

Natural Awakenings

Emotional Fitness: Tracks to Personal Growth

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By Kathleen Noone

Recently I read an article by Thomas Moore (Spirituality & Health Magazine, Sept./Oct 2008) in which he offers a reframing of the word “growth.” He suggests the word “development” is a wiser choice. As Moore writes, “I prefer to see personal development as the discovery of a new room in the soul, some area of life that has great potential but has just been found.” As I contemplated the article, I found myself agreeing.

Life does hand us, whether we like it or not, opportunities for growth and moving forward on the track to our destination for love, life, success etc., however we define it for ourselves. But it is our inner development that determines our ability to handle the quick stops, sudden derailments, and eventually the trains that will take us in new directions we never contemplated. Continued work on our inner development will ready us for whatever path life takes us on. And this readiness will support a new clarity, where old paradigms no longer hold us hostage. This clarity then puts us on our life’s path with more vitality to move forward on this journey.

Recently, I took a retreat from a stagnant living and work situation. This came after a period of utter frustration. As I suggested in last month’s article, I broke things down for myself, as to what I needed on the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual levels. I asked my Higher Self to help me remove whatever obstacles were blocking me from seeing my path. The answer I came to was, ‘change your perspective.’ I knew I could do that physically. I called friends and asked for help. That was a big one for me. And guess what? My friends showed me kindness in ways I never expected. And their acts of kindness made me aware of the value they held in our friendship.

Through their kindness I was able to leave my stagnant situation and change my environment for a month. During that month I realized I needed to get to an issue (mental-emotional) that was nudging me most of my life. I’ve done a lot of inner work over the years, but as the extraordinary therapist, Mona Ackerman, pointed out to me (right here in NYC), sometimes we have to revisit a place with new eyes. So that’s what I did. Reminding myself, as Dr. Ron Hulnick of the University of Santa Monica once said, “The issue is never the issue. It is our relationship to the issue that is the issue.”

My five sessions with Mona delivered several revelations and gave me a deep sense of spiritual release. Continued inner development provides the means for release from the old habits and patterns that bring frustration and stagnation into our lives. It is the tools we develop from the insight we’ve gained that move us forward, and give us the outward demonstration and feeling of growth.

So, I keep traveling on my own path of personal development and growth. My wish is that you will also be a willing and curious traveler on your own journey.