

GETTING DOWN INTO THE DIRT

Before awakening can truly flower, first get down into the dirt. Get into all those nooks and crannies where the light of awareness has not yet entered. Dare to enter the shadowlands, where feelings that were once too much to bear - feelings that were stuffed away because you were scared of being overwhelmed, feelings that were trampled on by those who said they were wrong - hide out in shame and gather power by numbers. In this dark secret place, these unloved feelings lurk and threaten to erupt in those moments when when you don't yet have the strength to be fully present to what is, those moments when you're triggered and the time bomb of reactivity is detonated.

So, be daring my friend. Dare to walk through the valley of darkness, dare to dig deep into the mud and shit of your past, to spew out the suppressed energies that are seemingly so scary. Be courageous enough and humble enough to be a warrior of the heart .. to do this as an act of love, an act of kindness to yourself. Dig down into the dirt and pick up what has been forgotten, hold it tenderly so that it scream and kick without blame or guilt, so it can fully express itself and release itself in the open hand of permission. Do what you need to do ... shake, shout, shiver, and shriek. Let your heart break into a million pieces, let the storm raging in your belly tear you asunder, let the tears of a thousand years wash you inside out.

Dare to fall apart. And then, thread by thread, weave yourself together again. Not in the same old way, not with an army of defenses, not with any attempt for self protection. No my friend, do not try to reconstitute yourself using the same old strategies. Weave yourself together by simply being present to what is here in the falling apart. What is truly here, what is always here ... unmoving, unshakable, unbroken. It is this that holds you in the midst of the agony, in the midst of the horror, in the midst of the fear. It is this that holds you in presence, that is you as presence. And, in this presence and as this presence you can meet anything and everything. No more need to run away, to hide, to stuff down, to battle with. No more need to hold it all together for fear of falling apart. And no more need to reach the giddy heights of transcendence in order to avoid getting your hands dirty in the human experience.

You see my friend, a great error is made on the path of awakening. In the desperate desire to reach a state of awakesness that will magically lift you up above the mire of earthly life, you forget to dig down into the dirt first. You forget to tend to the human vessel with its story of hurt and abuse and obeisance to an authority that is not your own. You forget to grieve for those times you have abandoned yourself, those times when you said 'yes' when you meant 'no', those times when you turned away from your true feelings. You forget to do what needs to be done to empty yourself of grievances, to breathe more deeply, feel more fully, love more fully.

Yes, a great error is made in the quest to reach the promised land of awakening ... you forget that a lotus has roots in the mud, you forget that a flower is the natural outcome of a seed that has been germinating in the darkness. Awakening too often happens too soon, too fast, before the seed has germinated, before the work has been done below the surface. All this causes chaos, as what lies beneath the surface erupts to be held in the light of this awareness. The

vessel is not ready, not able to meet all the darkness that tumbles into the light. Confusion, depression, despair, and desperation ... all this and more are inevitable. It's a sign that true awakening has not taken place. Just a glimpse, often mistaken for the whole sky. Just a petal, often mistaken for the full flower.

The flower of awakening is natural. When the roots go deep into the mud - when you have done the work of tending to whatever holds you back from being fully present, when you have ended the argument with life, when you have bowed down to love's intelligence, when you're willing to die in the midst of what hurts - then the light of awakesness can penetrate all the way through your mind to your heart to your belly, and into the very fabric of your living reality. Now every cell celebrates with the joy of presence, everything relaxes.

Awakening, my friend, is natural. Awakening is the flower of consciousness. It comes naturally when you've dared to hold everything in your experience in love, when you've dared to dig into the dirt, when you've dared to rise into presence. Friend, do not mistake the petal for the flower. Be patient, do the inner work .. and wait. Be true to the deepest in you, do the work .. and wait.

One day, when you least expect it, the flower will come by itself.

~ Amoda Maa

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