

ESSENTIAL HEALING NEWSLETTER

Strategies to help ourselves move forward and support our animal companions

STAYING AFLOAT IN ROUGH WATERS

By Judy Aizuss, M.S.

Life's journey is filled with zigs and zags, potholes, obstacles and setbacks. Rosamund and Benjamin Zander*, in their book "The Art of Possibility", compare life to a whitewater rafting trip. Some of the time the water is smooth and peaceful, and we can enjoy the scenery, and other times we're riding the bumps, often reveling in the excitement but at times the unexpected may scare us.

When life doesn't go as expected or planned for, we may be tempted to start telling ourselves horror stories. Everyone loves a good story, and when difficulties occur, we are all ingenious story-tellers. We sit with rapt attention as our minds weave dramatic, ultimately tragic interpretations of the events we are experiencing.

One common interpretation is bad things are happening to us because the Universe is either uncaring, or actually has it in for us. This interpretation has it that we are being punished *and* that there's nothing we can do about it. The result of this interpretation is that we end up feeling powerless, victimized, enraged, depressed, and ultimately in despair.

The second story we often tell ourselves is bad things are happening because we are somehow fundamentally inadequate. This view produces a lack of belief in one's self and habitual self condemnation, which in turn, leads to an inability to initiate or follow through with projects, depression, and ultimately, despair.

The above two stories are identical because they both begin with blame and end with despair. And when we listen to either of them, progress becomes at best, an uphill battle and, at worst, impossible.

Fortunately, there's a third, much better story to tell ourselves during trying times. It is an interpretation that will strengthen, rather than weaken us. In this story, we choose to reclaim our power by completely turning our attention away from blame and trying to hold someone responsible for our pain. Instead, we view ourselves as a powerful source of positive energy, capable of doing good for others, and receiving goodness, love and support for ourselves. We also shift our focus away from blame and regrets to present options and the creation of positive outcomes.

Here are some specific strategies to practice to make this third story a reality:

- 1) Take note of and acknowledge your emotions, i.e., "I feel disappointed, discouraged, frustrated, afraid" etc. and any physical sensations, i.e., tension in shoulders, queasiness in stomach, etc. Do not try to deny or change the feelings at this time - just notice them and

allow them to be there. Spend a couple of minutes taking some slow, deep breaths into your belly, focusing your awareness on the process of breathing. Then practice viewing yourself from the perspective of a very compassionate and very wise friend - someone who loves you unconditionally. Imagine yourself confiding in that friend about your hurts, disappointments, sadness, anger and fears. Then imagine how your friend would support you. This is a way to develop compassion for yourself. In addition, you might want to apologize for the hurt you've caused yourself through judgement and attacks.

- 2) Become aware of the negative stories your mind is beginning to tell you *about* your feelings and sensations. Especially take note of the negative predictions you're making - i.e., "Things will never work out for me" "I'll always be a failure". Realize that these judgements are making you feel worse, when you really want to feel better. So, you can stop making them by simply saying "Stop" - or, make a conscious choice to turn away from the "voice" of judgement. Then proceed to the clearing ritual described in #3.
- 3) Realize that you are listening to made-up horror stories - that none of them are real, but all of them are threatening to defeat you and hold you back. Then, choose to turn away from those negative voices in your head. You can make a ritual of this, lighting a candle, standing up, and focusing your whole will and intention, as you state: "I hereby state my full will and decision to release, detach from and turn away from any and all voices and energies of defeat, failure, hopelessness and negativity." Then literally turn your body in another direction as you say, "I choose now to turn to the Light, to my highest Wisdom, my source of encouragement, support, and unconditional Love. And I choose now to receive that love, support, and guidance at this time." Then allow yourself to take in images and feelings of being supported, cared for, and guided by an intelligent, loving force. If you have trouble doing this by yourself, the process can work really well with a beloved pet or another person who loves and supports you unconditionally. Focus on the bond of love that exists between you, and then focus on really receiving that love. Let yourself be strengthened and soothed by it.
- 4) Begin to imagine the positive outcomes you want, and state them out loud, and/or write them down. Examples would be, "I want to do work that really fulfills me", or, "I want a loving relationship" or "I want to have enough money", etc. Allow yourself to envision the positive outcome, and most importantly, ***how wonderful you will feel when that positive outcome is achieved.*** It's not enough to envision the positive results on a mental level. You must generate positive ***emotional energy***, for it is this energy that acts as a "magnet" to draw in the results you want. Do this every day for one to three months, and watch your life shift dramatically for the better! This "new and improved" method of making affirmations work for you is explained at length by Lynn Grabhorn in her book, Excuse Me, Your Life is Waiting. I highly recommend it.

TAKING IT FURTHER: COUNSELING, COACHING AND ESSENCES

After working with yourself, if you're still convinced that the "horror stories" are true, or feel otherwise stuck in negative patterns, then coaching, counseling and/or essences could likely get you unstuck and on your way.

Counseling can do a number of things. For example, sometimes people come to me with a "blind spot" in their thought process. In other words, the *way* in which they are perceiving their problem is actually perpetuating the problem. In these cases, simply pinpointing just how and where a person's thinking is getting them into trouble, and helping them to create a new, more constructive view, can make a remarkable difference.

For those who require an energetic nudge to make the necessary perceptual shifts, there are a number of essences available. Canadian Forest Company, for instance, has essences for "a revolutionary shift in perception", or a "peephole into a new way of being". I also have several essences from Alaska and South Africa that help those who are resisting change. Which essence(s) you would receive would depend on your specific issue and what you test for. As many of you know, in an "essence session" I tune in energetically and psychically to both my client and the essences. With the added help of spiritual guidance, I am able to find precisely which essence(s), among hundreds, a client needs at that particular time.

Another way that people often get stuck is by lacking awareness of underlying issues that need resolving. Here again, both counseling/coaching and essences can be of enormous benefit. Counseling can help you clarify the deeper issues that may be keeping you from moving ahead. And, just as important, having a good counselor or coach provides an invaluable sense of support - a feeling that someone understands what you're going through, and has confidence that you can succeed. One important part of my work is instilling confidence, faith and optimism in people, so that they have the strength and courage to do what's needed. Even if there's still some pain to work through, I believe a person should feel better and stronger following a counseling session.

Once core issues have been identified, they need to be worked through and cleared. In traditional talk therapies, working through old trauma and abandonment issues can take years, and even then, success may be very limited. The right essences, however, in conjunction with competent, supportive counseling, can greatly shorten the process and yield tangible, positive results along the way. The Alaskan Flower Essence Project, for instance, produces a number of essences geared to healing old traumas - including birth trauma, old injuries, and past abuse issues. And the South African Essences company makes some very powerful essences that address childhood abandonment issues which have been carried over into adulthood. When the right essences are used at the right time, they can trigger profound emotional and energetic shifts. Old, suppressed emotional experiences are brought to consciousness and then released, giving one an expanded sense of freedom and relief.

On the other hand, a person may be perfectly aware of their traumatic childhood, yet still be suffering from "fallout" effects, such as deep-seated shame and feelings of unworthiness. These feelings are terribly damaging to one's self and life, often limiting one's ability to take positive action, or sabotaging actions already in process. Fortunately, these feelings can also be effectively shifted with essences. There are several companies that produce essences for issues of shame, unworthiness, and lack of belief in oneself.

The final step in "staying afloat in rough waters" is not only to stay afloat, but to actually *go* somewhere. In real terms this can mean establishing a new way of being in the world and

relating to yourself and others. In addition, you may also need to answer the question, "If I am not who I used to be, who am I now?" Essences for courage, self-love, for fear of failure, and for identifying one's purpose and direction are among those that can be helpful during this stage. Coaching can provide structure, while practical assignments enable you to explore the questions, identify new goals, and begin to move toward them. And with counseling, you learn how to replace the internal voice of your judgmental parent with an encouraging, compassionate voice. In effect, you learn how to be an ideal "parent" to yourself, supporting yourself in growing toward your fullest potential.