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Dying to Live

By Nikki Di Virgilio

In his PBS special *The Happiness Prescription*, Deepak Chopra said, "When cells forget to die, they become cancerous." How many of us know at least one person with cancer?

When I was a girl in my 20's I was in a co-dependent relationship, and intuitively I knew if I did not get out of it I would develop cancer. I did get out of the relationship, but it wasn't easy. I literally had to go through a death experience in order to gain new life and depth.

There are many quotes about this kind of death, such as Joseph Campbell who said: "The old skin must be shed before the new one is to come", and this from the Prayer of St. Francis, "...it is in the dying to self that we are born into eternal life."

I wonder how many of us are allowing parts of ourselves to die, however. Are we letting go, I mean really letting go of what no longer serves us- or is it just a concept we know and often say?

When I let go of my co-dependent relationship I felt liberated, but then something dark rose up inside of me. For years I was riddled with fear, experiencing panic attacks often 3 or 4 times a day. At my darkest point, I was afraid I would kill myself, even with my small child sleeping alone in her room.

I called the suicide help line and I told them I could not find anything of purpose or joy and I was afraid I would hurt myself. The person on the other end did not know what to say and we sat in silence.

I asked God to give me a sign- to show me I was needed in the world- that I did

have a purpose. The next morning my phone rang and it was a woman I know offering me a job. Although this brought hope, it was not the end of my 'death' experience. There was more to come.

I share this story with you not for drama's sake or to scare you, but to suggest shedding is real and something I trust many of us will go through as we begin to awaken to the depths of our selves.

Eckhart Tolle, the author *A New Earth* and *The Power of Now*, also talks about his experience of awakening, where he wanted to kill himself and then had a 'spiritual' experience where he entered present moment awareness. To read his words and see his presence, we know he had to go through something.

Right before my death experience waned, I was lambasted with thoughts of death, dying and losing control. I could not take it a moment more. One night I lay down on my bed; arms outstretched and said *I surrender*. At that moment, what is me- the truth of who I am left my body and I experienced a freedom, which is hard to describe. When I entered back into the body, I knew I was more than the pain and the fear and oddly enough I was ready to die if that was what I had to do.

What happened next was a rebirth of sorts. When I awoke, I felt like a newborn baby, but without skin, raw and exposed. For a while I could not watch television or be in public without feeling extremely vulnerable, but I was alive.

*If we are not
evolving,
then we are
dissolving.*

Join
*In the midst of
darkness, parts of
ourselves revealed.
We long for
connection and in our
search we begin piece
by piece to JOIN
ourselves back
together and made
more whole than ever
before.*

~Nikki Di Virgilio

Dying to Live continued

This was my experience, and as difficult at the time it was, I am glad I went through it. I was like a city corrupted by fear, whose structure finally came loose and crumbled. As it crumbled there was a me inside in awe of what was happening, almost respecting the process of destruction. There was also a still small voice inside of me, which spoke calmly to me in every painful moment. What it said, I do not remember, but I was not alone while parts of me disengaged, crumbled and went away.

Looking back I could not be more grateful that I allowed this awakening process to happen inside of me. It has allowed me to find the true foundation

underneath me- not the one based in fear and illusion but the one based in love and truth.

Our current culture of fear encourages us to take control of our lives, our bodies and especially our deaths. *Don't let it happen*, the culture says to us unconsciously. But, I am here to say, as are many spiritual teachers of the past and present, let go- really let go. Allow the process to unfold; not trying to control or lessen the effects- let what no longer serves you die and trust in that moment of surrender there is new life.

My husband eloquently said recently, if we are not evolving then we are dissolving. To go further we must dissolve in order to evolve.

Join

Why go through a death experience? Why dissolve? It seems painful, and unnecessary. Why would we want to?

Quite a while ago, I was lying on my back and listening to a CD of mediation music. My eyes were closed and as I allowed the music to envelop me I saw myself in a field of white daisies, the sun shining upon my face. I was spinning in happiness and light, holding one daisy in my hand. From a far I noticed a person in white approaching me and when he did I gave him my flower.

Then many people began to come, all in white, all faceless, nameless beings one right after another. As I gave each one a daisy another daisy would appear and soon all of us were holding hands and daisies, in a circle.

Sometime later I painted a picture of this, although I didn't need to because this image has always stayed in my mind.

Right now on Earth we are catching glimpses of our unity. My first glimpse was right after 911. I remember being at the State Capitol gathered with many on a rainy day and I could feel the oneness

of us all.

More recently we are seeing other signs of our unity, such as Barack Obama, the presidential candidate whose message is change and unification. Disasters like Katrina, where once again we are brought together. Oprah Winfrey and Eckhart Tolle's new web class on his book, *A New Earth*, where every Monday night almost a million people gather to watch the same event and even take a moment in silence.

These are powerful manifestations that show us where we are moving. I don't know how long it will take for us to get to the New Earth, for in truth we are already there, but what I do know is we are in process and our consciousness is expanding all of the time.

When we shift our attention from the outside to the inside, and begin to be curious about who we are is when the shift of consciousness occurs. Until then we merely exist in illusion.

When we shift, just as the poem I wrote to the right suggests, parts of ourselves are revealed to bring into the light of

Join continued

to JOIN not only in the truth of who we are, but all of humanity.

In our wholeness we want to reach out and help. We want to reach out and connect. We want to reach out and inspire and retire from our falsities forever more.

This is our journey...

So how do we join ourselves back together? By allowing the process of change to happen through us. Many moons ago there lived lord Buddha, who was born a prince, living a cherished life, not knowing what lurked behind his castle walls.

One day he left the castle with a friend and saw the sick, the old and the dying and asked his friend if those things would happen to him. His friend said they would.

That began the Buddha's search for enlightenment. He sought it in

meditation, yoga, spiritual teachings, but nothing brought it, so as the story goes he sat underneath the Bodhi tree until he reached enlightenment.

It didn't come at once, of course for he had to encounter some things. Some of those things were his demons and shadows. As he encountered them he did not fight or resist. Instead he embraced them one by one, inviting them to become a part of himself and forgives. Here we have *Unification*.

This is the part of the process of enlightenment where we may get stuck. We are afraid of the darkness where our demons and shadows lurk. We may not even want to admit they are there, especially in this age of positive thinking.

However as we invite those parts in us that we often deny out of fear and ignorance, they begin to dissolve into the truth of who we are. Know there is



"There are only two mistakes one can make along the road to truth: not starting and not going all the way."

~Buddha

Living the Spiritual Life- is it worth it?

The spiritual life can often seem like a drag, right? For those of us who have been living consciously for a while now, we may wonder what it's all for, especially if we are still struggling?

Amidst my struggles, I have often wondered the same thing. Why can't I be like one of those people who go about their lives not questioning anything and appear happy? (Or is this an illusion- and there are no people like this?)

I will leave you with a story that speaks a bit to what I am saying. It is a condensed version of what I heard from Deepak Chopra on *The Happiness Prescription*.

There once was a sadhu who asked a philosopher questions about life that the philosopher could not answer. Since he could not answer, the philosopher went about his way and saw a fisherwoman

who was the happiest woman in the world, playing with her grandchildren. He approached the woman and asked her questions: "Do you know where thought comes from?" "Do you experience suffering?" "Do you have a soul?"

The woman looked at him and said, "Leave me alone. I don't have time to think about such things. I am the happiest woman in the world."

The philosopher went back to the sadhu and said, "You fool, here you have spent 40 years in meditation and self-reflection and here there is a woman who is the happiest woman in the world and has never asked herself any of these questions."

The sadhu said, "I don't want that kind of happiness."

As Deepak said, "Do we want happiness

Just as a candle cannot burn without fire, men cannot live without a spiritual life.

~Buddha

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Excavating the Clutter:

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nurtured in your home.

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Books- Nikki is working on three books; a memoir of her 'move' to Maui, a spiritual guidebook on excavating soul clutter and a daily meditation book. If you would be interested in reading these books, please email or call Nikki.

"The Soul Knows" Series™
Discover Who You Are, Unravel Who You Are Not & Begin to Live the Life of Your Dreams

This series will meet once a month for 8 months. Contact Nikki to register for a FREE orientation to learn more and experience a glimpse of What the Soul Knows. Orientation dates to choose from: April 15, 16, 22, 23, 29, or 30 from 7-8pm Series will begin in May

Group Teaching-

Nikki is available to teach your small or large group.

Fee varies by topic.

Please contact Nikki for more information or to book a class.

My Intention

I intend to use my skills, abilities and talents to create a space for Self-Realization and Transformation to take place. I intend to do so in a pure and honest way, always recognizing wisdom, truth and beauty reside within.

Namaste, Nikki

