

When Life is a Struggle

The struggles of life rarely take a day off and the holidays are no exception. If anything these special times of year seem to magnify whatever difficulties we are already facing; robbing us of what little peace and joy we manage to muster.

When life is a struggle it is important to find perspective by recalling important truths. One such truth is:

Suffering is Inevitable (a wise Rabbi, whose birthday we celebrate, once said... “I have told you these things in advance so you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart because I have overcome the world!” John 16:33)

But Misery is Optional (another spiritual teacher reminds us that we can be optimistic when facing hardship knowing that “the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance works maturity and maturity produces a fully developed you that is not lacking anything.” James 1:2-4)

Below are 5 ways to respond to struggles that minimize suffering and ensure our growth:

1. We can respond **Irrationally or Impulsively**.
Almost always this is due to fear, anger or guilt. Take a deep breath. Consult with your PAL group and respond in a thoughtful, proactive manner.
2. We can react **Resentfully**.
Often this stems from self-pity or blaming. Neither changes the reality. Resentment does, however, keep you stuck. Let it go and focus forward.
3. We can react **Passively**.
Helplessness or a lack of courage to take a stand is a victim response. Talk to others and learn that there are things you can do to move toward healing.
4. We can respond **Courageously with Faith**.
It’s like a physical exercise. Practice and hard work will make a difference. You will grow and develop into a stronger and better version of you!
5. We can rebound **Creatively**.
This requires getting your focus off the problem. Shift your attention to your self-care and the care of others; it will unleash new, creative energy.

I hope these suggestions are helpful as you face the Holiday Season. As always, surround yourself with loving, positive people and remember...

We’re on the journey together!

Ron

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