

## OLD FRIEND, DEAR FRIEND...

Progress is such a paradoxical process. Just as we think we may have cracked it or tamed the beast of adversity another challenge comes and questions our beliefs, our focus and resolve. Before we know it, we're on our backs again, looking up at the sky wondering how our 'best' efforts have brought us back to this point? If only we would accept that relapse is part of the growth process our journeys would be made so much easier. Relapse does not come to harm us; it offers us deeper understanding and further insight. In fact, every relapse is a gift, it's simply a matter of perception. We invite you to try a new approach. It goes something like this: the next time you find yourself standing in the old and familiar, surrounded by the unpleasant odour of that which you would rather leave behind, rather than sighing in disgust and sitting in that seat of defeat and victimhood try this...

Old friend, dear friend what have you come to teach me?... I've been so busy 'doing' that I haven't really been listening... I've only just begun to realise that personal growth starts with listening... I promise from today to really listen... I know you have a message for me if only I'd be still long enough to hear your sweet words... I've been so consumed with the challenges I face that I've fallen into the trap of becoming a victim... But no more! I'm tired of contributing to my own demise... generating my own confusion because I'm too busy 'doing' rather than 'being'... I'm beginning to understand that the ultimate in doing is to 'be', that 'being' is the most beautiful act I can perform and it's time to do just that... It's time to be... Old friend, dear friend, what have you come to teach me?... Probably for the first time I'm really listening... Please whisper your sweet truths into my welcoming heart and mind...

This is not a script that you're expected to learn and recite, it's merely a template, illustrating how you can set up such a dialogue with yourself. You will find your own words, words that best express your sentiments. Try to 'feel' your way through this kind of dialogue; it's not meant to be a well-constructed speech, it's an expression of the heart.

Every experience affords you the opportunity to grow. Often what may be deemed to be the worst of these experiences offers you the greatest learning. And so, if you set up a dialogue between your mind and whatever experiences you may be facing as illustrated above, magical insights begin to unfold. You need to be patient though; it often takes time for these insights to fully blossom but blossom they will (see: The 3 'P's and Courage and Application are the Keys). Do not fear relapses; embrace each one as an old friend bringing you priceless gifts. Sit with that old friend and keenly ask what gifts they have brought this time. Offer your time, attention, and appreciation. Most of all ask what lesson(s) you still have to learn and listen with all of you. Your insights and personal revelations will come to you in many forms, such as: dreams, reading inspirational material, a seemingly unrelated conversation, listening to or watching a play, a sporting achievement, or something else that moves you. Whatever form it takes, if you're listening, you'll recognise it when it turns up. When it does turn up remember to always give thanks!

Try this approach and you will see how quickly your perception shifts. Your world will make more sense and rather than being a slave to events you'll slowly become a master. This is an easy way to create humility. Ego is so busy battling and defending itself it simply isn't able to recognise the truth. Humility, on the other hand, is a place of openness, eternal learning; its love for truth means all mysteries eventually unveil themselves without even being asked. Choose humility and you are choosing clarity, peace and wisdom. Remember when you're next struggling with uncertainty, pain, or feeling confused, staring into a life that seems to have little meaning, have the thought: 'Old friend, dear friend what have you come to teach me?' ... and really listen!