

When it's time to leave...

by Shirley Smith

Did you ever wake up and feel like you no longer fit into your old identity? Things you once held dear or never questioned now suddenly seem strange. You realise you've lost momentum; your passion's gone missing and then you discover not only are you going in the wrong direction – you're just plain lost!

Then, a moment of clarity bolts into your unconscious mind – you understand that old certainties need to be released or perhaps abandoned entirely! You hate to admit it, but that nasty four-letter F word is crying out from your body and soul – F E A R!

For a moment you stop – maybe freeze, then the adrenaline kicks in and you decide you'll win the race this time. You will not give up – you will try harder! You analyse, make some adjustments, attend a seminar, read a book. Convinced you have changed, you're ready to get back in the race. But, this time you realise you not only have to do something different to win, you have to actually get off of the hamsters wheel and step out of the cage!

I have a question for you. Could it be you've been following old values, concepts and traditions, rather than allowing a direct inner knowing to be the driving force in your life?

You've heard the wisdom, "to thine own self be true" or "the truth will set you free." Maybe it's time to listen to your true voice, rather than the pre-recorded, critical tape catalogue you have locked away in your internal storage keeper? Maybe it's time to get really honest and start telling YOUR truth? Time to stop living someone else's life and start living your own. Maybe it's time to leave home – again.

What I mean by "home" in this instance, is anything that is comfy, secure and feels FAMILIAR. It could be a job, career, relationship, a role, a label – or more specifically, any pattern of behaviour that protects us

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from unwanted feelings, confrontations or a sense of emptiness.

Joseph Campbell states, "in virtually every culture destiny summons the hero and transfers his spiritual centre of gravity from his

family and homeland (or whatever is familiar) to an unknown territory".

The danger of not leaving home is that we can spend the rest of our lives hiding from ourselves. We cling to our addictions as if they were a life preserver rather

than a straight jacket. Addicted to love, work, food, others, alcohol, sex, drugs, drama, our titles and position (the list goes on) – we'll seize whatever we need in order NOT to hear the silence. Yet we need to go through the silence, the 'dark night of the soul,' the 'valley of the shadow of death,' to find and hear our true voice!

Oh S____! you say, deciding it's now the S word that suits the situation. And you're partially right. Although the journey involves examining your thoughts and beliefs; your emotions and values and your choices and behaviours – the most important thing to understand is that this journey is a sacred and spiritual one. It is the journey of finding the True Self.

In counsellor's offices, workshops and healing centres across the world, the dialogue usually focuses on what's gone wrong in our life rather than the deep purpose moving through it. If we miss getting to communicate the "deep purpose" don't we miss the essence of the whole experience? I think this is the gift that pain brings us – the "pearl of great price" so to speak.

Whether your focus is healing the wounded self or honouring the true self, the journey will not be successful without diving into the SPIRITUAL (the important S word) and finding your own special pearls. In fact, in all the years I've worked with people, I would say that it's the spiritual aspect of the journey that ensures they won't go backwards or remain victim to certain people and circumstances.

Letting go and "leaving home" usually involves making some significant changes, as well as addressing negative thoughts; beliefs; behaviours and overwhelming feelings. Wouldn't it be a shame if you didn't hear the call of that "still small voice" within guiding you out of the valley to higher ground?

The new way I intend to expand my work is to support people to step toward the sacred in their lives. To stop hiding and learn to identify the "true self". To have the courage, strategies and support to live their lives with full self-expression and to live their truths without feeling guilty.

Isn't that what leaving home was supposed to be about?

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