



Allure Article – for Sunday, March 2009

Give Your Story A Voice

As I was cleaning out a closet this week, I found a large plastic container packed with years and years of my personal journals. It made me smile. I guess I have always been a writer at heart. Putting pen to paper is a way I soothe my soul, drawing depth and texture from my human story. In my teens and early twenties, writing was particularly healing for me. Poetry and prose gave my heart a voice. As I honored them, painful experiences have added color and design to the tapestry I am becoming. I am committed to emerging from pain *better* rather than *bitter*.

For almost a decade I stopped writing. I got busy; I didn't feel the urge. Then, in my early thirties, life's intensities escalated, pushing me to crisis. As my inner discomfort grew, I found myself in line at a store buying a new journal. Again, writing became my channel for healing.

Giving voice to the stories I am living helps me understand my own perspectives and those of others. I grow as a person. I harvest hidden pearls of wisdom. Rather than allowing my pain to fester, I give it an outlet. Old energy is brought up and released. Writing is my way. There are plenty of others.

Those who suppress their stories seem to think they can bypass the effect their past has on them. Yet our deep, subconscious traumas do not go away by themselves. They lurk in the recesses of our soul. They surface again and again until they are owned and brought to resolution.

Do you try to avoid your painful memories? Are you harboring a wound in your heart? Is there a secret you've carried for years, fearful of releasing it?

What we avoid expressing is always there. No matter how busy we keep ourselves, no matter how many strategies we employ to distract and numb us, our pain brews within, draining us. It reveals itself subtly (or boldly) as fatigue, discouragement, pessimism, or even depression and despair.

What has happened has happened. We can't change the past. What we can decide is how often we relive the situation in our mind, maintaining our resistance to it. Can you see that agonizing incidents that may have happened in mere seconds or minutes, can consume your whole life if you let them? These situations occurred days, months, years even eons ago yet we keep them alive in every moment that we replay them for ourselves. The past is gone. No one else is doing this to us. We are choosing to dwell on unhappy thoughts.

If you find painful memories relentlessly churning in your head, why not take charge? Don't let your thoughts idle on rerun. You don't have to avoid the past. You needn't attach to sorrow either, wearing it as a badge pinned not into your shirt but into your heart. Instead, when you are ready for real relief, you can move powerfully into the present. You can consciously bring a painful event into your awareness and examine it. What happened from your point of view? What emotions does it make you feel? Begin to express your story with the purpose of moving beyond it to healing.

Begin by being honest. There is no point in hiding from your pain. You can't keep a secret from yourself, can you? Since you can't, find a private moment, perhaps sitting in your bedroom or walking alone. Tell yourself and your Source the story as you experienced it. As you do, observe. Be both the story-teller and the listener.

Let your thoughts and feelings spill out. It's okay to be raw. Just say what is in your heart. Let yourself cry or rage. Tears may be needed to melt the icy hurt within so you can become free. Realize you are not the person you were at the moment these things occurred. You have grown and changed.

Don't worry that your pain will overcome you. Let me assure you that the True You, the Grand Spirit you are, is far greater than any traumatic experience, belief or emotion. As you welcome hurt into your awareness, you will begin to see that You are not your pain. These memories are only passing clouds in the vast sky of You.

You might consider writing your story down. Journaling is a proven way of allowing deep disappointments, betrayals and desires to emerge. You may be shocked at details you begin to recall. Let it all come: the fury, the terror, the woundedness, the longing, the intensity. Allow your words and feelings to flood the page. Let yourself be brutally honest. If you need to, you can tear up or burn your work when you are done to maintain your privacy. As best you can, watch yourself process your pent-up emotions and imprisoning beliefs.

If writing doesn't suit you, try painting, drawing, sculpture, music, dance or drama—use your imagination. Find the medium right for your soul. Expect surprising insights. See what happens. Many great works of art are born from deep suffering. As you heal, you may find that your deepest griefs are being transformed into gifts you can share with others.

Once you have opened to healing, you may sense that you are ready to confide in a counselor or friend. If you have no one you can trust, feel free to share your story with me via email. I promise to keep all details confidential. I also promise to respond personally to what you write.

Expressing your pain is an essential component to well-being. If our families, communities and countries are to move towards wholeness, we must welcome whole ourselves. We do that when we bring our past into the present with the intention of healing. Own your past. Honor it. Open to seeing yourself with love. Let your experiences, even the darkest ones, become the raw materials through which you create your masterpiece of life.

If you would like more ideas on how to give voice to your experience, please check out my inspirational video clips, shown each Friday morning at 7:35 a.m. on Today on STV (on both Silverbird TV and DSTV.) If you can't catch them on TV, you can see them on www.youtube.com. Just search by my name.

Food For Thought

Although the world is full of suffering, it is also full of the overcoming of it.
-- Helen Keller

© Patricia G. Omoqui 2009, All Rights Reserved

Patricia Omoqui is an internationally recognized inspirational speaker, life coach and writer. Patricia's mission in life is to inspire people to move beyond fear so they can reach their full potential.

To share your thoughts about this article, please email Patricia at allure@patriciaomoqui.com or visit her at her website: www.patriciaomoqui.com.