MARIANNE WILLIAMSON: ‘TEARS TO TRIUMPH’

Normal emotional suffering is not a mental illness

We have a crisis, an epidemic of over-medication in our country. Most specifically, the over-prescription of antidepressants. Mental illness is a real problem, but there is a spectrum of normal human suffering. A painful divorce, losing someone you love, or professional failure are difficult, but they’re not mental illnesses. To treat them like mental illnesses is very dysfunctional. As a society, we have medicalized human despair. That robs us of the deeper transcendent meaning and the real spiritual potential that lies within everyone. Suffering gives you X-ray vision into the suffering of others.

When is depression an illness? How is it diagnosed?

People say I’ve been “diagnosed” with depression. But there is no blood test for depression. It’s a questionnaire. People also sometimes say, “Depression is different from deep sadness. There are changes in brain chemistry.” How many people do you know who have been prescribed antidepressants that had their brain chemistry checked first? There are times when psycho-therapeutic drugs are helpful to people. But the story that’s being propagated today is something for us to think seriously about.

Numbing emotions stunts growth and hinders change

This idea of emotionally flatlining ourselves, rather than experiencing the “dark night of the soul,” keeps us spiritually stunted. When we’re spiritually stunted, we’re psychologically and emotionally stunted. You don’t learn the lesson. You don’t make the changes. You go out and manifest the same issues. The dramas of our lives never quite seem to break through to something more wonderful. Psychic pain is like physical pain. You don’t just numb it. If you have a broken leg, you don’t just take morphine. You have to reset the leg. If you have psychic pain, you have to reset the thinking that lies behind it.

Accepting personal responsibility

_A Course in Miracles_ tells us that we’re responsible for our own experience. If we are really honest with ourselves, would have to attribute the vast majority of our problems, not to situations in which we have no control, but to situations over which we have a lot of control.

Marianne responds to question ‘Why am I so full of tears?’

Crying the tears will reveal that answer to you. Honor the fact that they’re there. It is in crying them that you will come to understand the message they convey. The question isn’t how do we get rid of those tears; the question is what is the meaning of these tears. You will not know until and unless you allow yourself to cry them.
There is no ‘normal’ timetable for grief

Many people who work in institutions are given guidelines for depression and told, “If a person grieves up to this amount of time that’s normal. If it’s beyond that, then treatment is required.” Treatment usually means pharmaceutical. But who is to declare how long someone should grieve?

Build your spiritual muscles through daily practice

The most important practice, for all of us, is to seek to embody the things that we already know. That’s why you meditate — so you can forgive more easily during the day; so you can handle your stress more easily; so you can stay present and rise to the occasion, practice generosity and mercy, and be available to people and to your own life during the day.

The miracle is waiting on you

When you say you are waiting for a miracle, that’s like waiting for circumstances to become what you want them to be. That’s not what a miracle is. That’s magic. Magic is where you want the universe to do something for you. Miracle is where you place yourself in service to the universe. Place yourself in the service of love. That’s the miracle.

Every withholding of forgiveness is a withholding of love. Miracles occur naturally, as expressions of love. You’re going to be waiting for a while as long as you’re holding on to resentment. You’re going to be waiting for a while, as long as you’re holding on to a grudge, or holding on to unforgiveness, or holding on to a grievance. A Course in Miracles says, “You can have a grievance or you can have a miracle. You cannot have both.”

Ask today, “Where would you have me go? What would you have me do? Dear God, use me today. Use me as an instrument of love. If there’s someone I’m not forgiving, I am willing to see them differently.”

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

Marianne’s books are available on Amazon and at bookstores everywhere. They include Tears to Triumph, A Return to Love, A Year of Miracles, Illuminata, The Gift of Change, A Woman’s Worth, Age of Miracles, Enchanted Love, and Everyday Grace.

Visit her website at marianne.com, and follow her on Facebook, Twitter (@marwilliamson) and Instagram (@mariannewilliamson).

Check out Marianne’s weekly livestream lectures at http://marianne.com/livestream-wednesdays.