

Tying Up Loose Ends ~

As the journey of self-discovery is indeed an ongoing odyssey of future discoveries, my experiences have been just that. When I wrote the Dragon of Personal Drama, I was retelling the discoveries I made during that initial phase of my journey. From there I went on to create the Dragon of Personal Drama website, which over the course of time has grown extensively. But since the time both those very poignant events materialized, I have gone through many more phases of self-discovery, that combined with my previous phases of self-discovery are the underpinnings of my second book, *The Odyssey of Self-Discovery*. This book is a slow work in progress because its many chapters correspond to the many phases of my own spiritual growth and personal development that too have been an ongoing work in progress. So rather than jump the gun and whip out a manuscript, I chose to take it slow because doing so enables me to add more substance to this second book, thus giving it more purpose and meaning.

To sum up the whole of all the phases of discovery and growth I have experienced it would have to begin with the Serenity Prayer:

*God grant me the serenity
To accept the things I cannot change,
Courage to change the things I can change,
And wisdom to know the difference.*

Now the reason why my phases of spiritual growth and personal development correspond so well to the Serenity Prayer is that right off the bat I was real short on serenity. In fact, I didn't really know what serenity was because the first fifty plus years of my life was anything but serene. So on the day I first embarked on my journey of self-discovery, not only was I craving serenity in my life, I was immediately confronted by many things in my past and current experiences at the time that I could not realistically change. Thus, coming to terms with just that much was a challenge all unto itself. Finding the courage to change the things I could change was a monumental challenge too because I had to first come to terms with what things about myself and my personal reality could realistically be changed. The problem was that I had absolutely no idea what I could or could not change or even why, for that matter. And the wisdom to know the difference - well, this too was no easy feat! At the time I had no way of discerning the whole of my life's experiences, much less to discern it with wisdom. Thus, every line of the Serenity Prayer represented a host of unforeseen challenges lying in wait for me to discover along the path of my journey of self-discovery.

It appeared that I was a Questor of Truth, sailing in stormy seas without a compass or a charted course. It appeared that I was lost at sea, because I had no clue where this journey was going to take me or if I would ever find my way to safe harbors. Notice that I did not say if I would ever find my way *back* to safe harbors, because I had never been

in safe harbors to begin with, so arriving there, would indeed be a completely new experience. Needless to say, that before I could hope to accept or change anything about my personal reality or myself I had to come to terms with the many self-imposed causes that created the adverse effects that played out in my life over the years and did so in the most undesirable ways. To even admit that these causes were self-imposed was a huge hurdle I had to learn how to overcome, given that my victim mentality was well embedded in the depths of my psyche, thus breaking through the thick layers that protected my victim state of mind was no easy feat. I can assure you I did not relinquish my perceived rightful title easily!

So making clear distinctions between what I had perceived was my reality and the causes of it, such as they were, and what was actual were monumental challenges given that my own perceptions were, as it turned out, quite distorted. Thus, unraveling the many layers of circumstances and events that made up the whole of my reality up to that time of my life was nearly an impossible feat – or so I thought. In the beginning it did seem impossible to me because I had never been exposed to spiritual principles such as the ones I came to know about during the course of my journey. So things like taking responsibility for my own actions and reactions, as well as my own thoughts and feelings was an entirely new concept as was learning that I was a co-creator of my reality and that my reality was the result of my own thinking, first and foremost. This was big stuff! Running into this information was like running into a brick wall that simply was not going to give against the force of my mental inertia. My first reaction, of course, was what reason would I have had for intentionally creating my reality as I experienced it all those years, which to me seemed ludicrous. Thus, the principle that states like attracts like and thoughts become things was indeed my first cognitive hurdle that I had to come to grips with.

So as I continued along my journey of self-discovery, I had to make many changes, which right out of the starting gate was to examine my rather dysfunctional thought patterns, which, of course, I did not even know existed. But as I came to find out, these thought patterns not only existed, they were driving the course of my reality and were manifesting things I did not desire to experience and not the things I truly desired to experience. I came to realize that my thought patterns were not at all supporting my desires, thus, I could not realistically realize or manifest my dreams anymore than I could achieve my goals, at least not without a struggle. So examining my thought patterns at close range was paramount if I was ever going to change the things I could change in my reality. The avalanche of undesirable, painful, and difficult experiences had to stop somewhere and this was a good place to begin the process.

The next issue that came before me concerned my emotions, which as I discovered was going to unfold in many successive layers over a very long period of time and through all the many phases of my quest for truth. It happened this way because there was far more

to the business of the emotions than just the initial phase I had experienced early on in my journey of self-discovery. There was much more to learn about the emotions than I could have possibly imagined. Thus, it seemed that the only way I was really going to understand the emotions was by way of experience, which I did by way of other circumstances and events that had to play out just as they did so that I would thoroughly understand the many aspects of emotions. I have since acquired an in-depth understanding of the emotions, and not easily, I might add!

In between examining my dysfunctional and rather destructive thought patterns, as well as acquiring an in-depth understanding of the emotions, mine too of course, I also had to come to terms with my own perceptions, which were a huge problem all by itself. I discovered that there was a lot about my reality that I was empowered to change, just by changing how I viewed my reality and myself. Thus, taking a real close look at my perceptions, which were the distorted lenses I viewed my life through was a very empowering experience and has since been an aspect of my reality that I pay close attention to. So not only was I empowered to change my thought patterns and harness my emotions, I was equally empowered to view my reality and myself from lenses that allowed me to see things with greater clarity. But this accomplishment did not come any easier because there were many layers that had to be peeled back before the truths about my reality were revealed...and this too took time and patience.

Now as if all these challenges were not enough to contend with, there was also the matter of my feelings, which tend to get hurt very easily and when that happens, everything else goes right down the tube. So coming to grips with the fact that how I feel about someone or something or even about myself affects my thoughts, as my thoughts always line up with how I feel, caused me to sometimes act or react in rather unpleasant ways. And as I kept acting and reacting to my feelings, those reactions became habitual to the point where I would react without giving my reactions a second thought, in fact, I didn't even know why I was reacting as I was, except that my feelings seemed to justify my reactions.

All of these influences, which by the way are internal, not external, led me to examine my expectations, which like everything else in my reality, were whacked out too. To say that my expectations were unrealistic would be an understatement because they really were. In some cases my expectations almost exceeded my capacity to live up to them and in other cases they were insufficient for me to reach the heights I so wanted to reach with respect to the goals I wanted to achieve and the dreams I wanted to realize, and so I struggled when I did not have to, but I did not know this about myself at the time. Not to mention I had expectations of others that were often unrealistic. I had to learn how to make all these distinctions because my realistic and unrealistic expectations were helping to create my personal reality, many of which provoked undesirable causes and their equally undesirable effects.

Now it might seem as though I was hard on myself and that perhaps I scrutinized myself more than what was necessary or reasonable for that matter, but given the circumstances of my life up to that time, my life truly was in shambles. So it was not only necessary and certainly reasonable, it was a lifesaver – mine, because by the time I embarked on my journey of self-discovery, I had no desire to continue living in this reality. I wanted out in the worst way! The only way I could remain in this reality was if something significant occurred, otherwise I was checking out. There simply was no other way. I was not willing to endure anymore of the strife and turmoil, difficulties and hardships I had experienced during the course of my life back then, which included my fair share of being abused in every manner of speaking. So because I asked to know the truth and nothing less than the truth that would explain the circumstances of my life, I did indeed step onto a path of self-discovery that would lead me to experiences I could never have imagined, all of which made it possible for me to grow spiritually and furthered my personal development in ways that still surprises me.

I suppose it could have played out differently, but no other path was intended for me other than the one I traveled on and am still traveling on because these were not just discoveries; they were and still are growth experiences that to me are truly priceless. I am no longer sailing in stormy seas. I arrived in safe harbors. I have a compass, as well as a charted course and although I do not know what the future will bring, I know that I have a say in what the future does bring because I know exactly how I am empowered to do that. I know that I do indeed cocreate my own personal reality and I know just how I am empowered to do that as well. I no longer live in the past, nor do I fret about the future. I live in the present and I do this one day at a time. I have serenity in my life. I am at peace with the whole of my reality, including my past experiences, which no longer adversely affects my current reality nor does it pose a threat to my future reality. It's not that I have swept my past experiences under the carpet, it's that I understand the causes that contributed to the effects, thus I am able to transcend the past by way of accepting my past because I understand my past. I know what things I am empowered to change in my reality and what things I cannot realistically change in my reality, but even more so is that I acquired the wisdom to know the difference. It is in this wisdom that I am empowered to affect, accept, and change my reality as I so choose.

As I came to the close of my most recent phase of self-discovery, which made it possible for me to tie up loose ends, I thought how nice it would have been to know everything I have come to know since the initial onset of my journey of self-discovery years ago, when the awareness of all the knowledge I have since acquired would have made a significant difference in my life. But then I would not be telling this story, nor would I have cause to write books or publish a website in which Z, the Collective We, and I jointly address many of the very same issues I too had to contend with no different the experience of those who visit my website and follow the weekly lessons. I also realize that had I known all these spiritual principles and the many truths that unveiled along

the way, not just about myself and my personal reality, but about reality in general, I would have missed out on an amazing journey of self-discovery that brought me to places of inquiry and achievements that once were not even a blimp on my cognitive radar. As difficult as the first fifty plus years of my life were, I have no regrets and no remorse. And even though my journey of self-discovery never reaches it end, some of the things I have learned more recently were still very difficult because when you rise to higher levels of awareness more is expected and sometimes the more is not easily arrived at.

To say that I am grateful for the whole of my experiences is an understatement as there really is no way to describe the depth of my gratitude, especially given that I was all too willing to check out of life in this reality, but Z and/or my higher self pulled me up by my bootstraps and set a path of discovery before me that would not only save my life, but would completely reshape and remodel my life in the most amazing way and then even allow me to give back all that I have been given. And for all this I am grateful beyond expression!