

Natural Awakenings

Emotional Fitness: Creative Expression Effortless Expression

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By Kathleen Noone

“You make the arrangement with your feet because it is your walk through nature that teaches you the truth.” – Hisako Shohara, Ohara School of Ikebana.

Don Amendolia, dear friend, extraordinary actor (recently in the Broadway play “33 Variations” with Jane Fonda), wonderful chef, and Ikebana flower arranger, gave me this quote from his teacher at the Ohara School. I found it so apropos to this month’s theme of Creative Expression, that I wanted to share it with all of you. Don is someone who lives his life in creative expression.

He has an uncanny ability to tap into his creativity with grace and ease, always making it look effortless, whether he is on stage, film, cooking a magnificent meal, or just walking through the moments of everyday life.

The key word I want to focus on here is “effortless.” Have you ever had the experience of working on a project knowing you were using all your well-trained skills and mental acuity to the best of your ability in its creation, and at the same time felt its expression was somehow effortless? In other words, all of your fears, concerns, anxieties and doubts, once you were truly in the moment of your creative expression, were pushed to the side.

At that moment you were an open channel for the free flow of your particular creativity to shine through. You were walking through the nature of your particular craft and its truth was able to reveal itself without interference. Many years ago someone who I will always hold close to my heart once said, “Kathleen, you get all your set of facts straight first, and then you let your inspiration talk to you.” As an actor, I was very happy to hear that from a lawyer.

It gave me the insight that it’s not only artists who have the ability to listen to the muses, but those leading what might be perceived as more linear lives have that same access.

Creative expression takes place on an experiential level for each of us individually, and experience has taught me that there is no formula for its manifestation. It is a state of being that comes alive within us when the “ego of I” moves out of the way. A number of years ago I was performing in a rotating repertory theatre.

At the height of the season we were performing eight shows, six days a week. I felt like a finely tuned instrument. On several occasions I had the experience □ of stepping on the

stage and feeling that the performance, with all its elements of timing, being in the moment and absolute command of the performance, were in that perfectly balanced mode of expression.

Other actors would come up to me and comment that my performance was in another stratus sphere, right on the money, etc. I remember so clearly that my answer to them was, "Yes, thank you. I had nothing to do with it." I truly felt outside myself. Not out of control. Out of my way.

These experiences became my "carrot at the end of the stick." They are something I always reach for, yearn for, because they felt effortless. In hindsight, those were moments of the best creative expression I ever had to offer. I had the experience of that perfectly balanced state of being, with all its exhilaration, freedom, ease, grace, presence of mind and openness.

My walk through the nature of my craft gave me the tools to manifest a truthful, authentic performance. It was allowing the inspiration to shine through me and that was without my usual stress and pressure. I had the experience of being in an effortless state, and it was an "AH-HA!" moment for me.

I invite you this month to walk through the nature of your life and careers, with all your great training, education and skills, and allow your truth to shine through you and teach you how to be in an effortless state of being.

Have a wonderful September!