

## Lesson 108: Breaking Free From Adversities

Life brings with it all sorts of adversities that can strike at any given moment. Adversities are unforeseen, unplanned for, unexpected, undesirable, unpleasant events that range in severity. Sometimes they are no more than an unwelcomed inconvenience, just a temporary derailment. Others are long-lasting derailments that are very stressful and distracting. Not only can they be severe enough to throw you off your path, they can cause you to lose touch with yourself and even lose touch with your identity. Losing the ability to be in touch with yourself and your identity is not a condition to be taken lightly. The more you are out of touch with yourself and your identity, the harder it is to find yourself again and the more difficult it is to get back on your path, that is, if you were on the right path. When personal adversities strike, they often bring about abrupt changes in your reality that can cause you to feel disjointed and disconnected from your reality, which is a very unnerving experience. Thus, getting back on your path is not only difficult, it can be challenging. Although the focus of this discussion centralizes on breaking free from personal adversities, it also focuses on the importance of getting back on the path and preferably on the right path.

Adversities are an unavoidable human experience because life itself is a daily interaction of human affairs, which are the result of many personal and interpersonal influencing factors such as family, cultural, religious and personal ideals, beliefs, perspectives and expectations, further influenced by personalities, character traits and free will. People act on their free will in accordance with their beliefs, priorities, needs, wants and desires, as well as the dreams they wish to realize and the goals they are driven to achieve or hope to achieve. Personalities and character traits are shaped, molded and transformed by past events and as such, they too are a strong influencing factor. This is especially true when painful past experiences have not been recognized and/or resolved, as they tend to alter perceptions, beliefs and expectations and adversely affect thought patterns, behaviors and emotions. Because all these personal and interpersonal influences directly and indirectly affect individual and collective reality, adversities are unavoidable, but how you react and respond to them is within your control.

The kind of choices and decisions you make in response to adversities also affects your reality. You can easily fall into ditches of error in your thinking if you are not aware that you are empowered to make the kind of choices and decisions that will enable you to overcome an adverse situation, circumstance or event, as well as its undesirable effects. Overreacting to adversities distorts your ability to think clearly and over time, your pattern of thinking becomes a set reactive state of mind, rather than a proactive state of mind. Falling into this reactive ditch of error does not free you from the adversity or its effects; it keeps you bound to the adversity, as well as its unpleasant effects. The longer you remain unaware that you are responding to the energy of a set reactionary pattern, the harder it is to break free from adversities. These reactive patterns produce long

lasting undesirable effects that are often more devastating than the actual adversity. The affects can be life-long and can have far-reaching crippling and debilitating consequences, which can undermine your well-being and throw your psyche into psychological overload.

When adversities strike, such as they do, you must have a genuine desire to get back on your path as quickly as possible, as being out of touch with your reality is distressing. No one is going to wave a magic wand over you and no one can make this choice on your behalf, neither can anyone force this decision on you; this is something you will have to do for yourself. Making a conscious choice to get back on your path or to get on the right path means that you must shift your thinking from denial to acceptance. This is not always an easy task because first you have to come to grips with the fact that you are in denial and that you are in denial of something specific relative to the adversity. Making this discovery is not usually a sudden insight or an on the spur of the moment event; it is often a mini journey of self-discovery. Others can give you their perspective and they can even hit the nail right on the head, but the thing you are in denial of will not become real until you have ears to hear and eyes to see. Sometimes it is not so much about what you hear or see as much as it is about how the information is stated, which can suddenly resonate with you. When this pivotal moment occurs, you actually see the thing you have been in denial of all along, which is why acceptance was such a struggle. When you finally cross over the bridge of discovery you realize the thing you were in denial of had been in plain sight all along. Acceptance comes easy and you are liberated from the energy of denial. You are free to accept the adversity and free to move on from its undesirable effects, and you do all this by choice.

When you make the choice to get back on your path, the steps you take from there may not be easy, as the journey of getting there is not usually a pleasant experience. However, if you can push past the difficulties encountered along the way, eventually you will arrive; you will overcome the adversity and its undesirable effects. The process of discovery may take time, but not only will you get back on the path; you will have found the right path. Pushing through denial into an attitude of acceptance enables you to put the adversity and its effects in perspective. Obviously, the sooner you can get your reality in perspective the quicker you can get back on your former path or find a new path. The much needed answers and solutions are not found when you are immersed in a state of denial nor are they found in a state of emotional chaos clouded over by confusion and uncertainty. The answers and solutions are found when the adversity and its effects are put in a truthful perspective. Thus, overreacting to adversities is not the least bit helpful; however, overreacting is often the case because fear tends to grab hold of cognitive sensibility.

Unfortunately, denial tends to run rampant in the face of adversities because there is an uncanny need for blame, whether you blame yourself or you blame someone else or even

some place or thing. Blame does nothing to help you overcome an adversity nor does it get you back on your path or help you find the right path. Blame is an obstacle that hinders your ability to overcome an adversity and keeps you off your path that much longer. The sooner you stop looking for someone or something to blame, including yourself, the better off you will be. Stepping out of denial and shifting into acceptance is difficult because there is usually an emotional connection to the adversity than can stop you dead in your tracks. Fear of the unknown, fear of not knowing what comes next, fear of loss or lack, all play a very important role in how you respond to an adversity. It would be quite simply if you could just see the end result right from the start, but since you cannot, it is difficult not to overreact, especially when an adversity strikes at the heart.

There are many experts and so-called experts whose retort to adversities is a non-feeling, non-emotional and definitely non-reactive response, a feat easier said than done that would work really well if all of humanity was logically and intellectually evolved to the degree that they could respond to adversities in robotic like fashion. Personalities and character traits, as well as a host of other external and internal influences make it possible for some people to let adversities roll right off their shoulders or just go with the flow, whereas others are deeply affected when adversities strike. The human nature is complex, thus what affects one on an emotional level may not affect another. This is not a human flaw or fault; it is simply cognitive and emotional differences that are quite distinct from one another, which has a great deal to do with attitude, priorities and perceptions. Thus, what is important to one person is not important or as important to another. Because life on the human plane is a subjective experience, by intention, adversities are prone to all sorts of subjective interpretations, making it even harder to see the forest for the trees.

As conscious awareness and the overwriting of genetics and brain patterns is an evolutionary process, not a onetime event, the right internal and/or external switches do not magically or instantly flip on or off when adversities strike. Conscious awareness involves a broad spectrum of internal and external influences, none of which can be eliminated from the human equation, such as the effects of personality and character traits, past experiences, brain function and so much more. Thus, you really have no means of knowing just exactly how you are being affected by any of these influences and in what combination at any given moment, which makes it really hard to know exactly what you should be aware of, when, how and why. The problem with adversities are compounded given that they do not arrive in a neatly packaged one size fits all category, likewise there are no neatly packaged one size fits all answers or solutions nor is seeking answers and solutions a simple process. It is trial and error because no two adversities are ever exactly alike, thus neither are the solutions exactly alike. Every adversity brings its own set of unique problems, leaving you to figure out how to overcome them, which is very difficult because there are so many unknowns.

When adversities strike, it is hard to imagine that they are often opportunities for personal development and spiritual growth because the little picture tends to distort the bigger picture and the bigger picture is lost in the sea of denial, lost in the cloud of confusion and uncertainty and lost to known or unknown fears. Adversities can really be an opportunity to expand your horizons. An adversity might even be your ticket to a freedom you did not know would end up being a blessing in disguise. Adversities can evolve into a completely new experience, in fact, there just might be a path that leads to new adventures, but only if you are willing to go the distance. As much as an adversity appears to be a personal entrapment, you are not as entrapped as you think, there is a way out; there is a means of escape. Sometimes the solutions are found right within the adversity itself, which becomes evident when you step outside of denial, when the cloud of confusion and uncertainty parts and the truth shines its bright light.

Adversities are not just the effect of outside influences. You can be the cause of your own calamities, which will surely throw you off your path. This is especially so when there are things in your reality you have not dealt with, mainly the mental and emotional affects from past events. These internal influences are most always at the root of the problem. They are powerful internal causes and effects that cannot be swept under the rug and as such, they cannot be avoided because they are wreaking havoc somewhere in your life, hence the adversities. Adversities not attributed to outside influences are the manifestations of the internal unrest. Neither denial nor avoidance is the antidote to overcoming these adversities anymore than building walls of emotional protection is a real means of resolving these matters. There are no real methods of escape, to act in this manner is to exist in a perpetual state of denial and live within the confines of illusion, which you will keep paying many a price.

Breaking free from adversities does not mean breaking free from perceived causes, as this too is a mental illusion that serves no valid purpose. To break free from adversities is to avoid the pitfalls of distorted perceptions, which will only keep you bound to an adversity that much longer. Thus, it is in your best interest to view the adversity objectively, even if you cannot pinpoint its contributing factor. The components of an adversity may be attributed to several contributing factors not easily revealed. Sometimes identifying the causes are not nearly as essential as it seems, but might actually be a hindrance, a crutch or a convenient excuse, especially when an adversity is used as a means of justifying unacceptable behavior. In these cases, some things are better left unknown, at least until there is a genuine desire to shed light on the situation, which may require outside intervention.

Getting back on the path is much easier when adversities are put in perspective. Sometimes an existing path is diverted in favor of a new path because the adversity dictates taking a new course of direction. Embarking on a new path can be a frightening and intimidating experience, but it can also be a very liberating experience, a new

freedom might be waiting just around the bend. Your former path was comfortable and well known because you probably traveled on this path for a very long time. To some extent, it was even predictable. A new path is unfamiliar, unknown and definitely unpredictable, but so was your former path when you first embarked on it. Once you get over the hump, if you will, the dust will settle and before long you will start to feel comfortable on your new path and eventually, it too will become predictable.

Fears tend to arise out of nowhere, especially when that path you were on prior to the adversity is no longer viable. These may be fears you had no cause for concern previously because they were not a threat to you or your reality, but became a threat just as soon as your circumstances changed. Suddenly and seemingly out of nowhere, life can change abruptly and you can find yourself faced with challenges that once were not even a remote concern. Abrupt changes in reality make it seem that answers and solutions are needed right away, when in fact, it might be best to just sit it out for a while. In some cases, the passage of time alleviates the need for you to take any specific action. However, because your mindset is on red alert, you start reacting to the adversity by making choices and decisions in the midst of chaos, confusion and uncertainty, which down the road are certain to bring about very undesirable effects. Realistically speaking, it was not the adversity that pushed you into making premature choices and decisions, it was your overtaxed mind and/or your denial that caused you to make choices and decisions you might not have needed to make.

Getting back on the path, and even more so, getting on the right path requires clarity of thought, which means time is needed to sort through all the specifics as a means of discernment and proper evaluation of the circumstances. Because not everything comes to you all at once, there are unknowns and time is need for these unknowns to surface, as they tend to bring with them the much needed answers and solutions. The things that were fuzzy, cloudy and uncertain become crystal clear and even the things you thought were clear before were not really as clear as they seemed or they became clearer, which ever applies. The two most important elements are time and patience. They are the antidote to overcoming adversities and getting on a path that will move you in a forward direction. Overcome adversities without the effort of patience and the willingness for time to elapse makes getting on any path a futile effort. You can end up on the wrong path, heading in the wrong direction, which could have dire consequences down the road.

Thinking is crucial when adversities strike and thinking with clarity is even more crucial. Cognitive processing is not possible when you are overcome with strong feelings and emotions. Lashing out in frustration and anger or even lashing out in response to your fears will not help you overcome the adversity; lashing out at others only makes matters worse. The affect is like rubbing salt in an open wound. If you are inclined toward the expression of strong feelings and emotions, overcoming your adversities is going to be a

challenge, as doing so will only dig the rut deeper. It would definitely be to your advantage to get a grip on your feelings and emotions before you attempt to overcome any adversity. As was stated above, personality and character traits play an important role in how well you can overcome adversities, much less get on the right path. Exploring your character traits and habitual behavior patterns is an effort that would be worth taking into consideration because these traits/behaviors may very well be feeding into an attitude of denial.

There are chronological steps that if followed will help you break free from your personal adversities because they will help get things in perspective. These steps are not quick fixes nor are they necessarily successive; you are likely to oscillate between them as you work your way through an adversity. The first step is to accept that the adversity has occurred in your reality, regardless of how bad it feels. Denial will get you absolutely nowhere. The second step is to stop focusing on the adversity itself unless there is some means of a quick turnaround that is not destructive to you or anyone. The third step is not to seek avenues of relief by finding someone or something to blame, including yourself even though you may have played a role in bringing about the adversity. The lessons you need to learn are not going anywhere and blame is an obstacle that gets you nowhere. The fourth step is to allow yourself some time to deal with your feelings and emotions even if they are unfounded and are reactionary, they are still your feelings and you are the one who is feeling them. Attempting to suppress, repress or deny them will only make matters worse, as these feelings will surface somewhere else and can be far more damaging. Lashing out is not the same as asking someone to be your sounding board. The fifth step allows time to elapse. This requires patience because the answers and solutions you need might not surface right away. They generally do not. There is a reciprocal energy involved and it works in its own special and unique way. Sometimes the answers and solutions come right away, but mostly they come with the passage of time.

Your ability to follow these steps will afford you the time and patience you need to shift into a mode of clarified thinking, which will help put things in perspective. Time for quiet reflection avoids the trap of skewed or distorted perceptions, which can so easily get out of whack when adversities strike. Being mindful of your expectations also helps to keep things in perspective, as unrealistic expectations of yourself or others are not conducive to overcoming adversities nor are they conducive to getting on the right path. Your beliefs play a very important role in the midst of adversities, as they will direct the course of your action in accordance with the integrity and usefulness of your beliefs. Examination of your beliefs is a worthy investment of time and effort because you may be holding onto beliefs that are actually counterproductive.

In closing, we hope that we have provided you with enough information to help you break free from personal adversities so that you can get on the right path, which might

be a new path. As always, please feel free to share your thoughts, comments or personal experiences.

Many Blessings,

Linda, Z and the Collective We