

There Is No Enlightenment ...get over it!

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If I talk to one more person who thinks that because they have been on the path of Self exploration and discovery for some time, diligently working through issues and problems they've had since childhood so that they can reach that state of enlightenment where life is pleasant, tranquil and happy forever more ...I think I'll scream. No, actually I think I'll have a good old fashioned temper tantrum that won't resolve a darned thing but will leave me at least feeling like I've expressed myself!

Where do people get this weird notion that life is supposed to be like a Prozac commercial ...all flowers, smiles and gratuitous virtue? Maybe from the Prozac commercials and self help books?

There is absolutely not one speck of doubt in my mind that it is worth investing time, money, energy and personal resources in resolving issues and challenges from one's past. If you read *Sekhmet Rising: the restlessness of women's genius*¹ you'll discover my story about what it was like to live life as a human volcano, never knowing when the next explosion would erupt. You'll also discover the stories of many other women who, like me and you, had things about themselves that seriously got in the way of them being able to move through life as the powerful, creative and productive women that we are.

Letting go of the hold that periodic rage had on me was not only an unbelievably freeing experience but it created a space and place where the fire energy I had come to call "rage" could become available to me as an unstoppable font of creativity. And dealing with my 'rage issue' is only one of many transformations I've experienced in my life. Who I have become as I approach 60 is a vastly different person than you would have experienced had you met me at 25, 35, 45 or 55.

I love the differences that have evolved in me, although there are lots of people who would not agree. I have become much bolder, sassier and clearer about my needs, wants, desires, passions and intentions in this world. I no longer worry about other people's opinions of me ...and I know that really annoys some and disappoints others!

I also know that as far as I have come in my quest for inner clarity, there is so much further to go. There continue to be things about myself that continue to irritate, annoy, frustrate and disappoint me, despite repeated efforts to resolve them. I continue to have people cross my path who get under my skin, up my nose and press my buttons. For certain these people don't show up nearly as often as they used to and they seldom capture my attention or my engagement for long or with the same intensity as they used to. However, they do continue to show up. And I know that when they do, they are an invitation for me to discover something else about myself.

What a wonderful way to move through life I have discovered. If every person I interact with is a reflection of some aspect of me, I never have to try to change that other person; I only have to look inside myself to discover some new aspect of myself that had previously escaped my notice in order to obtain resolution.

¹ *Sekhmet Rising: the restlessness of women's genius*. Louise LeBrun et al. 2006. WEL-Systems Productions. Ottawa, Canada. www.wel-systems.com

In a paradoxical way, life has become easy to live and pretty much joyful to experience. I don't expect a perpetual state of bliss or a life where problems and challenges never surface. But in knowing that when problem people and experiences do present in my life it is an opportunity for my own growth and evolution, it becomes easy to deal with. Now this doesn't mean that all I have to do is quickly think about things and an obvious solution surfaces. Sometimes it takes weeks and months for resolution to be obtained. But what's different is that I no longer feel the need to invest myself in weeks or months of grinding and gnashing, waiting for resolution. I simply get on with life, relaxing into the frustration, disappointment, agitation, and restlessness, knowing that one day an insight will surface or I'll discover that I am interacting with the person or situation differently. I no longer need to let any of these situations overtake my life.

So in writing these words, I also know that as perfect as my response to the process might be, the fact that I'm still irritated by people who think that there is some state of enlightenment or nirvana that can be reached if they just work hard enough at it, hang in there long enough, get the right questions answered tells me that there is something about myself to be discovered in this conversation. I don't know what it is, but I'm going to follow my best advice and engage it. I'm going to breathe deeply and let my body know that it has information to process on this topic. I'll relax into knowing that it'll take however long it takes and that I'll be a more effective coach and workshop facilitator as a result of its resolution. So maybe I'll save that temper tantrum for another time and place ...or perhaps I've just discovered that my need for temper tantrums is well and truly over!

Could it be that this is what enlightenment truly is? A perpetual state of being willing to explore life's challenges rather than a perpetual state of being so wise and all-knowing that nothing ever troubles you again. Personally, I'll take the version that rests in my willingness to keep exploring. That way life is full of adventure and I get to continue discovering more about me and this wonderful world I live in. ...wanna come exploring?

About Gwen McCauley: Coach, educator, writer and veteran of the 'employee to entrepreneur' transformation process. With wit, wisdom and worldly experience, Gwen invites her clients on a journey of self-discovery, gaining clarity of purpose and increasing self-awareness and resourcefulness. Gwen brings a strong background as a corporate executive with extensive management experience to her work. She founded Odysseys Unlimited Inc. (OUI) in 1997 and is a co-founder of the WEL-Systems® Institute. Gwen has an MA in Human Systems Intervention from Concordia University and a successful track record as a coach, program leader and businesswoman. In addition to being a WEL-Systems Educator™, CODE Model™ Coach and Quantum TLC™ Facilitator, Gwen has studied Open Space Technology, Myers Briggs, Appreciative Inquiry, Generative Leadership and Total Quality Management. Gwen published her first book "The Alchemy of Energy: Exploring The CODE Model" in 2004 and co-authored "Sekhmet Rising: the restlessness of women's genius" with 17 other women in 2006. She is currently working on her third book.

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