

Be Led By What You Are Trying To Avoid

BY KAREN DEBORAH FARRIS

When I am in search of flow, I always turn to what I am avoiding. There is no better direction in life, than to be led by what you are trying to avoid. So, when the assignment came along to write on flow and synchronicity, I decided to put the spotlight on my own issues. For every ounce of me that wanted to write my article and hand it in early this month, there were two ounces of excitement telling me, "Don't write a word until you have been led by everything you are trying to avoid!"

The first thing I realized I had been avoiding was a voice in side of me that was giving me an inner direction to take an overnight retreat. It seems we most expect the content of our avoidance to be negative or unpleasant in nature. Yet, I found that all of mine were things I really wanted and needed to do for myself, but for some complex reason, was resisting valiantly!

I have the terrible, though quite common habit of working too much, and I suffer for it physically and creatively if I do not heed the wisdom of balance. Going on retreat is my favorite thing to do, but I have to let go of what I can accomplish externally in order to take the time away.

So, I packed up the car and went to my favorite getaway. While I was there, I wrote a list of things I was avoiding. I came up with nineteen items in all, and split them into three categories. The first included things that had to do with other people—clearing communication, setting boundaries, resolving old conflicts. The rest of the list was divided between what I could take care of on my own, and what I needed someone else's assistance to get done. I also made an agreement with myself to have

this phrase be my spiritual practice for the next two weeks.

The first few days were so revealing. I have been in conflict much of the summer, seeking the resolution to some complex problems. I have been letting go of many many old habits and not always confident with what, if anything, I should be replacing them. Emptying out is mostly what I have been doing. It was wonderful timing to have a practice direct me to the nooks and crannies of each waking moment. To be constantly redirected toward my path with gentle nudges, taking ordinary moments and turning them into powerful expressions of such joy in my life.

Back in town after retreat, I had to go to my friends' house to pick up some tables they were lending me. They have a wonderfully warm pool in their backyard and I was given permission to take a swim. Pools are my passion, but anything less than bath water temperature and I freeze up and can't get in. The last time I had been to their pool the water was warmer than warm, and I couldn't wait to slip into it now. But when I dipped my toe in, it was not the 99 degrees I had expected, and I turned around and headed back to my car.

Another element of my friends' home that I have always enjoy is the neighborhood. It's a beautiful neighborhood to walk through with the mountains close and tall, surrounding. My next favorite passion after warm water pools, is walking. So, I thought I'd take a walk. But when I headed down the driveway, I realized how steep the street was and the thought of walking back up the hill was enough to turn me away from the walk, too.

When I got back into my car I saw the note I had left on the dashboard, it read: Be Led By What You Are Trying To Avoid. So, I asked myself, What do you want now? And what are you trying to avoid that is keeping you from getting what you want?

What I wanted was to swim in the pool and walk through the beautiful neighborhood that I have always loved. What I was trying to avoid was any level of discomfort. So I decided to be led by what I was trying to avoid, and I headed down the hill and took my walk, anyway.

Every rise and fall of street and sidewalk was a test of my avoid-

ance. I knew that if I could take a good hard walk, that the cool water would feel great to me. If I could keep myself going on this walk, I would reward myself with a swim in the pool.

All along the way, the pull to turn around would nag at me and each time I would ask inwardly “what am I avoiding?” The answer kept coming up as, quitting, “I don’t want to quit on myself. This walk will be good for me. I need to be here, and I don’t want to go back before I am ready!” So, I kept going until I was no longer avoiding quitting and no longer wanting to walk.

I walked a good solid hour before I returned to my car, got my swim suit, and jumped into the pool. The beautifully wet, wondrously tepid, soft, silky water of the pool.... I cried with relief when I was all the way in and found the water absolutely perfect in temperature!

I cannot tell you how invigorated I felt riding home in the car with my wet hair and soggy towels. I could have just as easily been driving home an hour earlier with none of the energy and excitement flowing through me as was flowing through me in that moment. I felt strong, and powerful—I had seized the day!

I continued to pick things off of my list, and challenge moments throughout the next week. My energy lifted higher and higher with each passing day and my zest and joy for life was multiplying exponentially.

When I set about this practice, I had expected flow to increase in my daily life, but I had no thoughts about synchronicity. It wasn’t until the last few days that synchronicity came into play by taking the final three items off of my list, the last of which was nothing short of a miracle.

Time and time again, I am impressed with the power of confession. The power of releasing our true thoughts and true beliefs out into the world. Our true desires, and true wants. In my workshops, we do it with play and the drawing of pictures. It can be done with journaling, conversation, or prayer. But however we do it, the power of manifestation always comes around. When we can sync up our desires with our willing nature, we can be led by what is most scary and find the presence of angels walking the path with us.

Synchronicity is the affirmation of energy returning to its natural form. It is the hand of angels nestled in your palm. Like grace, it is unexpected and unearned.

What I can tell you is this: If you choose to be led by what you are trying to avoid—everything, all of it, without exception or prejudice—you are sending out a prayer to the universe. You are putting heaven on alert and grace will find you wherever you are, no matter how deep in the forest you might think your fears are buried, or how dark your journey may seem at the time. Where there is flow there is synchronicity, and when you are being led by that which you would otherwise want to avoid, you are walking with angels.

I invite you this week to make a list of your own. And to notice what kind of patterns your list makes for you. One by one, pick the fears apart and allow yourself to be led by the unknowing, instead of giving your life-cycles away to the fantasy. Take a sticky note pad and write onto several of them this sentence: *Be Led By What You Are Trying To Avoid*. Place them around you. In your office, in your car, in your wallet, the bathroom mirror, the telephone.... Watch your energy swell up as you release your natural flow and giggle at the events that magically appear in your life, allowing you to heal old wounds and release vats of love into the universe.

No matter how big you think your problems are, and how scary you believe them to be, they are nothing once they are the leaders of your path. It is only when you are leaving them behind that they have power and control over you. If you can be led by the pain that you fear, you will find beauty and cause in your past. If you can be led by the tantrum inside, you can find the lessons of ages. To know peace, you must be led by what you are trying to avoid.