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Growers Are Inchworms

Jeff Brown Delivers Weekly Inspiration

by JEFF BROWN

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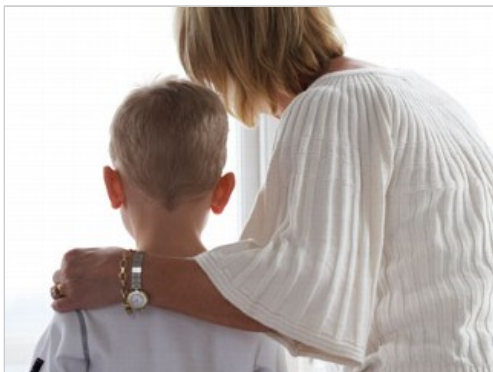
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I am often contacted by people who beat themselves up because they have not progressed on their spiritual journeys as quickly as they hoped. They are frustrated by their inability to embody their highest vision for themselves after only a few years, or even months, of determined effort. Quick fix, long suffering.



This week I invite you to be patient with your path. The personal journey I wrote about in "Soulshaping" took me six years to write and 45 years to live. From the moment I began my first wave of psychotherapy until now is nearly 20 years. And, still, at the end of all that genuine effort, the trails of transformation are no easy saunter. I still have a workaholic tendency, and a deep abandonment wound that arises when least expected.

This inspiration is a call to patience. Not the kind of patience that keeps us asleep (there are times when we need a karmic

kick in the behind), but the kind that is compassionate and that sees our efforts to expand in a broader context. When my Grandfather would see me fail, he would see me with Grandpa eyes.

He would tell me that he loved me and remind me that those things I was attempting were not even imaginable when he was young. He recognized how extraordinary it was that I was considering a quest for my "true-path," only decades after he would have taken ANY path that paid the bills. This was a valuable teaching, and served me often when I developed inhuman expectations for myself. He taught me the meaning of context.

I invite us to honor our bravery. Given that most of the world is still vibrating around survivalism, the simple fact that we have formed the intention to transform our consciousness is already courageous. When we actually make a leap of faith and set out for soulful waters, we have truly embarked on a heroic journey.

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turn back to familiar harbors to ground and protect ourselves. The fall back to our habitual range of emotion is a natural part of the journey home. Like turtles, we stick our heads out until it becomes uncomfortable and then retreat to the safety and familiarity of our shells. The time we spend under the shell can be just what we need to weave new experiences into our usual ways of being. So long as we persist in sticking our heads back out a little further each time, we continue to grow. Three steps forward, two steps back is still progress...

And we must also remember that REAL change simply takes time. Growers are inchworms. Lasting transformation is an incremental process, one "soulstep" at a time. We can have all the peak experiences we want but the real work happens between the peaks, while laying down and integrating on the valley floor. This may frustrate us, but it is the only way to craft an awareness that is authentic and sustainable. Divine perspiration...

I remember a beautiful moment with my Grandmother before she died. She had often resisted my need to look at the past and deal with family baggage. It probably brought up her own unresolved memories. She often told me that I was involved in the therapeutic process for too long -- "Get on with it, Jeffrey." But, one day, she looked me in the eyes and said "You weren't just doing this for you, Jeffrey. You were also doing it for me. I couldn't look at these things in the world I lived in. You're healing my pain, too." And that said it all. Every step I took beyond the defenses and parameters of her world actually took my whole soulpod to the next level. All the more reason to take it slow. All the more reason to get it right.

The very fact that we are trying to heal our hearts in a world where so many have had to bury their hurt is already extraordinary. It may not seem like such a big deal, but when the energy has been moving in another direction for so many generations, it is quite a challenge to turn the tide. We are breaking new inner ground, after all. Recognizing this should translate into giving ourselves a break when we can't quite get it perfect. So let's see ourselves through Grandpa eyes, and breathe...

A former criminal lawyer and psychotherapist, Jeff Brown is the author of "Soulshaping: A Journey of Self-Creation," recently published by North Atlantic Books. Endorsed by authors Elizabeth Lesser and Ram Dass, "Soulshaping" is Brown's autobiography -- an inner travelogue of his journey from archetypal male warrior to a more surrendered path. You can connect with his work at www.soulshaping.com

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