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LET LIFE BE THE TEACHER

More than twenty years ago I accidentally heard a man by the name of Brugh Joy, M.D. speak at a conference. I say accidentally because I'm not sure I believe that things that happen are just accidents. As I listened, I intuitively knew I was to study with him and travel to Egypt in one of his groups. Ten years later I went to Egypt and during these twenty years have studied extensively with him. The core of these teachings has been my awakening to the process of the soul's journey (not just achieving self esteem and building my ego), and the awakening to the Heart Center and Unconditional Love.

Many times I've heard Brugh say Life is The Teacher. Let Life teach you what Life is all about.

Let life teach you??? That concept did not even compute. I thought the goal was to take control of Life, make it be what you want it to be, manipulate it so that you come out on top in the way that you determined. I thought that my Ego, with proper training and motivation, could fit Life into whatever directions and accomplishments I chose.

I had never really looked closely, and honestly enough at my life to see that life had never turned out the way I thought it was going to or that I thought it should. Surprises were at every turn! Furthermore, as I looked, I could see nothing that even suggested I be in control!

Yes, I could see that training, motivation, and hard work helped to make many things possible for me. However, I had to admit that Life was calling the shots and making the big decisions. Because this old belief no longer worked, I was forced to begin an exploration to understand just what this was all about. I began the transformational process- that is a long process of unlayering my belief systems and ideas about myself, my life, and who and what I am. I began to consciously ask Life what it wanted to teach me. I sincerely and earnestly wanted to see through new eyes what Life was all about.

I believe that this desire is the first conscious step we make in the process, even though we often aren't conscious that we've made such a step. Making this step is probably the only part we even partially direct. After that, we surrender to Life.

As I looked more closely at what was going on at a deeper level, I saw that many things happened that 'I' didn't want to happen or didn't plan on happening, and definitely wouldn't have chosen. However, many wonderful things happened that I could never have planned for.

I believe that something is directing me that 'I' am not in charge of. How am I to explain this? How is my ego to 'feel good about itself' if it realizes that it is basically powerless to the larger forces of life? The ego may just have to feel its powerlessness at these levels.

On the other hand, is it possible that I could let go of my assumptions that my surface mind is in control of Life, and then, willingly cooperate with my Life as it wants to unfold? Is it possible that I might get a broader perspective and see My Life unfolding as my soul is orchestrating it, even though I may not understand the process?

I use the analogy that our psyche is like an iceberg, with the tip being 5-7% above the water line and analogous to our conscious/surface mind, our ego. The base of the iceberg carries and directs the movement of our lives and the tip is just along for the ride! The tip goes where the iceberg wants to go, no matter how much education/motivation/overtime it puts in! The tip is the 'look-out point' where we can observe what's happening on the surface.

Life, this Life which is the teacher, might be analogous to this base of the iceberg, which takes us where it will.

Being a psycho-spiritually-oriented psychologist in Orange County is nothing I ever planned for. No part of that was in my comprehension or in my imagination before I literally watched it happening to me. Now, that certainly isn't very much control. I watched relationships, which I thought were lifetime relationships, crumble. There was nothing I could do about it, except watch, accept the changes, and keep walking down my path as it unfolded in front of me. Or as Brugh would say, I put myself in accord with my soul's unfolding.

As a young woman in my early twenties I read a book entitled *Your God Is Too Small*. This left me with the idea that our beliefs about God were tied up with our thought process, which, by definition, are limited and based only on our history and belief systems, not on the fullness of reality. This is sobering. It also leads us to the suggestion that our beliefs about ourselves might also be too small.

It was a startling realization I had when I realized that I myself created limits to my life because of ideas/beliefs that I had which were limited, illogical, and even untrue!

So where does this leave us? For me, God and Life refer to that same mysterious force that operates below the conscious mind that causes things to happen. I use soul as the word to describe the larger development that wants to happen in us. Soul puts me in contact with The Mystery that lives through me.

So, the bigger question for me is 'How can I get myself and my systems out of the way, so I can have a clearer look at myself, at Life? At God? At what is happening in my Life?'

The first step is to face the fact that, at the bottom line, i am not in control. i can make decisions and take actions, and i am not in control of all the variables. My soul sometimes sends me on journeys that aren't my first choice, even though later i will be very happy that my soul took me there.

So how are we to deal with this state of affairs?

- * Find a mature aspect of yourself, that's willing to see and let go of anything that doesn't work
- * Be present in the moment- be present to What Is
- * Keep your awareness in your center, which is for me is The Heart Center, a very profound experience of the full acceptance of all of Life as it is in us- the place of Unconditional Love which you will probably find is quite different than you initially think, and the core of this work.

- * Let go of your ideas/beliefs about how you think life should be
- * Listen within to the inner voice, which guides you through your Life as you **learn** to listen and understand it.
- * Trust and be willing to make course corrections as necessary.
- * Be willing to open to your soul's journey moment by moment

Just know that this is a process of unfolding a journey, a journey of long cycles of development. Be willing to go deeper and deeper into the processes as you engage your soul's journey.

There's a poem by David Whyte, which begins 'In this high place, leave everything you know behind.' This is a subtle place where you constantly build on all you know AND you approach each moment as if you know nothing, and you wait to be directed from within. You learn to trust by trusting.

You realize that your own deep Self does not think ill of you, is not out to get you. Your own deep Self seeks your highest development and works to help you get out of your own way. And your development is determined by your willingness to participate with an open and joyous heart with its urgings and directions. As someone said, 'it's an inside job.'

'Let Life be your teacher.' I've learned that when I need to know something about my life, I ask inside. Then I wait. Sometimes a response is immediately forthcoming. Sometimes it requires a few days or hours, or it may require months or years. I have found that when the response requires a longer period of time, that it is because there are other things that I need to know or that need to be in place before the response to this request will either make sense or be appreciated, or appropriate. Nonetheless, that period of time between the request and the response is not wasted time. It is full of Life and continues to promote my developing awareness.

Nothing, no time is wasted. Just do your life and 'clean up the path in front of you.' Keep your heart open to the exploration of the Mystery as it evolves in you. Carl Jung said that Life (the Unconscious, as he called it) responds to each of us with the same energy/attitude that we give to it. So, opening to Life with an open heart willing to be transformed by the soul's journey sets the stage for The Unconscious/Life to interact with you in the same manner.

The added bonus from life lived as a journey of exploration is that we come to find ourselves, to know ourselves, and to engage the mystery of who and what we are.

This poem by Derek Walcott expresses this opportunity.

The time will come
 when, with elation,
 you will greet yourself arriving
 at your own door in your own mirror

and, say, sit here. Eat.
You will love again the stranger who was yourself
Give wine. Give bread. Give back your heart
to itself, to the stranger who has loved you

all your life, whom you ignored
for another, who knows you heart.
Take down the love letters from the bookshelf

the photographs, the desperate notes,
peel your own image from the mirror.
Sit. Feast on your life.

This will be more than enough to keep you busy and occupied with the wonderment of Life. I can guarantee that you will not be bored. Instead, if you let yourself, you just might be enchanted. You may find these words and this attitude new and different, and wonder at just what it means. I'd recommend that you hang out with these ideas, ask for help from within. Ask for inner direction and for assistance to see how this all fits for you, or if some other understanding of Life really fits better for you. You'll know or learn to know what works best for you and what is the truth as you can see it at this time.

This is the Mystery of how Life is the Teacher.

Namaste,
Judith