

Lesson 18: Navigating a New Course in Life ~

“Know well what leads you forward and what holds you back, and choose the path that leads to wisdom” The Buddha

There may come a time when we find ourselves faced with the challenge of learning how to navigate a new course of direction in our lives which can happen for so many reasons. Sometimes these changes in direction come when we least expect it and when we are the most unprepared. They literally catch us off guard. But the success lies in how well you navigate along this new path which can be a karmic learning experience as well as a goal achieved or a dream realized. I chose to address this subject as the lesson for this week because I know from the people I speak with that there is always an uncertainty when it comes to knowing how to navigate a change along the path of their lives. When you have been suddenly faced with a change in the direction of your life that you were not expecting, myself included you want to be sure of the direction you are going in. Whether or not we face these new courses by choice or it came before us unexpectedly there is a right and a wrong way to navigate through these uncertain times. In this lesson I will be mapping out how to follow along a new path and also how to recognize how it came to be that you are on this path whether you got there by a recent choice or the path opened before you unexpectedly.

The first question we generally ask ourselves is how do we know if we are making the right decision(s)? The answer is this: you will know if you are on the right path by your intuition or what we often call our gut instincts. Your very first reaction to this new course of direction is the only feeling you need to be aware of initially. It is the signpost that speaks to you on the intuitive level not on the conscious level unless you have been diligent in your meditations and your consciousness is highly attuned to such intuitiveness. If your first reaction was doubt that too is also your intuitive signpost. A simple measuring gauge is to just think back to your previous experiences when it came time to follow along a new path for whatever were your reasons. If you recall having a gut feeling that told you to move forward and you went with that feeling then the outcome should have been very positive. If your gut feeling caused you to doubt but you went that route anyway you will also recall that it did not turn out to be a good experience. Whether you knew it or not you set up karma through cause and effect and you suffered the undesirable consequences. Hopefully you learned your karmic lesson to trust your own instincts. But there are other contributing factors that must be examined as well so let's begin taking a look at them.

The first of these contributing factors that trip us up more often than not is over-thinking and over-analyzing. I have to tell you that I expended more energy giving thought to the details I didn't need to give thought to in the past and as a result I rarely got to the finish line because I always managed to delay a goal I was trying to achieve or simply failed to achieve it at all by trying to solve all the how to's right out of the starting gate. I was thinking with my conscious mind and my emotions, i.e. fear and doubt, so a simple thing like taking one step at a time and allowing events to unfold on my behalf was beyond my capability. I was trying to see the end results before I ever got out of the starting gate. Needless to say I seldom progressed to first or second base because I was too busy trying to hang onto the reins at home plate and be in control of things I did not need to be in control of. That mindset barely left me with enough energy to actually see

the pursuit through. I was already exhausted and exacerbated before I ever got started or just barely got started.

The second factor is that being a perfectionist has its built in limitations as well because by the time you carefully map out every possible detail something unforeseen jumps right smack into your well-planned strategy and throws you right off course. You may find yourself putting your endeavors on the back burner until a more convenient time but that time never seems to occur and pretty soon you end up giving up on what you had intended to accomplish. What is important to know is that when something is meant to be it will come to fruition one way or another or it will wreak havoc in your life until it gets your undivided attention. Carl Jung described this as the ‘Shadow’ effect. So when you find yourself navigating a new course in life by choice or by what appears to be an unexpected and unanticipated event (more about this later on) you must let go of the controlling reins before you take that first step. Allow yourself to be led by your heart and your intuition. Rely on your Higher Mind for guidance not your ego-mind, your surface consciousness and definitely not your sensory perceptions. I can assure you those ditches of error will be there waiting for you.

The life-lesson I learned well is to not strategize the entire process but to leave some of the planning to the experience of just being led. Sometimes the path of life does not always require us to do our due diligence or at least not to the degree we are accustomed to doing where we tend to over analyze and over think everything. I am not talking about leaving things to chance. If you are unclear about the matters of chance, coincidence and synchronicity then I strongly suggest you read Lesson 11. The information in that lesson should give you a solid basis of understanding the distinct differences between these terms including destiny. I will say right now that nothing ever happens in life by chance but that everything that occurs in our lives is the result of a continual series of synchronistic events that unfold in accordance with how you think, your desires, what you hold fast in your heart and in your mind along with your beliefs and your perceptions all topped off by your own mental attitude.

In the past lessons I have described these matters in great detail so if you are new to the lessons I would encourage you to please go to the Archive page and read the prior lessons. Reading those lessons will help you understand this lesson and the message I am conveying here because I do not want to risk the message in this lesson perceived incorrectly. It truly is as the Buddha said; you must know what leads you forward and what holds you back so that you can choose the right path, path of wisdom.

This is of course a concept that is entirely unheard of in the mindset of any diehard perfectionist, by those who just have to be in control or those who fear change. I have learned that many surprises and opportunities are waiting behind doors that are not always revealed until arriving there. Just because you cannot see those doors it does not mean they are not there waiting for you. If I had mapped out my journey of self-discovery which led me to acquiring an unexpected metaphysical education; becoming an author, a writer and a therapist I can assure you I would have never reached the finish line. The only due diligence required was for me to follow the path one step at a time, do the work required and to follow simple directions. How hard was that? When it was time for me to write the Dragon of Drama my directive was to “write the book, write the book, write the book.” While at first it seemed like a daunting task and a

rather scary one I learned that writing one sentence at a time led to a paragraph, then several paragraphs, then pages. I wrote page after page until the purpose of the book was accomplished, put my pen down and relaxed. I had done what I was led to do by intuition that flowed into me from a higher source and that was all that was required of me at that time. I am following that same intuitive lead when I write these lessons and as I am writing my second book too. Everything I do on the spiritual level flows through me, it is not of me.

I had the same experience when it came time to create the Dragon of Drama website. I knew absolutely nothing about creating a website or even where to start but again I found that all I had to do was to put one foot in front of the other and it all came together even to knowing what to say and where in the website to say it. So, when life finds you standing on the onset of an entirely new path do not fret about where the path will lead and how will you get there. You just have to trust in what you cannot see before you and with a degree of confidence go as you are led to go and where you are led to go. Each time you arrive at a stopping point you will have an opportunity to assess your progress. You will find much to your surprise that you will be full of inspired and creative ideas that will actually serve to propel your next steps. I never had a clue that my new path of life would lead me where it has, nor do I know where this path is still leading me but I have sufficient trust and confidence to allow the path to do the leading while I do the following rather than the other way around. We always think we have to be in control of everything so how nice is it to know that you don't have to be in control but that you can actually lay the reins down, relax and allow the horse to safely lead you along a safe path.

The third factor that has tripped up more intuitive leads is external influences. Don't be surprised if you run into some resistance. That should be your first clue that you are on the right track. People generally will not resist you when you are doing what they think is best for you but just as soon as you step out to do something that you know intuitively is best for you they will resist you with all their might. Well meaning friends and family may try to sway you against your own intuitive lead because they are limited in their scope of such knowledge or they feel personally threatened in some way. You will need to recognize that this is an attempt to manipulate and control you for their personal interest not yours. They will come across as if they have your best interest at heart, and perhaps they really do but this is your path to explore not theirs. The fact that what you are setting out to experience becomes a threat to them is not your problem, it is their problem and they will have to deal with it just as you will have to deal with it if you read the signposts incorrectly. Sometimes it requires you to actually move away from their presence so that you can walk peacefully along your path but that is always your choice to make; no one should ever make that choice for you. Again, we are talking about what is in your heart, not what is in your head which is an entirely different matter. What you are attempting to achieve or realize must come from your heart and your thinking must only come from your Higher Mind. This is no time for emotional or ego-minded thinking and sensory perceiving unless you are willing to incur the negative consequence of cause and effect, aka karma and fall into ditches of error.

This is probably the most critical aspect of this entire lesson. You have to know that what you are chasing down is not being driven by selfish motives – yours, but that it is truly coming from your heart and your Higher Mind is guiding you accordingly. So

before you take the next step, regroup and examine what is leading you and why. Think about the words of the Buddha quoted at the top of the first page. What is the opportunity you see before you and will it serve you well in the long run. Others may try to trip you up and throw you off course but if they are not acting on their own selfishness or fear then they should have no reason not to support your endeavor. The journey is yours and no one has the right to determine the path of your life. This is called empowerment and when you allow others to control your life you are essentially turning over your free will, handing them the reins to make choices and decisions for you. I empowered everyone along the path of my life to choose what they thought was best for me. I have found myself in a similar situation as we speak where a new path has unfolded before me and I have met every negative resistance imaginable. The results were always devastating and it was me who suffered from very undesirable causes and effects. While it is always a worthy cause to seek out the wisdom of those who have blazed the trail before you remember this is your path to travel on and only you can decide for yourself whether or not to travel on it. What that person experienced may not necessarily be what you will experience because your circumstances are just different enough to warrant an entirely different experience; one that was designed with you in mind. Not to mention that person may not be able to clearly define their own experience because they have not dealt with their own cause and effect.

The fourth factor that bogs so many of us down when in the face of this kind of situation is that we erroneously believe it's too late to navigate a new course or we attempted to navigate the same course years ago but didn't because we gave it up in lieu of obligations and responsibilities and now we think we are too old. I was very much of the same belief and was scared out of my mind when I was inspired to write my first book. I thought to myself, who am I kidding? But the truth was that I was the perfect age to write this book because I had the benefit of 50+ years of life experiences such as I had and I learned many valuable life-changing lessons that I knew I could not keep to myself because I knew others could benefit from what I learned. There is no way I could have told my story before my story played out. So, you see there are accomplishments to be made later along the path of life that actually come with an older age prerequisite.

When it comes to what we think we can or cannot navigate at any time of our lives I would like to suggest you read Julia Cameron's Artist Way books. I have in my library *The Artist's Way* and *The Artist's Way at Work*. Both of these books will set you straight on addressing the matters of what you are capable of achieving or a dream you can still realize no matter where on the path of life you are and why you can. Many a top executive learned how to navigate a new course in their life from an old dream or something they always wanted to achieve and they found a way to work it out right smack in the middle of where they were in their careers and obligations in spite of the fact they did not think they could do it. There is always a way to navigate a new course if you are willing to take the first step followed by another and another until you find yourself standing in front of the door of opportunity; the opportunity you falsely believed you had to give up for one reason or another. I highly recommend reading these two books.

The fifth factor is that there are many other reasons why we fail to take those first steps and chart new courses. They can be very complex and often require peeling away many emotional and mental layers most of which usually have their roots in childhood. I

discuss these layers in depth in my second book, *The Odyssey of Self-Discovery* because too many people are suffering from emotional and mental inflictions they don't even know about because they are lying below their conscious awareness. Many of these inflictions came from childhood experiences; more specifically from external influences that were based on someone's very deceptive perceptions and disabling beliefs. When I work in therapy with a client my primary focus is to get to the root cause because I know that once the root cause is revealed everything else will fall into place. Incidentally, the act of getting to the root cause has nothing to do with pointing any fingers of blame. No one is truly a victim although all the evidence may point to being a victim of circumstances but when you experience this type of therapy you see that you never really were a victim. Sometimes it can be beyond our capability to step out onto that new path if we do not know what is holding us back that is unseen and undetected. In this case it does require taking a much closer look to see what is lying below the surface, outside of our conscious awareness so that we can move forward. Often we think we know the cause but then we find out that we really did not know the real cause; that what we thought we knew was merely speculation on our parts based on what we know from our conscious intellect or is what someone told us who knew less than we knew. It pays to get to the bottom of the matter so that you can move forward with a sense of peace and confidence knowing that nothing or no one can hold you back except for yourself by the choices you do or do not make.

The sixth factor is doubt. There is intuitive doubt and there is conscious doubt that is related to things like fear and inferiority complexes. This is an entirely different matter and a clear distinction must be made between the two. Author Orison Swett Marden wrote the best explanation I have ever come across where the effects of doubt are clearly spelled out in his book *Victorious Attitude* (c. 1916). To make the distinction clear I am going to quote a few of his descriptions as follows: "Our worst enemies are not outside but inside of us. Every human being harbors a traitor who is always on the watch to thwart his ambition, to turn him aside from his aim. That traitor is doubt." "No one who is not bigger than his doubts can ever accomplish anything great or worthwhile, because this subtle enemy kills initiative and self-confidence, and without these dominant qualities no human can measure up to his possibilities." "He begins to reconsider, to look again at the obstacles ahead, and the longer he looks the bigger they grow. He becomes frightened, fears he cannot do the thing that at first seemed possible, and finally turns aside to the easier path of mediocrity and commonness." And lastly "Doubt has killed more splendid projects, shattered more ambitious schemes, strangled more effective genius, neutralized more superb efforts, blasted more fine intellects, and thwarted more splendid ambitions than any other enemy of the race" (pg. 43-46). Author James Allen said that he who has conquered doubt and fear has conquered failure.

Lastly, I could not close this lesson without discussing how it is that we find ourselves standing on new paths when we least expected it or anticipated it. First of all nothing ever happens by chance. There is always some cause and effect at work in response to something you have desired, prayed for or held deep in your heart. Even those intended thoughts on the surface trigger an action that will result in an effect of some kind because you have programmed that into your subconscious mind by habit. So when life suddenly throws something at you it would be in your best interest to examine it at close

range to see where you are in this. In other words, what have you desired for yourself that you could not let go of. What did you pray for? What beliefs do you hold fast too that would contribute to the circumstance you are now faced with? What about your perceptions? Have you desired something for yourself but you would not allow yourself to believe it could happen to you and so now you are reaping the rewards of your negative thoughts, disabling beliefs and deceptive perceptions. Are you afraid of change? A sure sign is if you are feeling trapped in a situation you honestly believe you cannot get out of. You can if you will follow your own intuitive leading leaving doubt and fear behind you. Unless you are standing on a new path of your life, charting a new course, a change in the direction of your life by your own conscious choice then be assured that life is responding to some conscious or unconscious thought, desire, feeling, emotion, belief or perception you have transmitted on your vibrational frequency.

I truly hope this lesson has shed some new light on why you have charted the courses of your life such as you have and how you have navigated those courses and what you can do differently today armed with some valuable information. I would love to hear your experiences so please feel free to contact me at lindaj@dragonofdrama.com.

Sincerely,

Linda & Z