

Messages from the Medicine Wheel

A monthly newsletter from Myron and Angelitta Old Bear



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The Value of Hard Times

The young man was very happy to be spending the day in the forest with his grandfather who, as far as this teenager was concerned, was the wisest person who ever lived. As they sat and ate their lunch near the crystal clear mountain stream that meandered its way through a long, grassy meadow, suddenly the young man saw a large cocoon hanging from a tree branch near by. The young man got up and walked over to examine the cocoon, and just as he reached out to touch it, it started shaking violently, even though there was no wind blowing.

Upon careful examination, he noticed that there was a small opening in the cocoon and a beautiful butterfly was trying desperately to escape the

confinement of this cone-shaped prison. Feeling sorry for the butterfly, the teenager took out his pocketknife and carefully cut a slit in the cocoon so the butterfly could escape.

The butterfly crawled out of the cocoon and onto the branch above. It flapped its wings again and again, but it couldn't fly.

Finally the young man called for his grandfather to come and look at the butterfly. "I helped it escape from the cocoon," he said to his grandfather, "but it doesn't seem to be able to fly." Looking over at the wise old man, he asked, "What do you think is wrong with it, grandpa? Why can't it fly?"

The old Indian shook his head as a sad expression clouded his face. "It will never be able to

fly, grandson, because you didn't let it fight its way out of its' cocoon." He put his arm around his grandson and patted him on the shoulder as he continued. "You see, as the butterfly fights to escape the cocoon it strengthens the muscles in his wings so he can fly when he escapes. However, by helping the butterfly out of the cocoon you prevented it from developing strong wing muscles, so it will never be able to fly."

Enduring Hard Times Can Make Us Strong

I heard the above story many years ago while I was experiencing an extremely difficult time in my life. We tend to view hard times as a negative experience—something to be avoided. However, I have discovered that going through difficult times can have a very positive effect on my life. Like a butterfly fighting to escape its cocoon, going through hard times can make a person a lot stronger, and a much better individual.

That obviously doesn't mean that we deliberately try to create problems for ourselves. However, when a problem occurs, we should make every effort to learn all we can from it, and in doing so, we can turn a bad experience into something that will make us better people in the future.

When we experience hard times in our lives we should ask ourselves, *why did this happen to me?* That will help us identify the cause of the problem. In fact, often times we need to ask the "why" question several times before we get to the real cause of the problem.

Our whole universe operates on the law of *cause and effect*--which means that for every effect there is a cause. We should understand that hard times in our lives are the *effect* of something. By that I mean that hard times and bad experiences are *caused*—they don't just happen. Therefore, when we experience difficult times in our lives we should make every effort to determine what *caused* the problem and focus on that. **Eliminating the "cause" makes sure the "effect" doesn't occur again.**

Life's problems tend to tempt us to do one of two things—they usually either draw us closer to our Creator, or they push us further away from him. Have you ever noticed that while some people seek our Creator's help during hard times, others tend to blame him for allowing the problem to happen to them.

Instead of "cursing our luck" when hard times happen to us, we should thank our Creator for them and ask him to teach us what we should learn from them so that we will be stronger individuals in the future.

The Cause of Hard Times in Our Lives

Our Creator never causes us to experience problems and difficulties—we are usually the cause of the problems that occur in our lives. Our Creator has given us Sacred Laws Of Right Living designed to keep us from experiencing hard times. However, when we ignore, or fail to live according to those Sacred Laws, we set in motion the "causes" that produce our own problems and difficulties.

Whether we are discussing going through hard times as a nation or as individuals, the cause of those hard times can almost always be traced back to the violation of one or more of our Creator's Sacred Laws Of Right Living. For example, many of the factors that have led our nation into the current "economic crisis" that is bordering on another Great Depression can be traced back to the excessive greed and over indulgence in materialism on the part of our society as a whole.

Our unquenchable appetite for more and more material "stuff" has reached gluttonous proportions. History teaches us that once a society gives in to its craving for more and more material possessions, it quickly starts sliding down the slippery slope of moral decay which ultimately leads to the destruction of that society. The destruction is brought on because the society abandoned our Creator's Sacred Laws Of Right Living that are designed to produce peace, harmony and balance within the people living according to those Spiritual Principles handed down by our Creator.

Usually when we experience problems and difficulties in our lives, we tend to point the finger at someone or something else as the cause of the problem instead of focusing on ourselves and the contribution we have made to cause the difficult situation. In most instances we will find that the hard times were the result of violating one or more of our Creator's Sacred Laws Of Right Living.

Therefore, instead of "cursing our luck" when hard times and personal difficulties happen to us, we should focus on the cause of the difficulties and ask our Creator to teach us what we should learn from them. Instead of being quick to blame others, we should first examine our own lives to see what contributions we have made in creating the problem. This can help us avoid making the same mistakes again and we will be stronger individuals in the future.

Community Corner

We want to thank those who came to Medicine Wheel Mesa over Memorial Day weekend to participate in the two ceremonies. Some of you came great distances to be with us at the mesa, and we trust that you returned home spiritually, mentally and physically refreshed.

The four days following the holiday weekend, a few of us also floated the Dolores River through 51 miles of remote wilderness country. We took lots of picture and had a wonderful experience. Later this month we will have pictures of that float trip posted on our web site.

If you are interested in making this float trip with us next year following Memorial Day weekend, please let us know as soon as possible because we limit the size of the group.

If you have benefited from this newsletter please feel free to e-mail it on to others you think would benefit from it, or simply e-mail us their e-mail address and we will send it to them each month. On the other hand, if you do not wish to receive our monthly newsletter in the future, simply let us know and we will remove your name from our list of those to receive the newsletter. We would appreciate hearing from you concerning any comments, prayer requests or suggestions you may have regarding this newsletter, and we invite you to come and visit us sometime at Medicine Wheel Mesa—***Where Sacred Journeys Begin.*** Our web site is www.medicinewheelmesas.com and our e-mail address is oldebearm@yahoo.com.