

Sage- ing International : "Era of Awakening"

...Life does not afford us an opportunity to see over the horizon of current circumstances. However, there is comfort in Jane Hirschfield's poem pointing to wisdom inherent in the natural world when we may not know what to expect next:

Optimism

More and more I have come to admire resilience.
Not the simple resistance of a pillow, whose foam
returns over and
over to the same shape, but the sinuous tenacity of a
tree: finding the
light newly blocked on one side,
it turns to another.
A blind intelligence, true.
But out of such persistence arose turtles, rivers,
mitochondria, figs—
all this resinous, unretractable earth.

Emily Esfahani Smith studies resilience of the human spirit. She notes Victor Frankl's reference to "tragic optimism." There is a Buddhist saying, "In the midst of that, there is a way to find a light, to find meaning and hope." Tragic optimism is the ability to find hope and maintain a sense of meaning during tragedy and loss, anxiety and grief. Tragic optimism is going through the pain and adversity, experiencing the hard things, but also maintaining optimism that there is meaning and value to be found.

Realistic Optimism: Dr. William Sadler proposes that a kind of optimism that is needed during difficult times is *realistic optimism*. Realistic optimism is tough, resilient, responsible, and hopeful. It is a combination of positive emotion, faith, a sense of self, and personal meaning. Realistic optimism helps us meet distress but not be overcome. We face adversities and turn them into opportunities. We allow positive factors to outweigh negative ones. We learn to hope and believe that at least in our personal lives, all shall be well to the best of our ability.

Question: *In what ways does optimism influence resilience in my life?*

Formidable Optimism: At the heart of pure optimism is a belief that it is powerful and awe-inspiring. It holds a spiritual essence—a mysterious spark affecting the human spirit. When we acknowledge that optimism—regardless of how it is referenced—is essential to humanity's evolution, it becomes compelling to turn toward optimism. As we carry forward during this time—wisely reframed as a *pandemic of love*, may we deepen in realization of its potency. By gaining insight and deeper understanding into the formidable possibilities of optimism, we also gain immense opportunities to alter situations in which we might otherwise feel powerless.

Question: *What does hope and spiritual beliefs have to do with optimism? ...*

May your life and our lives collectively shine forth with the transformative power of optimism. May we call on courage to guide us. May we support each other in love, and protect each other and our planet with fierce respect and reverence.

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