

## A Dark Night of the Soul ~

Recently I went through what is called a dark night of the soul which was a personal experience that shook me on every level of my being. I had no prior knowledge that such an experience even existed until Bruce shared his dark night of the soul experiences with me. I decided to do some research on my own and discovered that a dark night of the soul was indeed a valid personal or spiritual experience. Generally speaking a dark night of the soul occurs at the time of death and typically during the night but it is also an experience some people go through in life for the sake of becoming either personally or spiritually enlightened, each having its own kind of experience and the degree of it. Knowing that my experience could benefit others who perhaps have not traveled down this particular road I was inspired to share my story because as I learned from my experience there are no instruction manuals and that basically you are left on your own to discern what is taking place within you. I had little to draw on when I was going through my dark night of the soul so if anyone should find themselves blazing this trail I hope this article will serve as a source of inspiration and encouragement.

My story begins with having expressed on many an occasion my desire to know the Truth about the matters concerning life, God and the Universe and my place within the whole of it. However, in professing my desire to know the Truth I seemed to have missed the fine print which contained in it the disclaimer that held the promise of being told the Truth but not without its personal and spiritual costs that ultimately would somehow work out to be in my best interest when all was said and done. I discovered well after the fact that I was totally unprepared for the psychological roller coaster ride I was about to endure and the events that would threaten to push my sanity right over my psychological edge one more time in my life. The events that were yet to take place and the significance of them were, of course, not at all evident at the onset of this experience and did not become apparent until I was fully engulfed in my dark night of the soul that came bearing down on me with all its mighty force. I literally felt as though I had been grabbed by the backseat of my pants or grabbed by the back of my neck and unmercifully dragged over some very rugged terrain. I recall describing the feeling much like an old fashioned washboard and I was the one being scrubbed clean. However, the writing of what was to come had been on the wall for some time, I just didn't see it until it had consumed every level of my being. When it was all said and done I was mentally, emotionally and even physically drained for several days afterwards.

At the onset of this experience my comfortable and peaceful environment had suddenly become very unfriendly, even threatening, and not as peaceful as it had been. Things around me began to get more and more distorted in spite of my futile attempts to not lose my mental and emotional grip. It was as if I woke up one morning peering through lenses that made things appear to be other than what they really were. I seemed to have

been stricken with a perceptual handicap that affected my ability to discern my feelings and emotions which was so contrary to how accurately perceptive I had become following my journey of self-discovery years earlier. It was very confusing to say the least! It felt as though the rug of familiarity had been yanked right out from under me and I was left standing on some pretty shaky ground. There were times when it even felt like the earth was going to open up and swallow me whole. I could not make sense out of anything. I was incapable of making any sound decisions because I was not the least bit rational. Irrationality seemed to be running rampant through me as if someone other than me was in control of my senses. Senses, what senses! My senses seemed to have been on strike or were MIA without my knowing it. Another striking feature of this experience was that I actually felt abandoned and even felt ganged up on by whoever was involved in this most painful escapade that eventually led to some serious enlightenment that in the long run was to my benefit after all.

Mystics and Christians refer to the dark night of the soul as a spiritual crisis. The experiences I described above are all characteristic of a dark night of the soul. Wikipedia describes Dark Night of the Soul as a treatise written by Saint John of the Cross which contains a commentary to explain the poem he wrote also of the same name. The article in Wikipedia goes on to state that the poem narrates the journey of the soul from its bodily home back to its union with God. It is said that the journey occurs during the night, literally and figuratively speaking and represents the hardships and difficulties the soul meets in its detachment from the world and reaching the light of the union with the Creator. There are several steps in this dark night that are related in successive stanzas of the poem. The theme of the poem is expressed as the painful experience that people endure as they seek to grow in spiritual maturity and union with God. The poem is divided into two books that reflect the two phases of the dark night. The first is a purification of the senses which, incidentally, is easier said than done. The second and apparently much more intense of the two stages is the purification of the spirit, not as common as the purification of the senses. In the event anyone is interested in reading up on the dark night of the soul, here is the link to Wikipedia:  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dark\\_Night\\_of\\_the\\_Soul](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dark_Night_of_the_Soul).

While doing some additional research I learned that the dark night of the soul is described as an experience that occurs in response to the desire for personal enlightenment and is where personal issues are worked out through the senses on a mental and emotional level. The process of purification truly does feel like the lights have been turned off and you are suddenly standing in a blanket of darkness. Just in case this particular experience isn't enough to endure there is what is called a spiritual dark night of the soul which is where spiritual matters are worked out in the darkness of the soul. Something I'm not particularly anxious to engage in! Neither of these experiences is effortless which is why they are so vividly described as a personal or spiritual "crisis". It's a crisis because you suddenly find yourself standing face to face

with whatever issues have been brought to the surface of your conscious awareness that seemed to have appeared out of nowhere. You can rest assure it is not likely to be smooth sailing, and so it was with me and my experience. As is so characteristic of my nature I went kicking and screaming every step of the way which of course did not make getting through the experience unscathed very easy on my psyche.

What I came to learn is that when you ask to know the Truth, as Z so eloquently described to me at the tail end of my experience, is that you cannot expect to have your spiritual field opened up to receive the truth if you have not yet understood your own personal truths. These personal truths must come to the surface of your conscious awareness so that they can be cleared away otherwise they remain as unseen obstacles that will continue to block incoming spiritual or universal truths that are comprehended on higher planes of understanding. In my case there were some personal issues that had to be dealt with that related not only to the changes that had occurred in my life last year but the changes in a lifestyle I had grown accustomed to over the years and was struggling to come to terms with. Even with all my metaphysical and spiritual background there simply was no way for me to predict the psychological stress I would eventually come to feel in response to these changes that were almost a year in the making. The problem was that as they began to surface into my conscious awareness they were so subtle at first that they were more like an inconvenience than a real problem or an important issue that needed to be worked out. But soon thereafter those little annoyances began to gather up some steam and before I even knew what was going on they were running full steam ahead having gained their own momentum and very quickly became my worst nightmare. Suddenly I was confronted with feelings and emotions that seemed to have popped up out of nowhere and for no good reason or so I thought. The specifics are not tantamount to the purpose of this article, therefore I will not disclose them except to say that they were very important issues that needed to be worked out for my own good although it sure didn't feel like it at the time. It wasn't like I was a willing participant. To the best of my recollection I had not signed up for a crash course on what it feels like to experience a dark night of the soul – or had I. What I didn't realize was that directly and indirectly I had asked for this event to occur at this time of my life in response to my relentless plea to know the Truth. Had I not dealt with these issues I would have been left stuck in a very miserable psychological rut that would have taken its toll on me in ways I shudder to think about. Thankfully in my case, Bruce was not the least bit threatened by my inability to be mentally or emotionally rational, in spite of my best efforts, because he had already experienced his dark night of the soul which as he said occurred on more than one occasion.

In my quest to know the Truth the deliverance of many truths had been a fairly easy process in which I attained a plethora of newfound knowledge. However this very comfortable process suddenly came to a screeching halt, apparently to raise up some personal issues at this time of my life that I did not even know where going to be there to

deal with. Had these issues not been brought to my conscious awareness my peaceful life was about to unravel with me being the one most surprised and caught off guard. Like it or not I was forced to face these issues over the course of many dark nights of my soul. I have absolutely no idea exactly when it began because as I said earlier the personal issues that were being brought into my conscious awareness were so subtle at first that they were hardly even noticeable. I tried to estimate the timeframe which appears to be the better part of a two week period give or take a day or two on either end of the experience. As my dark night of the soul was drawing near its end it occurred to me that there are no dark night of the soul manuals or instruction books to help get through the process unscathed and left in one psychological and spiritual piece. Looking back on the experience, had it not been for Bruce I know for a fact that I would not have made it through wholly intact. He was definitely a grounding factor for me and was a positive influence while I was inconveniently up to my eyeballs in a most unexpected and much unappreciated period of resolving the personal issues that surfaced.

In closing I suggest that no one be aloof where the dark night of the soul is concerned because it is an experience that is all too real and is one that can become a very pivotal moment in your life just as it was in mine. What starts out as a personal or spiritual crisis eventually becomes a blessing. When you finally come back into the light after having been in the darkness for an indefinite period of time you will find that you are not the same person because some things deep within you have been removed. You actually come out of the experience a better person for it. Any mental or emotional pain, or anguish endured will have been well worth the effort. But don't get too cozy because the mystics of old claim that there can be more than one dark night of the soul experience. I can only hope that if such an experience should occur in my reality sometime in the future that at least I will recognize the writing on the wall before I forget who I am and what I know.

It has been my pleasure to share my personal story with my Dragon of Personal Drama readers and I sincerely hope that it will serve you well in some capacity, perhaps yet to be experienced. If you have had such an experience but were not able to identify it as such please know that you are okay and that the experience itself was truly for your benefit. If you wish to ask questions, make comments or share your story with me or perhaps share it here on the website please feel free to send me an email.

Love and Light

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