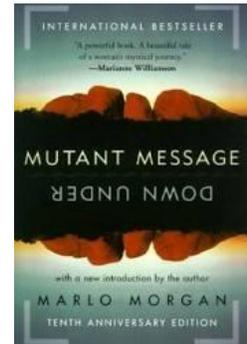


Focus Your Attention Elsewhere

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After 20 plus years, I am once again reading the book, *Mutant Message Down Under - A Woman's Journey into Dreamtime Australia* by Marlo Morgan. This is a story about a 50 year old woman who goes on a 4 month walkabout with an Aboriginal tribe. The first time I read this book, I was inspired to look at my life from a new perspective. I was more grateful for all that I had, I thought more about giving thanks in advance of receiving and I questioned whether I could be identified with just one gift/talent as the members of the tribe were. Imagine being the StoryTeller who didn't have to be Cook or the Midwife who didn't have to be the Peacemaker and at the same time know that you are being honored for your role in the family/tribe.



Today, I was reading about the beginning of the woman's journey with the tribe when she was walking barefoot, stepping on barbs and in considerable pain and Ooota, the translator for her, said,

"Focus your attention elsewhere."

This was my challenge for 20 years and the lesson I learned is one that I share with my clients who are in pain - physically, mentally, emotionally and/or spiritually. My story is this:

I have always been passionate about everything I do! I was 18 years old and at the University of Maine studying to become a speech therapist. I wanted to work with people who were blind and deaf. I'd already had experience reading braille and teaching it to a patient who was blind and deaf during an internship that I had during my senior year of high school. My future was planned out... so I thought. I scheduled my college classes around the daily three hours that I spent in the gym as a competitive gymnast. I loved everything about gymnastics and was my coach's "guinea pig", trying anything new without any fear or reservations. On April 13th, 1973, I was practicing on the balance beam with my coach and accidentally fell off, landing on me head. I woke up in the ambulance with a severe head trauma. It would be two years after the accident before I saw

the top neurosurgeon in Boston, who put me in the hospital immediately and performed barbaric medical tests that left me in excruciating pain. His prognosis: *"you will always have pain in your head and you will be on drugs for the rest of your life."* The first part of that prognosis was true for a long time. I still made it through nursing school - yup, the original plan changed - got married, worked, had a child. There were days when the head pain was so severe that I couldn't function. What I neglected to do on those days was to FOCUS ON SOMETHING ELSE. I had no pain from the neck down. Of course, we can usually see the past with 20/20 vision. Eventually, I traveled to California to become a kinesiologist and holistic nurse and I eventually healed the head pain, learned healing techniques and pain reduction tools both for myself and my clients and I live a full life with the ability to keep up with my 4 year old grandson!

Focusing your attention elsewhere when you are experiencing pain isn't about ignoring or minimizing what you are going through. Physical pain is often your body telling you something isn't okay. In my case, I could have sent my thoughts and focus to an area that didn't hurt. When the head hurts, often massaging your feet will lessen the pain and I could have done that. When you are depressed or sad, helping someone else puts your focus on what you can do to support them. It's important to get away from the tunnel vision or single focus and step outside the box, focus on something else that might work.

A simple technique to use if you are mentally going in circles and can't find answers is to block off your RIGHT NOSTRIL and breathe only through your left nostril. This will allow you access to your right brain hemisphere where you can see options and alternatives, perceive a bigger picture without emotions clouding your thinking and find creative ways to solve a dilemma without the left brain editing and judging the thoughts. Give it a try. It's a great way to brainstorm with yourself!

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