

## Lesson 118: When Life Hits Hard

When life hits hard, the story often plays out much like this...

There you are snug as a bug in your happy place. You feel good because you have done the right things, which have attracted favorable circumstances that are making it very easy for you to have a positive outlook on life. Why not, after all, life is good. Your dreams are coming true, your goals are being achieved and you are feeling very hopeful for the future. Then one day, seemingly right out of nowhere, life comes at you from the opposite direction, hits hard and totally derails you. In the blink of an eye, your reality unravels right before your very eyes. Your life is suddenly falling apart at the seams. All your hopes and dreams are crumbling around you like shattered glass. Someone or something has disrupted your life and adversely affected your reality. Even though you are badly shaken from the sudden upheaval to make sense of the insensible reality that now lies before you, somehow you have to collect yourself because circumstances may be that you have to make some very difficult choices and decisions you never anticipated making. Not only are you not prepared to make unexpected choices and decisions, you don't even know how to make them because you haven't figured out exactly what is it you really need to accept and not accept. New directions are hard to find in the midst of a personal crisis, especially while you are struggling to get past the initial shock; past the hurt if you have been hurt; past the sense of betrayal if someone has betrayed you; past the breach of trust if someone has violated your trust; past the confusion, anger, resentment, frustration and the fear that now tightly grips you. Life has hit you hard and you wonder if the chaos is ever going to end.

The process of getting through a personal crisis can make you feel as though you are dangling on the end of a perpetual yoyo string. Somehow, you have to find a way to muster up the courage, strength and confidence to push through the adversity that just turned your reality upside down and inside out, which of course, you were probably not prepared for. You may have been forced to let go of things that were meaningful to you, such as a special relationship, the dreams you were just realizing or the goals you were achieving. You wonder if you have the strength or even the desire to pursue a new dream, achieve a new goal or have the stamina or the fortitude of a strong enough constitution to seek a new direction or purpose for your life.

If any of the above is an experience that strikes a familiar chord with you, be assured that this lesson is not about telling you what to do or how to do it because there are no one size fits all solutions when life hits hard, especially when it is a life-altering or life-changing experience. The discussion in this lesson is about helping you see through the blur that now clouds your reality so that you can make sense of your reality. It is to help you see the forest for the trees by accepting the right things so that you can recover, heal and move forward. It is also to encourage you to learn what can be learned from the

experience and perhaps come away from it having gained a deeper understanding of yourself and maybe even some others too. Last but not least, is to assure you that it really is okay for you to feel the way you feel right now and probably will for some time to come, but with the passage of time and the acceptance of the right things, you will gain inner strength and your feelings will change. A day will come when you will view the experience very differently than the way you view it while in the midst of your crisis.

When life hits hard, it usually brings with it a personal loss of some kind. Whether it is the loss of a relationship that you valued greatly, the loss of a loved one, the loss of your health, the loss of a job, the loss of a home or whatever the loss is attributed to, the experience can have an enormous impact on your reality, especially when it occurs abruptly and so unexpectedly. Acceptance is the most difficult step because it is so easy to be overcome by shock, closely followed by denial, hurt, anger and resentment, and even bouts of depression. However, knowing what to accept and what not to accept is crucial to your recovery, as well as to your healing. Accepting the wrong things not only hinders your recovery, doing so slows down the healing process, if there is any healing at all, thus leaving you feeling stuck in a perpetual mental and emotional rut.

To the degree, that such an event impacts your reality depends on a number of internal and external influencing factors. These factors include, but are not limited to the emotions that surface, that is, how you really feel about the event, what you believe to be true about it and your ability to cope with it. These combined factors and many others predetermine the amount of time it will take to get through the crisis, at least until you experience a significant breakthrough or the passage of time allows it to fall away, whereby decreasing its importance. Even the stage of life an event occurs in plays a key role. As you progress through the stages of your life, your feelings, priorities and coping mechanisms differ from stage to stage. This is especially true when you are older and the things of life take on very different meanings, as compared to how they look and feel when you are much younger, when you feel like you are invincible, far more than you are likely to feel about yourself when you are older, when such things no longer feel the same. All the many influencing factors will be discussed in more detail throughout the course of the discussion.

It is said that life here in the physical is all about the things experienced along the path of life and the lessons learned from those experiences. Regardless of how they are labeled, whether positive or negative, right or wrong, good or bad, all experiences are said to count because there is always something of value that can be gained from every single experience. The challenge is in recognizing the lessons that surface in the myriad of ways they so often do. Although you may not be so accepting or appreciative of the lessons that surface while you are right smack in the midst of a personal crisis, you are more likely to come to accept and appreciate them later on, when the dust settles. Having clarity of mind enables you to look back on the experience more objectively, as

opposed to how subjectively you viewed your circumstances previously, which is not very accurate. Unfortunately, not every lesson learned along the path of life corresponds to the next experience that may be waiting around the bend because you cannot and do not know everything you need to know prior to an adversity striking your reality without the benefit of firsthand experience, which is not the same as only possessing head knowledge. Experience and head knowledge work together in tandem-like fashion. This non-blissful state of not knowing things ahead of time is a built in human handicap, which will remain as is until humanity evolves sufficient to precog future events as an ordinary everyday occurrence. Such an evolved ability avoids the agony and suffering as the result of having made costly mistakes, as well as avoiding negative or undesirable internal and external influencing factors because you will know what is waiting around the bend before you get there.

Not knowing certain things ahead of time makes it difficult to apply a well-learned lesson gained from prior experiences, especially those that are life altering or life changing to a future unknown event. The reason for the difficulty is not just that the event has not occurred in your reality yet; it is that the next event brings with it its own unique set of circumstances, which you've had no experience with previously. Because such unexpected events are seldom a raging storm that comes blowing through your reality alone, along with the event comes a fair amount of uncertainty, vulnerability and some degree of fear. There are unknowns you are not prepared for because you have nothing similar in your repertoire of experiences and lessons learned thus far to draw on that correlates to this new event and all the new circumstances it brings along with it. Thus, it can feel as if you are lost at sea in the black of night without a compass, a charted course, a pole star or a beacon of light to guide you back to safe harbor.

It is also said that life is what you make of it and while this may be true in principle, fundamentally speaking, there is another side to this principle that cannot be disregarded. Contrary to popular belief, so flippantly stated, what you do or do not make of your life is not always in your control, at least not immediately. This is because you do not make your life solely on the results of your own choices and decisions. There are times when life makes you as the result of the choices and decisions others make, which adversely affects your reality. These choices and decisions, when acted on by another person's free will, have a direct impact on how you experience your reality. The length of time your reality is affected depends on a number of factors, such as those described throughout the lesson. Consequently, the way you respond to the adverse impact is not necessarily by way of your own volition, but is influenced by the actions of others. You may be forced to make choices and decisions you otherwise would not have made in order to overcome the life-altering or life-changing event, when such an experience occurs in your reality. This is the reason why all those positive affirmations people love to share on social media websites, written in tons of self-help books, often prove to be much easier said than done, especially when life hits hard and does so

unexpectedly. Positive thinking can easily fly out the window when stress overtakes you, and clarity of mind escapes you; when there seems to be no hope of change and everything feels so indefinite and uncertain; when you don't know what direction to go in because there is no clear path before you. The ability to change undesirable circumstances inflicted on you by others is not always in your control. What is in your control is the right to make choices and decisions on behalf of your best interest. However, this is something you do when you are in the right frame of mind, not when you are in reactive mode, where you are likely to make radical choices and decisions that are not in your best interest, thus compounding an already difficult and stressful situation.

When it comes to all the many heartwarming, supportive and very encouraging positive thinking affirmations, actually applying these principles, fundamentally speaking, is challenging when life suddenly slams into your reality as if you just ran into an invisible brick wall seemingly right out of nowhere and catches you completely off guard. Suddenly, those inspiring affirmations don't sound quite so affirmative or as inspiring, when life finds you face to face with an unexpected personal crisis, especially when it threatens to be of a life-altering or life-changing magnitude. It's always easy to be positive and affirming when things in your reality are fairly calm and serene, but how quickly that positive can-do attitude changes when it's all about your life and your reality. It's amazing how different you feel when an unexpected adversity comes ripping through your personal reality like a tornado, when it forces you to make choices and decisions you did not anticipate ever having to make and even more so when you find yourself making choices and decisions under a great deal of pressure.

Until you walk a mile in these very shoes, you really do not know exactly how you will handle an adversity until it becomes your own personal experience because nothing in life really prepares you for any adversity, especially of an extreme nature. Even money and material possessions or an impressive group of letters next to your name pale in contrast to a life-altering or life-changing event, such as discovering you have cancer or some other life threatening illness or perhaps you've lost a loved one, experienced financial devastation or the devastation of a broken relationship. In spite of your favorite positive affirmations, you may find that you are not able to bounce back as quickly as you thought you could or just assumed you would. It's in these times that life makes you a certain way and then conveniently drops the ball in your court, leaving you to figure out where you go from there, never mind the fact that there is no clear path mapped out in front of you, no certain first step to take. Ultimately, you will make your life one way or another in the end because you have no other choice but to move in one direction or another. Whether it's to your benefit or not remains to be seen. The reality that you end up manifesting has everything to do with your own state of mind. Thus, the choices and decisions you make are crucial to your well-being and may even affect others in close proximity, which is why you will want to think them through carefully.

As there is often a tendency to panic first and think later, if possible, it may be best to make no choices and decisions at the onset of an adversity that could potentially complicate things even more than they already are. Thus, rather than move in a helter-skelter like fashion, when the stress is running high, it is wise to move forward one slow step at a time, lest you bite off far more than you can chew. While some progress is always better than no progress, you do not want to risk off the cuff choices or decisions made that, blatantly speaking, will come back to bite you in the ass.

Although rising up out of the ashes like a phoenix is much easier said than done, it can be done. However, it just may not happen on your timetable or anyone else's timetable. It may be that you just might have to buckle up, ride out the storm, and know that as difficult as these experiences are because they always seem to last forever, they really are temporary and you will get through it. You will get to the other side. The process of getting through it, that is, riding out the storm and doing so without making drastic choices and decisions may take some time, it may take a lot of time, but eventually the crisis in your life, along with the consequential fallout will pass. There will come a time when you will look back on the event and perhaps even marvel at how far you have come or how much your life has changed for the good, when at first you couldn't even see the forest for the trees. As you move further and further away from the adversity, your thoughts, feelings, emotions, beliefs, perceptions and expectations will go through their own metamorphosis. You may find yourself moving in a completely new direction. You may find yourself doing things you never imagined yourself doing. Your priorities are also likely to change and there may even come a time when you will actually feel grateful for the change in direction because perhaps now you are venturing into something that is far more satisfying or perhaps now you are free to express your own individuality. As the previously unseen obstacle is removed, your creativity cannot help but flow more freely. Of course, there is the likelihood that some things about you or your reality will not be the same again. Some things might even be unrecoverable, and though it might feel more like a broken wing, life will go on.

Acceptance is not about winning half the battle; it's about winning the whole battle. However, knowing what to accept may have to be an ongoing process until you come to know exactly what you need to accept in order to win this battle. When you feel the internal release, you will know that you are okay with your reality as it is now because you have accepted the right things, which will come into your awareness at just the right time. It works this way because there may be other very important things you need to know about yourself, as awareness of these things, as they apply to your circumstances, play a role in your reality too. Thus, the process of acceptance is all about the discoveries you make along the way. Unfortunately, in times like this there are no magic wands, no one size fits all therapeutic approaches or healing methodologies. Approaches to recovery and healing are as different as are the people needing to recover

and heal because their circumstances are so vastly different, even though many common threads are woven between experiences in a general way.

While change is a certainty of life, some things cannot be changed because they are out of your control. However, there will be things you can and will eventually change, including the possibility of changes not visible at first that in time can be changed. Acquiring the wisdom to know what can and cannot be changed, realistically speaking tends to coincide with the passage of time and knowing what to accept. Just as time moves you through the process of acceptance, time brings important things about your reality to your awareness, sometimes in bits and pieces, but eventually the whole picture emerges and usually does so in the most peculiar ways. Time also enables you to adapt to the changes you have experienced in your reality more and more comfortably. Time also makes a way for you to chart a new course and move in a new direction. Thus, the things you think you cannot accept or change, time will do for you, but this requires patience to see change through, as these experiences usually occur on many levels before things become crystal clear.

And speaking of change...the well-known positive thinking adage, change your mind, change your reality is not always as easy as it sounds either. Just like positive affirmations, changing your mind to change your reality makes perfect sense, but as a principle, fundamentally speaking, changing your mind is not quite so easy and for very valid reasons. Trying to change your mind to change the energy of a life-altering or life-changing experience can be very frustrating, especially when you make repeated attempts, only to end up right back where you started. Consequently, you change nothing about your reality, except that each time you fail to change your mind and actually act on it, things seem to worsen. When you do this enough times, you begin to wonder what heck is wrong with you, why can't you make a choice to change your mind and stick with it. When you can't find the answers, you berate yourself, but what you don't know is that you are looking for the answers in the wrong places. Unfortunately, you are not going to know that you are until you know that you are!

The problem is not in the desire to change your mind, nor is there anything wrong with you when you fail to do so. The problem is that you are trying to convince yourself to *feel* a certain way that does not align with the choice you are trying to make, which can feel very defeating. This is because you are unknowingly trying to accept the wrong things or are accepting things out of order for lack of not knowing what should be accepted, which essentially puts everything else that needs to be accepted in perspective for you. Certain changes can occur almost instantaneously, sometimes change occurs right on the spot when you accept the right things. The result is that your feelings align with the goal you are trying to achieve, which in this case is the desire to change your mind in an effort to change your reality. However, even more surprisingly is that once you accept the right things, you don't even have to change your mind because

acceptance of the right things changes your reality for you (more about this in an upcoming lesson). This is why all the many spiritual or conventional psychological/healing approaches often fail to result in real recovery and healing that actually lasts.

The mistake some therapists and healers make is in attempting to standardize healing and recovery, as if such psychological matters were a one size fits all therapeutic approach. Such a boxed in stereotyping methodology cannot help but fail for the simple fact that no two people are affected by adversity in the same exact way and for the same exact reasons nor do they march to the beat of the same drum in a synchronistic fashion. Thus, a methodology that works well in overcoming a like-kind adversity for some people, does not work as well, if at all for others because all the puzzle pieces, unique to each person's circumstances do not fall into place in the same exact way or at the same time. When it comes to human nature, there are far too many variables involved, all of which must be taken into consideration, most especially is the pace any one person moves at, which cannot be compared or standardized. Consequently, change is not likely to occur until your feelings align with your desire to change your mind or your reality, not to mention unsuccessful attempts increases your anxiety, which is self-defeating and counter-productive. You simply cannot do what you cannot do until you know what you really need to accept at the top of the list and then actually feel the internal release, which prompts the change you desire, thus becoming a manifested reality that occurs almost instantly. While the internal release is felt immediately, you do need time to adjust to the sudden flow of pent up mental, emotional and physical energy.

When life hits hard it not only rocks your world, it often leaves you desperately needing answers or explanations to help you make sense of what has happened in your reality so that you know what choices and decisions you should make or what direction you should go in. Clarity of mind is difficult to achieve when caught up in the midst of an unexpected personal upheaval. Knowing where to find the right answers or how to find relief from the crisis at hand is not an easy quest. Unfortunately, the answers and explanations you need seldom surface at the onset of an adversity, nor do they typically surface all at once, but rather they seem to come in bits and pieces, revealing the cause and its solution a little at a time. This, of course, is in contrast to less significant situations, where the cause is apparent because it lies on the surface in plain visible sight, thus the answers or explanations are just as clearly visible, as are the solutions. However, there are causes that are not quite so visible because they are hidden below the surface, which requires some internal digging to find the cause and is where the solution is typically found as well. In some cases, there is a tendency to want to blame someone or something right out of the starting gate, including blaming yourself, in the absence of an answer of a reasonable explanation. This is especially true when the cause that created the undesirable adversity that suddenly manifested in your reality, and no doubt occurred when you least expected it, is not always immediately identified. Until

the cause of the adversity is correctly identified, it appears that someone or something else must be the blame for the upheaval. The problem with blame is that someone else has to shoulder blame where there is no real blame, which further compounds the situation and leads to even more confusion, anger, resentment, division and even bitterness.

Because things are seldom as they appear on the surface, the effort it takes to track down answers or explanations for the cause of your crisis because there is one and the burden of fault doesn't always rest on your shoulders, in addition to finding the solutions can make looking for a needle in a haystack a heck of a lot easier.

Unfortunately, seeing the whole picture often involves digging around in places most people typically don't think to look or even want to look voluntarily because sometimes what they find or fear they will find buried beneath their feelings, beliefs, perceptions and expectations is uncomfortable, unnerving, unsettling and even threatening. Not to mention these kind of internal digs are time consuming and can feel as though there is no end to the end, as one layer of your reality often reveals yet another and another layer until you finally arrive at the core of the cause and its solutions, that is, if you even make it that far. Not many people do, which is why the path of self-discovery is likened to a journey. Self-discovery is an odyssey of unknown adventures.

When you limit yourself to only looking at what lies on the surface, you miss seeing the rest of the picture hidden beneath the surface. These missing pieces are essential because they tell the whole story, thus completing the picture. So when you limit yourself to seeing only its few parts, you can be sure that the parts you are seeing are out of focus and distorted. Whether you need to dig a little or a lot deeper in order to see the whole picture depends on a number of factors, but one thing is certain, whatever discoveries you make when you arrive at the core does not have to be an earth-shattering life altering or life changing experience. It can turn out to be something minor by comparison to the havoc it's been wreaking in your life and probably has been for a very long time. Of course, if you had known about it, you would have made very different choices and decisions. However, since you did not know what was hidden beneath the surface, you cannot change past events, unless you can view the experience from a completely different perspective, which requires a willing attitude. The only other alternative is that you would have to call everyone and everything back to a particular point in time, exactly as it was at the time the cause was initially created, which you obviously cannot do.

Getting through an adversity that unexpectedly plowed into your reality can take a very serious mental and emotional toll on you, which is why it is important to know that life does not always hit hard because of something you did not get right, did not know about, or were not aware of until you became aware. Unfortunately, not everyone bounces back right away. Recovery is not about comparing yourself to the recovery of

someone else; it's about recovering at your own pace. Some people can brush off adversity or bear abrupt changes in life much easier than others can. There are many reasons for the difference, which is why comparing yourself to someone else is futile, self-defeating and unproductive. On the opposite side of this coin are those who try to pretend they are okay, act as if they are okay, when in fact, they are badly broken up inside and might even take to suppressing their feelings and do so for a number of reasons. Everyone's constitution is different, so how you react to an adversity may be very different from how someone else reacts to the same or a similar adversity, which is okay. This is not a competition. You are not required to act or react in a certain way. There are no hard and fast rules, no right or wrong approaches when it comes to getting through a personal crisis. You can only do the best you know how to do until you know to do something else. As is always the case, hindsight is always perfect vision. Thus, neither you nor anyone else can say with any degree of certainty just exactly how you will get through a personal crisis or should get through it until you have been all the way through it. A healing methodology that works well for others may not work well for you and might even add to your stress. Consequently, if the approach taken does not resonate with you, the desired affect will be blocked. Even the way you think you should get through your crisis is not necessarily, how you will actually get through it when all is said and done because you don't know what things about yourself, your reality or things concerning the influence of someone else will surface along the way that will affect your progress. These are all unknowns until they become things known, which takes time.

Life can sometimes hit so hard that it doesn't just cause an undesirable disruption in your reality. Along with the mental chaos, there often comes emotional pain. When it comes to the matter of how everyone feels emotions, no two people feel emotional pain the same exact way. Because emotional pain is an individual experience, your emotional pain is not understood by anyone except by the person who is experiencing the emotional pain, which happens to be you. Thus, the depth of the emotional pain you feel may be indescribable, whereas another person doesn't feel emotional pain so intensely and can more easily brush it off or experience it as a temporary setback. However, when emotional pain is experienced on such a deep level, when it goes right through to the core of your being, this is not just a temporary setback; this can be a life altering or a life changing experience.

Hence, emotional pain is not always a matter of choice, which is why relief by intention is so often a well-intended short-lived experience. The fact of the matter is that something about your reality has been dramatically altered in some manner of speaking. Therefore, you are entitled to feel your very own feelings and emotions exactly as you feel them, when you feel them and why you feel them. Nothing is more frustrating than to be told when or how you should feel your own feelings or limit the expression of your feelings and emotions. Worse yet is to be told that your emotions or your feelings are out of control, when all you are doing is expressing what you really feel, especially in

response to a traumatizing experience. Now this does not apply to people who really are off the hook, emotionally speaking, such as those cannot control their emotions and habitually lash out at others without giving thought to the damage they may be inflicting on themselves and others. However, there are times in life when it is necessary to lash out, as this might be the only way to be heard by someone who otherwise refuses to hear you, but doing so should not be the first line of attack, it should be the last measure taken after benevolent efforts to effectively communicate your feelings are made.

When it comes to how people express their emotions, there are many variances. For example, there are those who choose not to feel their emotions, much less express them, just as there are those who are more reserved and not at all comfortable expressing their emotions. There are also those who do not allow themselves to feel their emotions or may limit feeling their emotions for fear of what might happen to them if they do. For them self-preservation is not just crucial, it may well be a life saving technique they rely on because feeling their emotions may be more than what they can possibly bear to the extent that their life may be at stake. With the exception of a life-threatening situation, it is not wise to suppress your emotions. When you suppress your emotions, that unreleased emotional energy does not vanish, it is released into other parts of your body, which can trigger a mental disturbance, a physical illness or other undesirable physiological symptoms, which is not worth it in the long run. Thus, the matter of how you express your emotions should be taken into consideration, as this too will affect your well-being and your reality.

In closing, we hope that you take away something of value from the discussion in this lesson, which was not intended to advise you as much as it was intended to help you sort through the chaos and confusion, which occurs when life hits hard.

Wishing you healing, strength and recovery,

Linda, Z and the Collective We