings, we realign ourselves once again with what is perfect and divine both inside and around us. We also open ourselves to even more inspiration. In essence, we consciously step into a renewable and sustainable cycle of creativity! ²

There is one more critical component of creating the healthy, happy life that you desire. It is actually putting in the hard work of following through with what your imagination offers. Believe completely in what you imagine and then use all your talents and efforts in striving to manifest it. In this way, we are using creativity as an engine for action. American humorist Arnold Glasgow holds an opinion that I have found to be true in my life--that is “when an idea not coupled with action it will never get any bigger than the brain cell it occupied.” I would also add, based on my own experience that, your efforts need to be ongoing as the reality you are creating will continue to evolve in the process of it’s manifestation! In other words, a big idea can become and even bigger reality as we fuel it with our focused actions.

Dare to live as the life you can dream!

1. Doc Childre with Rollin McCraty, PhD “Psychophysiological Correlates of Spiritual Experience” Biofeedback, Winter 2001, pp.13-17

2. Support for this process may be found in using the CD, Becoming the New Human which is available through Amazon.com or from www.spiritpassages.com

Nationally recognized shaman teacher/healer, speaker, and author, Evelyn C. Rysdyk delights in supporting people to remember their sacred place in All That Is. Whether through face-to-face contact with individual patients, groups and conference participants, or through the printed word in books, columns and articles--Evelyn uses her loving humor and passion to open people's hearts and inspire them to live more joyful, fulfilling and purposeful lives.

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