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Guiding Questions for Life's Journey

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The journey is NOT only about the final destination. The journey itself is remarkable. It's exciting to think about the possibilities of what we can create in our lives and who we are capable of becoming. It is essential, though, to remember that each step of our journey can be fully enjoyed.

We often postpone our happiness to the future. "When I am able to achieve this, then I will be fulfilled," says the voice of our ego mind. Yet, the greater part of our spirit, the connection we have to Source energy beckons us to become aware of how fascinating, how extraordinary each moment on our path truly is. The Universe invites us to accept each moment as perfect.

Most of us have learned to judge our experiences as either good or bad. When "bad" things happen to us, we have formed the habit of asking, "Why did this situation happen to me?" We feel sorry for ourselves during difficult times. We have come to believe that a "good" life is one that only has easy, fun situations.

I'd like to challenge this notion. What if we could see the beauty in each and every circumstance we find ourselves in?

During certain periods of my life I have experienced overwhelming darkness. Sometimes the pain in my heart has been so intense that I wondered how I could face another day. I'd find myself feeling broken. I'd feel as if I was free-falling in the unknown, like I had no control over what was happening. As I was free-falling I'd be kicking and screaming in mid air, flailing my arms and legs in all directions, crying out for help. I wanted the situations I was experiencing to change. I resisted my circumstances and felt there was something wrong with what I was experiencing.

The last few years I have grown to realize that rather than having tantrums when I experience difficulty in life, I can instead calmly move in the darkness observing my thoughts and feelings, listening for guidance. I have found that by accepting each

moment as a necessary step in my journey, I begin to flow with life no matter how challenging it is.

It is essential for us to experience the deep emotions that go along with painful experiences. Pretending that everything is "OK" only postpones our healing to a later date. By being honest with ourselves and allowing ourselves to move through the spectrum of emotions that arise in difficult circumstances, we open the door for healing to begin.

I want to share with you some guiding questions to help you see each and every moment of your life as something to accept, to even embrace. Yes, I'm even speaking of the hard situations - the break-ups with girlfriends, the loss of loved ones who pass on, the misfortunes and seeming "failures."

Question # 1: "What opportunity for learning does this experience offer me?" As I open to learning, I am always amazed at how much I expand my understanding.

Even after finishing my professional basketball career, basketball was an integral part of my life. Playing was my main outlet for enjoyment. I continued to play almost every day. One of the worst things that can happen to a basketball player is to tear their ACL (a ligament in the knee). That's what happened to me in 2001. Not only was the injury excruciatingly painful, it was a time of deep sorrow for me. Playing basketball with the intensity I had always known had come to an end.

At first the situation felt tragic to me. I went through a grieving process. I'd watch other people playing and long to be back on the court. I'd cry and wish for things to be different. Yet after the initial shock, I began to ask, "What opportunity for learning is there in tearing my ACL?" It took me awhile to see any good in it, but gradually I began to see jewels of appreciation come from the situation.

I became grateful that the injury didn't happen until after I had completed professional competition. What a blessing to have had a virtually injury-free career. I celebrated that. I saw the passion I had for the game and knew that it was why I felt such loss. Many people never experience such deep passion in life and I had found it in basketball. To love deeply often means to grieve deeply.

After the injury I became aware that my identity as a person was wrapped up in being a basketball player. Though there is nothing wrong with that, it opened my eyes to new experiences. Losing my ability to play basketball competitively created additional time, space and energy for me to develop other talents and interests. I learned yoga. I took dance classes. I started spending time in nature.

This painful situation was rich in learning. Was my knee injury a hindrance to my

journey? Some might say it was. However, I recognized it as a blessing, full of gifts of wisdom. I could have fought the situation - wondering, "Why did this have to happen to me? Why am I facing an 'Obstacle' like this?" Instead, I accepted the circumstances and thanked the Universe for the experience.

Question # 2: "What miracle does each moment in my life offer me?" By asking this question, you are bound to see your whole life with new eyes. I believe miracles are at work all the time in our lives. We often get so caught up in worry and inner suffering that we fail to see the miracles.

Recently I had a client who was experiencing extreme heartache in her marriage. After nearly 10 years she found herself extremely unhappy because of the distance she felt between herself and her husband. There was an underlying love and friendship between them but they had grown apart. A major blow-up between caused them to decide they needed to separate from each other since they were so close to divorce. When she called me for our weekly coaching call, she was feeling deep pain.

As we talked, I asked her, "What miracle is this situation offering you?" After some thought she told me that the time away from her husband was giving her time to see that she had not been valuing herself enough. She often put her needs aside and silently suffered. She became aware of how her fear of the marriage ending kept her from expressing to her husband how she honestly felt about difficulties they had experienced together.

A miracle came in the form of soul searching done by both spouses. The time of separation that many outside the situation viewed as tragic was healing for their marriage. The extreme unhappiness helped them to remember how much they really loved each other and how they had forgotten to express this to one another. They discovered that the unexpressed anger had become a block between them. For the first time in ten years, they began to talk honestly about all that had happened-another miracle.

My client realized that no matter whether they stayed together or decided to part ways, the personal growth she experienced from the situation has helped her evolve as a person.

How might each situation you experience be a miracle for your life? You won't know unless you begin to use this guiding question for interpreting every situation that arises.

I believe that each step of the journey is necessary for our Soul's evolution and growth. When we choose to see life this way, we can interpret any circumstance we encounter as a gift. Each moment becomes fascinating when we ask these questions. As we relax into our lives rather than fight and judge our lives as "going wrong" in some way, we begin to find gratitude for every encounter, every challenge, and every success.

Your assignment this week is to write down these guiding questions on a piece of paper and keep it with you everywhere you go. As often as possible, read these questions to yourself. When you find yourself in situations that feel difficult or uncomfortable this week, choose one of these questions to ask yourself.

Take time to write in a journal. Jot down the question that you are choosing to answer and then write out your answers. By committing your thoughts to paper you give yourself an opportunity to more fully clarify your answers.

If you choose to ask these guiding questions, you will begin to see yourself and your whole life from a brand new perspective. It is certainly worth a try!

Food For Thought

All events in your life are perfect.

Shift your perspective.

Believe this.

Relax into it.

Go with the flow of life.

Don't fight it, instead accept it.

Find the pebbles of wisdom

In everything you experience.

There are gems of truth,

Gems that are treasures to share with others.

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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.

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