

NERVOUS BREAKTHROUGHS: The Pleasure of Sadness

Throughout my life I have had a series of nervous breakthroughs. Rather than call them break downs I like to call them break throughs. I learned from these experiences and found my life more enriched, more mature, and at a powerful stage of growth after coming through a sad or conflicted time in my life.

I believe “it’s all good” and that happiness is living with a sense of trust that everything happens for a reason, or as I say “everything happens for a lesson. “ Life is a journey in which we follow a path that leads us on a road, not always straight, full of twisted side paths, but eventually leading us forward to discover who we are and our ultimate purpose in life. It is not always comfortable. Discomfort can simply be a sign of growing pains.

These days, it seems we do not allow ourselves to tolerate discomfort in our minds and our souls. Sadness and depression, while often so deep and debilitating they rightly warrant prescription medication, are a time to get in touch with the depth of your heart and soul. There is nothing wrong with a good cry or a time to scream out in anguish or to get down on your knees and pray. It’s a time to listen to what our deepest inner self may want to tell us after such a time of anguish and pain.

There are so many new books on the market about happiness that it may seem wrong to experience sadness. It is great to be a positive thinker and see the glass half-full and the world through rose-colored glasses. However sadness is not negative thinking. It just is a beautiful human emotion. You can still see the glass half-full when you judge sadness as simply an experience and not a tragedy. You can wear your rose-colored glasses and even imagine you are sitting in a rose garden, while you have a good cry.

Victor Hugo described melancholy as “the pleasure of being sad.” Sadness is normal after losing a loved one, losing a job, failing at something felt important, or just reading the newspaper or watching the evening news. It would be a classic case of denial if one said they never felt sad.

There are times when you can’t pinpoint the source of sadness, and yet something inside is not right. If you are losing weight, losing sleep, feeling hopeless or have thoughts of suicide some type of therapy may be needed. Rather than hurry to take a drug, it might be helpful to see a professionally trained psychotherapist or counselor. Sometimes medicine is helpful while engaging in talk therapy. And there are times when depression is caused by a chemical imbalance and may warrant medication similar to a diabetic who needs insulin. In these cases it is best to see a knowledgeable psychiatrist who is a doctor trained to decide the best medication and dose for individuals suffering from depression.

Recently I went to my doctor and told her I was feeling a little down, wondering if I should take a drug, and she said “ You have normal sadness. Your father died, your life is in transition-you don’t need medication, just a little more soul-searching and allowing yourself to be content with not being happy all the time.” I left the office empowered and with lightness in my step as I thought, she’s right. This is natural and normal and you will come through this with yet another nervous breakthrough.

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