

Learning from Our Dramas

By Mel Schwartz

There are times when our lives tend to resemble Greek dramas as we struggle to get it right, so to speak. So often I hear people blame or fault themselves for not being where they think they should be in their lives. It's typically about their relationships, their careers or their children. It may sound very paradoxical, but there's no where to be—and nothing to get right. Life is not a test to be passed. It is an experience that our soul undertakes so that we may grow and actualize in the way that we require. Regrettably, the myths and messages of our culture misguide us in the proper course of life's actualization.

Our society, in its inclination for productivity and perfection, views struggle and fear as detestable and convinces us that we have some dysfunction if not outright pathology if we still have unresolved issues. A more holistic perspective would suggest that these life problems are simply landmarks around which our lives are trying to unfold. In other words, the issues that we carry with us are the stage setting for our drama. They are not the problem, but merely the backdrop. They are in our lives for a reason and paradoxically, they provide the opportunity for our growth and emergence. Finding meaning in these troublesome patterns is the goal.

We tend to attract people and events into our life as a sort of constellation in the drama. They however, are also not the problem. But they may serve as the catalyst for our change. What we experience in life is what we tend to attract to us or gravitate toward. Our nature is to evolve and we do so only by engaging struggle. Our imperfect parents and our imperfect culture are also the setting for the life drama. Rather than looking at our past in a reductive and blaming manner, it's helpful to understand that these were the experiences that we were destined to have and ironically they provide the launching pad for our growth. Being mindful that the script of the drama is not fixed or predestined is crucial. Learning to improvise with our script, coming free from habitual patterns and choosing differently are the tools toward a fuller life emergence.

Finding meaning in the struggle is the key to emergence. Ask yourself what you need to learn from the recurring dramas of your life. Whatever emotional or psychological impasse we encounter is essential for the growth that we're seeking. How we choose to engage the impasse should be the focal point of our attention. Without struggle and impasse there is no growth. If you look at others' lives and think that it's been clear sailing for them, think again. They are either hiding their difficulties or putting an enormous amount of energy into avoiding them.

Just as maintaining a fit body requires the strain of exercise, emotional well-being requires engaging our dramas and issues. Most importantly, if we judge ourselves for these obstacles, we actually tend to cement them into our lives. You cannot judge yourself and liberate yourself at the same time. When we focus on outcomes we tend to freeze with fear. Most people become somewhat paralytic over concerns about making mistakes and fear of wrong outcomes. There is no such thing as an outcome. Life is an inexorable flow. Engaging in that flow permits life to unfold as it should. What we call an outcome is simply a snapshot of a life event or experience that we attach particular meaning to. We are however free to take new snapshots at any given moment. The question is whether we choose the same filter of perspective or we select a new one. A new way of looking at things is the most powerful thing in the universe. Look at your life

dramas and struggles as providing opportunity for growth and you'll clear your path toward your fuller emergence. The self that we strive to become cannot manifest without learning the purpose in our life's dramas.

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