

Wake Up Call #12a

Moving Toward and Away

The wake up call for today is "Moving Toward and Away". Say you have a big problem - a serious problem. The pain is very great, and you want to know, "Should I move away from it - get away from it - or move toward it. Away can be avoidance, causing the pain to keep coming to get you. But moving toward it can be a reminder of your pain, so you are giving it more energy, so you don't necessarily want to do that. So, sometimes you want to move away and sometimes you want to move toward. How do you know the difference?

There's a fable of a bear in the woods. There's a log hanging from a vine that's in his way. He pushes it away, but it swings back to hit him in the head. He pushes harder and it comes back and hits him harder. Sometimes avoidance causes the pain to come back worse. So, that's not a good time to move away from pain.

But a good time to push pain away would be if you could do as Victor Frankl suggests in *Man's Search for Meaning* (2021), from his experiences in a concentration camp. He suggests that you focus on something - instead of the pain - that has real meaning for you in your life at this time - not the meaning of life - meaning for you, right now! That's a great thing for you to do and it's a re-direction of your focus.

An opposite case might be like what happened to me once when I was twelve years old. I was on a roof doing real roofing. My dad, my brother and I were building our house. I'm twelve years old, but I'm roofing! I'm nailing in the shingles with a real hammer. I'm cutting the shingles with a real knife, and I cut right across my finger. Oh, the blood was spurting out! It scared me. But I'm on a roof. If I stand up quickly and go, "Whoa! My thumb hurts!", I could fall off the roof. So, I had to focus. So, I went into the pain. I

remember distinctly, studying it. And that's the clue for today. Study the pain. Now, I've calmed down because I'm so interested in what's happening - "Oh, my God, I can feel my pulse in my thumb. I must have hit a big artery." But now, I'm calm. I didn't over-react. I can walk myself to the ladder, get down and wrap it up to stop the blood.

There are times where the opposite of redirecting your focus is to focus directly on the pain, itself. At times, Victor Frankl recommends that you make an intense study of what's going wrong, and face the problem. If it's not going away by thinking of something else, then you go in toward it. Byron Katie would say in *Loving What Is* (2002), that it is what it is. It's not going away. Maybe it's something from your past that keeps haunting you - it keeps coming up. You don't like what happened. Well, it happened. It is what it is.

Focus on it and go directly toward calling it what it is. And perhaps you can end up loving it. Maybe the way to wake up to a spiritual view would be to ask yourself, "Can you use the pain of what happened? Can you use the suffering? Can you use the event that caused all of the suffering as a way to move forward - to maybe use it as a fuel for change in your life? And then, maybe even be thankful for it? There's the highest goal of goals. Not to minimize that there might be a serious problem, here - but to have a higher view.

That's it for today. I'll see you in one of those tomorrows.

"suffering is relative" (Frankl, 2021)

"Everything can be taken from a man but one thing, the last of the human freedoms, to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one's own way." (Frankl, 2021)

For a long-term exercise, ask yourself, "Can I find any use of this event? Can I find myself *Loving What Is?*"



References

Frankl, V. E. A. J. D. D. h. d. (2021). *Man's search for meaning : an introduction to logotherapy.*

Katie, B. M. S. (2002). *Loving what is: How four questions can change your life.* London: Rider.