

The Power in Powerlessness

God grant me the serenity
to accept the things I cannot change;
courage to change the things I can;
and wisdom to know the difference.

One of the greatest fears we have on the deepest level is that of losing control. There is a belief embedded in the unconscious of many of us that we are safe only when we're in control. That losing control is a dangerous experience. So, many of us go through life holding on to the illusion that we're in charge. We believe that if we do enough, do the right thing and have Plans A, B and sometimes even C ready, we'll be okay. Anything outside of our expectations of ourselves, others or life can send us into a frenzy to get reality to the way we believe it's supposed to be.

Examples of how we hold on to that illusion of control:

- *Impatience, anger, telling others what to do or how to behave*
- *Helplessness, being a victim, manipulating others to do for us what is our own responsibility*
- *Being overly responsible in a situation or relationship in order to control others' opinions of us*
- *Judging others, whether it be individuals, religions, political parties, cultures, situations*
- *Fears, phobias, anxiety,*
- *Denial, avoidance, minimizing of feelings, trauma, reality*
- *Obsessive, compulsive behavior and thoughts*

Just imagine all the behavior, patterns and energy we put forth every day to hold on to this illusion. When we are so consumed with holding on to this sense of control, we may actually be blocking the Divine flow of energy that is there for us. We actually keep ourselves small by staying in that box that we've created for ourselves. We often get the Serenity Prayer in reverse, by trying to control the things we can't, and by sitting helpless in the face of things we can change.

What would it be like if we truly let go of the need to have life exactly the way we expect it to be? What if we opened up to the idea that there is a wisdom in everything that happens? And, most importantly, what would it be like to surrender to powerlessness and not feel helpless?

I recently dealt with that issue on a deeper level due to an ongoing deteriorating health issue that my mother has been experiencing over the past several years. I realized that often at the

root of my sense of helplessness, impatience, judging, despair in situations lie this fear of fully admitting to and experiencing powerlessness. That it is a human frailty to be avoided at all costs.

During her most recent hospitalization, I allowed myself to go beyond admitting I was powerless in this, to actually surrendering fully to that energy. I allowed myself to feel the wave of what I spend a lot of energy trying to avoid. Surrendering to my powerlessness to change this situation, I was surprised by what I discovered. I didn't disappear. I wasn't annihilated. It was just a new reference point, and I actually had a sense of safety. There was a feeling on a deeper level that I wasn't alone in this, there is something much greater than me at work here, and that I could let go of the struggle. I opened up to the awareness that my Soul was experiencing. During this time of insight that covered many situations in my life, I also recognized the difference between helplessness and powerlessness, at least by my definition.

I learned:

- *We are powerless to make others stay in our lives when they are ready to leave. We are not helpless to move on and fulfill our own destiny.*
- *We are powerless to take away the pain of others. We are not helpless to trust they are protected while they go through it.*
- *We are powerless to make others love us. We are not helpless to love ourselves more.*
- *We are powerless to make others approve of us. We are not helpless to follow what we know to be true for ourselves.*
- *We are powerless to change another's behavior. We are not helpless to leave a situation that is not healthy for us.*
- *We are powerless to make others happy. We are not helpless to be responsible for our own happiness.*

When we surrender to the powerlessness of situations that are out of our control, we can step into the power of handling what is our responsibility. So, instead of getting the Serenity Prayer in reverse, we can open to the wisdom our Soul has of knowing the difference. We can begin to trust that there is something greater at work here. That everyone has their karma and lessons to learn that we have no control over. Surrendering to that isn't as painful as it might seem, although the ego might tell you it is. In order to do that, we have to understand that we are just as Divine and protected in our powerlessness as we are in our taking charge. One is no better than the other. Our task is to open to knowing the difference.

To feel joy in the face of sorrow. To feel safety in the face of powerlessness is true power. That is the Soul's Journey.

