

Designing A Life - We Each Get The Chance

As we pass through the Seven Gateways to Enchantment again and again and become a true Enchanted Self, we see that life is all about living and then telling and retelling the stories of our lives to get the most positive juice from our stories.

This often means taking pain and misfortune and turning it into meaning and even eventually a metamorphosis of pleasure. One example of designing a fulfilling life comes to mind. This is the story of a part of our French cousin's life. A retired doctor living outside of Paris, Jean Manuel, has often told us the story of his years living hidden in a farmhouse in a French Province. When he was five, his parents were warned that they had to leave Paris. He vividly remembers how terribly upset his parents were. Somehow they found a farmer and his wife who agreed to take in as many of the family members as could get there. His family and some cousins lived several years on this farm.

Others chose not to leave Paris and were never heard of again.

Jean Manuel told us about how his family went back after the war to look for their missing relatives, only to find possessions and an uneaten birthday cake celebrating the nephew's first birthday still on the table, at one of their cousin's homes. The family, however, was gone forever. He remembers his parent's despair, yet also how life resumed for all of them.

He also shared with us how his father was once picked up by the French Police and loaded onto a train. Fortunately the train was moving slowly enough that his father could jump and escape, living for a while in the woods until he could return to his little family.

One might at first wonder--how could a person come to terms with so much loss and seeing his family go through so much pain? I don't know Jean Manuel terribly well but I have clearly seen a friendly, joyful person every time we've been together. I have a hunch of several ways he has processed this story of his life and the life of his family.

I believe that one of the major ways that he has processed his own life and turned it into a meaningful, joyful experience is by giving back. The farmer and his wife who took them in didn't have any children of their own. Jean Manuel and everyone else that was hidden by them, never forgot them. They visited this couple every summer. To this very day, although the husband is gone, and the wife lives in a nursing home, Jean Manuel or his wife, or sometimes his daughter will take responsibility to visit and be with this woman. They never forgot and they've always been good to the people that were good to them.

Perhaps the other major way that I know that this man had made his life story into a meaningful life adventure is the way I feel when I am with him. He is a pleasant, reassuring person who makes me feel comfortable, safe, and as if there is a good time lurking around every corner. I think he is a lovely example of someone living an enchanted life... a life that has had to be reinterpreted, I'm sure, more than once... a life that is not a life of fame but of private meaning and consistency.

Exercise: Positive Personal Recognition

The following activity is great to help you better recognize how special you really are. Keep a piece of paper or a small notebook handy with which to make a self-pride list. For one week, write down at least one item a day that you have done well.

For example, on your list you might put, "I was polite and kind to several people in the check out line in the supermarket, even though I was very tired." Or you might write, "I used my head, rather than my fists," or "today I was able to really share with my son my concerns over his getting another traffic ticket, rather than showing intense anger."

\

Or you might write something as simple as, "I took care of my body today. I ate reasonable foods and went for a 20 minute walk."

At the end of the week, find a spare moment to read over your list a few times. After you have done that, give yourself a mental hug or visualize shaking hands with yourself or giving yourself a "high five" sign, or even placing a gold star on your forehead. This is a good way to begin giving yourself some recognition and possibly long overdue acknowledgment of all your many successes.

What you will realize as you keep your list is that you are certainly worth acknowledging in positive ways! You may also be surprised to see that you have done many acts of kindness, good deeds and often taken positive rather than negative action! Wow, you are AN ENCHANTED SELF!

Source: <http://www.articlecircle.com>

About the Author

Dr. Barbara Becker Holstein , originator of THE ENCHANTED SELF?, a method of bringing delight and meaning into everyday living, invites you to view her new line of ENCHANTED WOMAN products, e-books, and free gifts at <http://www.enchantedsself.com>.