



Allure Article – for Sunday, February 2009

Life Is Not Hard

My husband recently sent me a link to “Aye Ole,” an inspiring music video by Infinity. The scenery is breathtaking, the music uplifting, and the lyrics echo life principles that I teach my clients: “Life is not hard for those who believe it is not hard.” There is something Divine going on even in the midst of our darkness. Do you believe that? I experience this as true in my life.

It is fascinating to watch the way different people deal with the same situations. Recently two friends of mine who work in the same company both lost their jobs. Their families and finances were similar. Both of them needed to provide for their families; each had to pay for the home he lived in. Both faced this dreaded news. One friend was devastated. He immediately panicked and was sucked into a fearful frenzy. He was sure that losing his job in a bad economy meant financial disaster.

The other friend felt an initial surge of worry but determined to calm down and ask for Help. He opened his mind to finding a hopeful way of moving forward. Gradually he was able to say, “Wow, this is interesting. I guess it was time for this job to end. I trust that another possibility will emerge.” He actually began to feel excitement stirring within him realizing that he could have a fresh start. He trusted that he would find a new opportunity.

Same circumstances. Opposite responses. Each viewpoint created a pattern of thought and emotion. Each of my friends could use his intellect to prove his perspective true. The one who was upset could point to a pile of monthly bills, a dwindling bank balance, and gloomy predictions of rising unemployment. There was plenty of evidence to support his belief that he was headed for tragedy. Was life going to be hard for him? He believed so and used his mind to search out every possible “fact” to support that belief system. The inevitable emotional state was anxiety and depression. He was confused; he found it hard to think clearly about next steps.

The other man also used his mind to find proof for his view. He admitted that he had always known he would leave this job someday. It wasn’t his dream job. Deep down he had actually wanted to change jobs for awhile. He saw that the severance pay the company was providing would give him a small window to look for another job. The company was even offering laid off employees an opportunity to work with consultants to improve and polish their resumes. He gratefully accepted that service. He remembered that his Higher Power had always provided. When life closed one door, another one always opened. He would trust that this too would work out for the best. Looking at his situation in this light, he gained relief. He felt hope and peace. As he relaxed, all sorts of possibilities for action came to mind.

Our circumstances do not determine how we feel. Our thoughts about those circumstances control our inner world and frame our vision of the outer world. The view we choose also has a mental and emotional impact on the people close to us. Which of the above men would you prefer to be around?

I believe that our Source is always present with us and provides for us at all times. It is just that often we don't like the form (always changing) that provision takes. So we argue with life. It is pointless because we never win. Rather than focusing all our attention and energy on the impossible task of changing the past, we could accept our situation as it is and ask for Guidance on a way forward.

We can either become victims to our own incessant resistance of life or we can become the powerful victors who choose the way we will respond. "The one thing you can't take away from me is the way I choose to respond to what you do to me. That last of one's freedoms is to choose one's attitude in any given circumstance."

You may be thinking, "It is fine for Patricia to talk this way and share inspiring quotations but she doesn't understand what hard things I'm facing right now." That's true. I haven't walked in your shoes. However, consider this. In Nazi concentration camps, some prisoners did better than others in the horrible conditions they experienced. All were starving, mistreated and separated from family and friends. Yet, some triumphed through all they endured. One of these prisoners was Victor Frankel, (author of the quote above) and of the now classic book, *A Search for Meaning*. Let me enlarge on his perspective: "We who lived in concentration camps can remember the men who walked through the huts comforting others, giving away their last piece of bread. They may have been few in number, but they offer sufficient proof that everything can be taken from a man but one thing: the last of the human freedoms—to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one's own way."

Each of us can do the same. We have a choice in every moment. You may not be able to change some of the situations confronting you but you can change your thoughts about those conditions. If you are ready for change, the following ideas can support you in making inner shifts that will allow you to find comfort in life amidst hardship and even encourage those around you.

First, become aware. Watch your thoughts about situations you encounter as you move through the day. Do you see how your thought choices either bring you suffering or peace? Take close note of the connection between your thought patterns and the resultant emotional states.

Second, watch how others react to life. Are their choices increasing or decreasing their suffering? Do you know people who are peaceful and optimistic? Try to find out how they maintain their perspective. We can learn from observing others.

Third, use these helpful questions: What perspective could I choose to help me feel better right now? Is there anything in this situation for which I can be grateful? What's right (not wrong) about my life right now? What good am I missing in this situation? After you pose these questions, quiet your mind and allow Spirit to shine new insights into your circumstances.

Next, write a letter to the Universe about each tough situation. Put your worries, your fears, your concerns, your wishes all down on paper and then file it in the "Universe file." Let this stuff go. Don't spend your valuable thought time on things over which you have no control. Leave these challenges in your Higher Power's loving hands. You will feel better when you release your burdens.

Also, look around you. Aren't there plenty of people worrying? Choose at least one day each week and allow others to carry the worry load. The Divine actually invites us to give our cares over. To stay healthy you need a break from the mental and emotional burdens. Relax. Lighten up. Take care of you. You can't help others if you are exhausted. Once

you have experienced a day like this, consider the possibility that you could live worry free every day.

Last, make a daily gratitude list. Sit down. Discipline yourself to put on paper the good things in your life, even the tiniest. What blessings are you missing right now because your mind is spinning in negative, fearful spirals? Try to fill a whole sheet of paper. Then sit for a moment and enjoy thinking about those good things. Celebrate. Let the gentle energy of gratitude soothe your heart and mind.

Food For Thought

“There is nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so.” William Shakespeare

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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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