

Don't Wait Until Tomorrow

Julie Hryniewicz-Hache -- Wednesday, November 1, 2006, 9:59AM



Emergency vehicles rushing past us on the highway Thursday night brought me right back; eight years as a police officer and I know all too well what an ambulance and two cruisers in a row usually means. Sure enough the dozens of flashing red lights culminating on the highway up ahead indicates a crash. The one vehicle turned on it's roof, another's front hood crumpled towards the windshield like a pop can that you squish end to end for recycling. My adrenaline surges, I

am triggered to past accidents; I wonder if anyone was killed. I remember what it feels like to witness death at my feet. My thoughts move to assess if someone we know might be involved; our family commutes on the highway regularly and you never know. I think about the people involved - I hope that they are all okay. I am grateful that my husband is safe beside me. I am so appreciative that our children were not in the vicinity.

Despite the fact that I did not end up knowing the people involved in that accident and gratefully no one was killed, I was still affected by the event. Whether we see tragedy, death, violence, pain, or war in person, on television, in the newspaper, or on the internet, we still respond physiologically and emotionally to what is going on. Our experiences mold who we are and what we believe. I recall being frozen to a television at my workplace as the second plane hit the twin towers on September 11th, 2001. I was shaking, I was afraid, and I knew that somehow this event would change everything. I was glued to the news reports for weeks, I worried that this was going to spur on another world war and break out the nuclear bombs. I felt the need to accept that life, as I knew it, could end in an instant and I didn't feel like I was in the right place.

The month after September 11th, I left my marriage. A year and a half later, I moved to another town, and shortly thereafter, left my career as a police officer. The rationale behind turning my life upside down was that I felt the urgency to mold my life as I imagined it could be. I wanted adventure, peace, passion, joy, purpose, and fulfillment and figured that I

had to live as if any day could be my last because I had no control over the world chaos that was going on around me. Sometimes though, there are hurdles along the way! Illness, depression, and eventually bankruptcy ensued. I had abruptly cut off my main source of career income, become overwhelmed with my seven real estate properties, ended up developing a life-long stress-induced thyroid disorder, and crumbled into a depression where I was barely able to shower...

I eventually got tired of wallowing in my own misery though. I became sick of being a self-proclaimed big puddle of tears on the floor. I figured that I would not be able to reach my goal of changing the world if I could hardly manage to function! Enough was enough and one night while wandering out into the night in an emotional meltdown, I decided that I had to make a choice - snap out of it or risk a life of emptiness, numbness, or even worse. I knew that I was at a crossroad. Shivering, cold, and barely dressed for summer on that cold spring night at three something in the morning with tractor-trailers roaring past me, I was forced to face my situation, once and for all. I eventually found a picnic table overlooking the beach and curled on top, into a ball, covering my legs with my shirt. I had run out of tears, I had run out of energy, I was looking for an answer. The continuous chatter and bantering inside my head had finally stopped and it was silent; my spinning top had slowed and fallen over.

At that moment, the silence was one that I had never known and there was a sense of peace that washed over me. I looked out over the water at most glorious view that I had ever seen. The moon lit up the water and there was a band of light dancing like blown glass on the horizon. The water rolled onto the beach, the stars flickered in the sky, and I realized the absolute beauty of nature that performed at my feet. "I surrender", was the thought that entered my head. "I surrender", I whispered out loud... I knew in that moment that everything was going to be okay. I knew that if I wanted my life to be different that I had to make new choices. I decided that I deserved to be happy and that I was not being of service to anyone as long as I continued to wallow about the circumstances that I had created or that had befallen me as a result of my decisions. I decided that my daughter needed me, that I had work to do on this earth, and that my purpose was going to be to heal and share my experience with others because there are so many people who are paralyzed in pain. Nothing around me had changed but I had dramatically altered my thoughts from despair to hope. I decided it was time to focus on what was good in my life.

That dark stage of my journey has been the very best thing to ever happen to me. I am now so blessed to be able to speak, teach, and write

in the realm of life balance, wellness, personal development, the mind/body connection, overcoming adversity, increasing energy levels, living full out, and finding purpose and meaning in life and work. I have chosen to use my gifts and experiences to empower, lead, motivate, encourage, guide, teach, support and inspire others to their greatest potential, despite all of the adversity that we call life. We cannot change the circumstances, pain, tragedy, abuse, or events that have taken place in our life so far; however, we can begin at any moment to accept the past for what it is and instead focus on the present moments that will make up the rest of our lives. The quality of our life is determined by how we process what we perceive to be negative events and not the events themselves. I now use negative events as a reminder to live my life fully and be grateful for my blessings. It is so senseless to live our lives upset, cynical, and bitter because our lifetime is so limited.

We have this undetermined span of time until our physical life on earth is over and we have the ultimate control to do with it what we wish. We can continue to live in struggle, addictions, pain, blame, hatred, sorrow, grief, illness, guilt, or anger that will fester inside our mind and body (even if we have every reason to justify all of this) or we can decide that we are no longer willing to suffer. You can learn to embrace, persevere, triumph, and overcome anything that you are dealing with to make your life meaningful. You never know when a vehicle may pull out in front of you. No use worrying about it, just live now! Are you living your life fully? Are you living in the past that is holding you down like an anchor? Are you allowing your pain to prevent you from recognizing the blessings in your life? Start by getting yourself a journal or notebook or mentally make a list of all the people and things you are grateful for. Don't wait until tomorrow to let your family, friends, colleagues, and loved ones know how much you appreciate them - you never know what lies ahead. Life is too short!

"Begin at once to live." Seneca

Stay tuned to this column for weekly tools, tips, and resources for overcoming adversity and living fully. You deserve to live a life of absolute joy and fulfillment. Have a great day! Julie