

Come Back from a Stab in the Back

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| In one week I have had two people for whom I have tender feelings, experience betrayal. Life is tricky with its shadows and light. Here are some thoughts of the dynamics of feeling betrayed.

The Buddha said that in this life we would experience ten thousand joys and ten thousand sorrows and Jesus said, "In the world you shall have tribulation." It is tempting | to move into and stay in pain and vengeance. Regrettably, that road not only adds shadows and hurt, but distracts us from necessary self care and nurturance.

When it comes to forgiveness the most important person to forgive is yourself. We need to learn to forgive ourselves for our humanness, our misplaced trust, our leaning, our neediness or our innocence and naivety. Certainly forgiving both ourselves and the perpetrator of our harm frees us to totally move on.

Still the first place to start is with ourselves and our feelings. Identifying feelings and how they might be familiar allows us to be authentic with ourselves. To transform feelings of blame and shame we can identify lessons from this experience. We can learn to trust our intuition, not tolerate initial disrespects, heed first warning signals and trust ourselves to trust again. We can discern what action we need to take to reclaim our power. We might get a lawyer, write an angry letter (mail it or not), have a face to face confrontation or sell the engagement ring.

Gwendolyn Jansma suggests that all parents need to "betray" their children in order for them to learn the weaknesses of their parents and eventually leave home. We can grow through people disappointing us. We can learn that our opinion of ourselves is the most important opinion, that we are our main caregivers and others are not in the world to make us look or feel good. We all have weaknesses and we will all let others down. Few of us are saints and even Mother Teresa had a crusty side. I often say, "You can trust other people to live life their way." Pay attention to how others operate and "trust" them to come late, or break their agreements or run off with your money, if that is their life long pattern.

There is a phrase that says "stronger in the broken places." Bad things do happen to wonderful people and in the end often strengthens them. Or as my friend Melanie says, "What won't kill you will make you funnier." Earth is full of paradox with light and ugly shadows like rape, affairs, name calling, stealing and all forms of betrayal. As in the movie Star Wars, we are sometimes drawn into the dark side or we can fight to stay in the light. A friend of mine recently demonstrated this choice. After a fierce divorce where she was often tempted to do revenge, she reclaimed a relationship with herself. She gave herself a promise ring as a reminder to care for herself until death do her in. Betrayal is painful and yet it just might really bring us home to ourselves.

Note: For more on this subject go to www.members.shaw.ca/bethhedva to learn about the book, *Betrayal, Trust and Forgiveness* by Dr. Beth Hedva

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