



Inner Journey Coaching

“The journey forward begins inward!”™

A Message from Elaine: September 2009

Hello to ALL the amazing women out there! We've often discussed the importance of living our truth AND the power of gratitude. This month, I'll address these together. I recently experienced a serious illness: a kidney stone that caused tremendous pain, constant nausea, lower intestinal issues and organ infections. I rarely get sick so this came as quite a surprise. It's been almost 3 weeks now and I'm still recovering. Yet, it has been an amazing journey – one that I hope you'll agree is worth sharing.



From the start, my intuition told me that there was a greater lesson to be learned here if I had the courage to embrace it. I've supported many people through life-threatening illnesses who bravely chose a higher perspective – looking beyond their physical crisis to understand the deeper purpose at hand. Like them, I chose to view the illness as the universe's way of helping me live at a whole new level. The synchronicities were amazing as the pain started at the peak of the full moon. The moon represents *female energy* and her cycles profoundly influence us. Full moon energy is designed to help us *release the old* and make room for the new. From the on-set of the pain, I began to wonder what I may need to release from my life.

During my first of two ER visits, I started to notice my closest relationships being challenged. Many of us are the “rocks” in our families – that is, we personify strength and security, especially in times of need. However, when the “family rock” gets ill, things are revealed that would not have been otherwise. I was surprised at how those closest to me responded. *Some* choose to focus on their own fear and ask me to help them with it. They wanted me to listen, coach them through it and assure them I was going to be okay – none of which I could do well as I struggled with extreme pain, strong anti-biotics and various pain meds. *Others* chose to hide from the severity of the situation. As if it would go away somehow by their not acknowledging it. Yet, *a few* knew exactly what I needed – bringing me a warm meal, keeping me company, listening to my health care mishaps and being fully present. This was tremendously healing for my body, mind and spirit. As the days progressed, both the strengths and weaknesses of my relationships were highlighted, including what each relationship was based upon.

The illnesses' duration also prevented me from playing my normal ROLES for people. That is, how I meet the needs of those around me, what I represent to them and how they handled my temporarily not being able to fill those roles. When we are physically incapacitated, we naturally protect our physical, emotional and mental energies. We need ALL our energy to endure the pain and then to heal. In self-protective mode, we can see other people's behavior with the utmost clarity. The universe had literally stripped my closest relationships down to the core and showed me the deeper truth behind each of them. Although I continued to show compassion for people's fears and needs, it did not erase the greater truth that was being revealed nor the deeper purpose the illness was serving.

TRUTH is my highest life value! When it is shown to me (no matter how difficult to accept), I approach it with gratitude and take steps to align my life with it. When we embrace our truth, we liberate ourselves at the deepest possible level. From this place, we gain the clarity and courage needed to improve our lives. In this case, the actions I needed to take were two-fold:

1) **RELEASING THE OLD:** I needed to release the *remaining* roles/behavior patterns that no longer serve my highest good. Women are socialized to be nurturers – often to the exclusion of our own needs. Like so many things in life, *balance* is key. When our nurturing of others becomes chronically imbalanced, we shield the adults around us from their own life lessons. I saw how this well-intentioned yet enabling pattern doesn't allow our loved ones to face the adversities that would help them find their own truth and inner strength. Take it from one “family rock” to so many others out there, this is a great disservice to those we love. A more *balanced solution* that serves ALL is to support others in ways that do NOT shelter them from life's challenges. Pain is a great teacher – it often motivates us to change when nothing else will get our attention. When we over-nurture people, we block them from feeling their pain. Pain that would otherwise help them to learn and grow. Remember, we never get more than we can handle so any challenge that comes along CAN be transcended. Challenge is essential for growth. Now I realize a more *powerful role* for women is to help others see the deeper purpose or lesson at the core of the challenge. The more we do this in our OWN lives, the better teachers we will be. Through our own experience, we become living models of how to move “*from pain to power!*” This changes lives in a significant way – ours and all those we touch!

2) **MODIFYING RELATIONSHIPS:** By releasing the old, I could now make room for the new. I began by re-evaluating each relationship based on what would serve our higher good in a balanced way. In this process, I kept both compassion and truth in mind. The truths revealed to me were a tremendous gift – one that I feel deeply grateful for. To honor that gift, I made the appropriate decision for each relationship. For some, I decided to step back. This entailed putting less energy and focus on that relationship. Still loving the person but changing the way I express my love. The new love is more balanced, allowing that person to learn his/her lessons directly and increase inner resourcefulness. This truly serves the highest good for ALL!

I also saw changes in my relationship with self. For instance, my relationship with food has significantly shifted. My body now craves more whole and fresh foods. Processed and sweetened items have lost their appeal. Food doesn't seem to have the same *comfort role* it did before my illness so I'm eating less volume. With more “balance” in my relationships, I have more time and energy to nurture myself. Overall, I feel much lighter: physically, emotionally and energetically. I'm not carrying the weight of responsibilities that are not mine. Although it was extremely painful, the illness has been hugely liberating. I'm free to move forward with this new wisdom and truth, helping other women to do the same!

My intention for sharing today is to inspire and empower other women. For you, the challenge may have been the loss of a job/career, death of a loved one or a major health crisis. You too may have seen your relationships in a new light. This light may have resulted in: 1) strengthening the connection and love you feel; 2) changing how you express your love; 3) altering the amount of energy you give to a relationship; or 4) ending a relationship that has served its purpose. We learn a great deal through our relationships. Yet, change must occur WITHIN US before it can be reflected in our outer world. For each time we reclaim the powerhouse of wisdom and truth inside us, we set ourselves free!

In closing, this experience has validated that life is truly a journey. Over the years, I have gotten quite good at setting healthy boundaries and keeping balance in my relationships. Yet, I'm reminded that we often learn the *same* lessons throughout our lifetime – each time at a *deeper* level or from a *broader* perspective. By embracing life lessons and transcending challenges, we come to realize our deepest essence. That of wholeness, love, peace and joy! All of which are priceless and worthy of gratitude!

“Honesty is telling ourselves the truth. Integrity is living that truth.” Ken Blanchard