

Lesson 80: The Path to Cognitive, Emotional and Spiritual Maturity

Series Four: Overcoming the Disappointments of Life

Life brings with it many disappointments, and the process of overcoming these disappointments can take you down the path of unforeseen and unexpected adventures of self-discovery, but only if you are willing to go. And although making your way through these experiences can sometimes be painful at best, they have a way of affording you an opportunity to get to know yourself on a much deeper level. These experiences contain within them a built in capacity to see yourself, in all your many aspects, reflected back in the mirror of your life, thus provoking a time of introspection that will provide you with the means to reexamine your own priorities, reassess your beliefs, reconsider your perspectives, reevaluate your expectations, rethink your thought patterns, understand the basis of your feelings and emotions, and determine your current and future goals. They serve as a valuable aid that is instrumental in helping you determine where you are along the path of your life, and where you would like to go, and maybe even show you how you got there in the first place. Disappointing experiences also have a way of showing you whether or not you were on a path that was most suited for your personal journey, as often there is a tendency to veer off intended paths, so that you can get back on your intended path. Or perhaps the path you were on was necessary for a specific purpose and period of time, but now that purpose has changed, as has the time. In addition, there are always lessons to be learned from the experiences in life, but only if you are willing to be open-minded, sufficient enough to hear what is being said, and to see what is being shown. This fourth series is designed to serve as an aid to help you overcome the disappointments in your life, and to help you get back on your intended path.

One of the most devastating feelings that arise in the face of a significant disappointment in life is the feeling of failure, which can quickly become an embedded self-destructive mindset if left unattended. The feeling of failure is an illusion; it is not an actual reality, thus taking on such a debilitating mindset limits the possibility of not just lifting the veil of illusion, but actually being able to see past the veil of illusion, and into the light of truth. Failure is not what it appears to be; it is merely a state of not having accomplished something you hoped to accomplish that did not work in accordance with your own expectations, or the expectations of others, and at the time you expected it would. Releasing yourself from the feeling of failure to that of acceptance, and change requires a shift in your thinking, an alteration or a change in your related beliefs, as well as viewing what was not accomplished from an entirely different perspective. Failing to shift into this modality of self-help, will only enhance your feeling of failure, and it will bring even more so-called failed experiences into your reality. So it is for your own well-being that you closely examine the reasons why you

believe, and perceive yourself as having failed, and more importantly to further examine the underlying reasons that are driving the feeling of failure into your psyche.

The path to examining the basis of perceived failure is one that you have to work out and through, and it will require some time, and some effort on your part. One of the best methods of working through failure is to approach it in writing. There is energy in the written word, and this energy comes from your Higher Mind, your spirit guide or what many people think of as their Higher Power, God, or any other spiritual identity that you connect comfortably with, as it makes no difference what name you ascribe to the source of this energy. Writing how you feel about your perceived failure, mincing no words, provides you with a safe outlet to freely express yourself. And as you work through the writing process, your mind starts to open to new thoughts and ideas that will better explain your dilemma. The commitment to see this exercise through will eventually lead you to your own truths. As you continue to progress along the path of your life, these particular truths will become even more profound, in that they will become clearer and clearer with time. You will come to see for yourself that you did not fail to accomplish anything, but that certain choices and decisions, whether made by yourself or others acting on your behalf were the cause of the deviations that knocked you off your path. You may also discover that the beliefs you held fast too were not acting in your best interest, but that these related beliefs were actually undermining your efforts. Your own thought patterns may have caused you to fall into ditches of error in terms of your thinking. It is very likely that any number of truths about your circumstance will surface and will eventually get you back on the right track, where the pursuit of an intended accomplishment that is suited for your personal journey, will be accomplished, and then some.

Regardless of any feelings or emotions that rise to the surface in the face of disappointments incurred along the path of life, the avoidance of them will not automatically correct the problems that caused the disappointments to begin with. It is one thing to accept an unfavorable situation at face value, if you really understand the basis of it, but it is another thing to avoid the underlying conditions that set the stage for the disappointments. Avoidance puts you at risk to keep repeating the same or similar disappointing experiences. The negative psychic energy remains with you, and like continues to attract like. The tendency to avoid unpleasant matters is to delay the resolution of unfinished business which results in the accumulation of unresolved personal issues that over time become excess mental and emotional baggage. These issues, when left unattended by the mindset of avoidance, do not dissipate, but rather they fester within you, grow like a cancer, and in time they will find a way to manifest in your reality, and usually do in the most unpleasant ways. Unfinished business cannot simply be swept under the carpet or shoved in the back of the closet, nor can it be inappropriately directed at someone or something. Unresolved issues cannot help but to affect the mental and emotional state of your mind, throws you off balance on every

level of your being, not to mention it affects your peace of mind. It is an illusion and a delusion to believe that you can maintain peace of mind while intentionally avoiding the resolution of internal or external issues. Somewhere along the line, these issues will be lying in wait to finally be resolved, whether in this lifetime or in another lifetime. The best time to get these issues resolved is right at the time of their happening, when the disappointments in life become your reality. Although they can be worked out at any time, and often are, you have the advantage of the circumstances being fresh in your mind. In most cases this is not an overnight success story, but becomes a journey of self-discovery to the degree that is necessary for you to work it out, and work it through. There are no set rules to follow. The truths that will surface require the interaction of cognitive processing and integration along with emotional and even spiritual processing and integration.

Sometimes disappointments are experienced in life as the result of attempting to chase down dreams and goals, as well as the desire to attain certain needs and wants from an unrealistic approach. These approaches can be motivated by selfish desires, inexperience, insufficient education or knowledge, undeveloped skills, talents or abilities, lack of insight and wisdom, lack of courage or confidence, lack of self-worth; the fear of failure, as well as the fear of success; feelings, limiting thought patterns, and disabling beliefs that are not in alignment with each other; skewed, distorted or deceptive perceptions, and unrealistic expectations. One or the combination of any of these self-destructive or limiting mindsets will act as an obstacle time and time again in your attempts to successfully manifest a desired accomplishment, resulting in an inevitable disappointment.

However, the cultivation of disappointing experiences does not only lie within you, but are also directly affected by certain external influences. You may desire something for yourself but the conditions necessary to achieve that desire are not favorable for any number of external reasons which typically correlates to the people, places and things that play a decisive role in determining the outcome, as well as the relevancy of time, as the factor of timing is an important consideration. Just because the door of opportunity does not open the moment you step onto the path of your intended accomplishments, is not an indication that it will never open. In some cases it is actually a good thing when a certain door of opportunity does not open, now or later in your life, because the place where it was going to lead you may not have been in your best interest. The art of manifesting what you desire as your reality depends on your ability to, first of all know what you want and why you want it; to identify the real motivation behind the desire, and then to articulate your desire precisely, that is, to say what you mean and to mean what you say. There is a very distinct difference between saying what you mean and meaning what you say, as any discrepancies will create confusion, and will most likely have a canceling affect in the long run, thus producing a disappointment.

Chasing down desires, needs and wants without giving adequate thought to the purpose and the intention of them can lead to all sorts of personal dramas, including your relationships, as well as in the achievement of non-relational goals and dreams. Knowing yourself on a deeper level affects the quality and the quantity of your desires, needs and wants, which in turn affects the accomplishments that you will achieve, as well as the intuitive ability to avoid the accomplishments you should not achieve. Life is hard enough to navigate its often rough and rugged courses, so the more aware you are of what makes you tick, not what you perceive makes you tick, as there is a very distinct gap between the two, and are definitely not one in the same, the better off you will be. In addition, your experiences will be far more rewarding, in that they will lean in the direction of quality rather than quantity. Running through the courses of life with blind folders on is not likely to end with the achievement of results you actually desire to experience, but often ends in the achievement of experiences you don't want to experience, as like does attract like and thoughts do become things, and so do perceptions and beliefs. And even those experiences that you think you want or need, are not really what you needed or wanted in the long run. But even if you travel down the wrong path, life is all too happy to teach you the appropriate lessons, if you have a listening ear, an open mind, and are willing to see the bigger picture, or you can remain in a prolonged state of denial.

Life is not about traveling only on one straight path throughout the entire course of your life, but rather there will be many paths. The paths you will travel on correspond to your mental and emotional state of mind all throughout the stages of your life. The very attitude you hold about yourself, your environment, and toward life itself, whether in the past, the present or the future, is the determining factor that will result in the outcomes you will experience, that all too often end up as disappointments, some more dramatic than others. Not every disappointment in life can be all together avoided, because you exist in an entangled reality, where the attitudes, feelings, beliefs, perceptions and expectations of others affect the whole of consciousness, and as such, have a desirable or undesirable impact in your reality. The impact can range in its severity, especially the ones that completely catch you off guard, and usually do so because you were oblivious to the forewarning sign posts. The more aware you are of yourself, the more aware you are of your environment. As the level of your awareness increases over the course of your life, the less likely you are to attract disappointments that are of a very severe nature, thus minimizing the mental and emotional impact on your psyche.

Everyone has paths that are intended for them to travel on, but not everyone finds their paths or recognizes that they have predestined paths to travel on. So when you step onto a path, at any given time in your life, and do so with blind folders on, there is no telling where you will end up. Recognizing your paths are indeed easier said than done, as the paths you travel on are affected first and foremost by your own choices and

decisions. As the disappointments are experienced time and time again in your reality, the confusion, with respect to the purpose of your life, often gets worse before it gets better. You may end up down the rabbit hole in search of answers and directions more times than you care to remember, but if you are at least willing to hold the belief in your mind that there is some purpose for your existence, even if you can't see it at the time, you have a shot of eventually arriving on the right path, stay out of the rabbit hole and avoid some of the likely to occur disappointments.

Disappointments can also be overcome by taking an inventory of your strengths and weaknesses. However, this is not a onetime event, but is an ongoing process of evaluation and reevaluation for the sake of determining what weaknesses need further development, if and when. As the circumstances, situations and conditions change throughout the course of your life, your strengths and weaknesses have an effect on the various changes that occur, by degrees and intensity. If you are strong in character, in that you exude confidence and courage, for example, you will fare well, and experience fewer disappointments, because you are not prone to attracting disappointments. On the other hand, if your character is weak, the degree of weakness will likewise increase the disappointments which will correspond directly to the weakness, as you are more prone to attracting disappointments.

Cognitive and emotional processing and integration of past and current experiences develops character. The development of character is the path to spiritual maturity, as one cannot truly exist without the other. The quality of your future experiences rests on the development of your character, which rests on the willingness to resolve unfinished business. So here again, avoidance of unresolved issues plays a very important role in the building of character. You can choose to stay stuck in your mental and emotional ruts, but should you make such a drastic choice, in lieu of avoiding taking responsibility for your actions and behaviors, and being accountable for your choices and decisions, you can be assured that there will be many pitfalls and more disappointments that will greet you along the way. You will just have that many more lessons to learn.

Building character also means taking a stand for yourself with respect to the validity of your self-worth. If you do not validate your own self-worth, no one else will, you must do this for yourself. And although most everyone has a need for approval, at least on some level, looking to others for constant approval will set you up for many disappointments. These are the kind of disappointments in life that can be avoided once you understand the pitfalls of relying on others for approval. If you are willing to make a searching and fearless moral inventory of yourself, per the 12-Steps in any recovery program, you will find that you have less of a need to prove yourself to anyone or to rely on others for your self-worth. The building of your integrity, as the result of conducting a periodic personal inventory, will in turn build your spiritual character, and will, of course, decrease your disappointments.

If the circumstances and events in your life have left you stuck in the rut with a victim mentality, you will definitely attract even more disappointments into your life, and worse yet, is that these disappointments will intensify and will severely impact your reality, because in this respect, like will definitely attract the exact like-kind. This is a state of mind you absolutely cannot afford to remain in. You must do everything in your power to detach yourself from your victim mentality, whether this mentality was self-imposed, knowingly or unknowingly, or was inflicted on you by the actions and behaviors of others in your environment, regardless of when, where, how or why. To remain in the grips of this mentality is to be mentally, emotionally, spiritually, and eventually physically imprisoned, and on every level of your being. Every aspect of your reality will be relatively affected in accordance with your mental and emotional state of mind, as it corresponds to your victim mentality. To live in this state of mind is to live everyday of your life in the danger zone. Every experience you have will be a perfect reflection of your victim mentality, thus causing you to be victimized over and over again, ad-infinity, until you make a conscious choice to lift yourself out from the pits of such deep disparity. If you are in this predicament, help yourself by getting the help you need, whether by means of self-help books and related resources, support groups or professional therapy. Commit to doing whatever it takes.

Last, but certainly not least, is the issue of codependency. We will not attempt to reinvent the wheel here in this discussion, as there is more than sufficient information available in bookstores and online, from support groups, and various recovery programs, such as AA and Al-Anon that can assist you in overcoming the debilitating effects from this dilemma too. Whether you are codependent due to an addiction or are codependent for other reasons, and are caught in the grips of denial, the need to control others and the inability to resolve personal issues, please seek help for the sake of your own well-being, as well as to validate the integrity of your own self-worth, and as a necessary means to build up your self-esteem. If you are uncertain about being a codependent, there is a list of characteristics available in Melody Beattie's book, *Codependent No More*, starting on page 41.

As we bring this fourth series to a close, we hope that we have opened your eyes to the various conditions in life that can bring about a range of disappointments, and that in doing so we have also provided you with some insight that will help you to overcome the disappointments you have already experienced in your life, as well as how to decrease the likelihood of continuing to experience many more disappointments, the degree and intensity of them, now and in the future. Please feel free to share your questions, concerns or comments.

Many Blessings,

Linda, Z and the Collective We

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