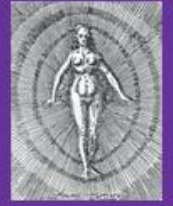


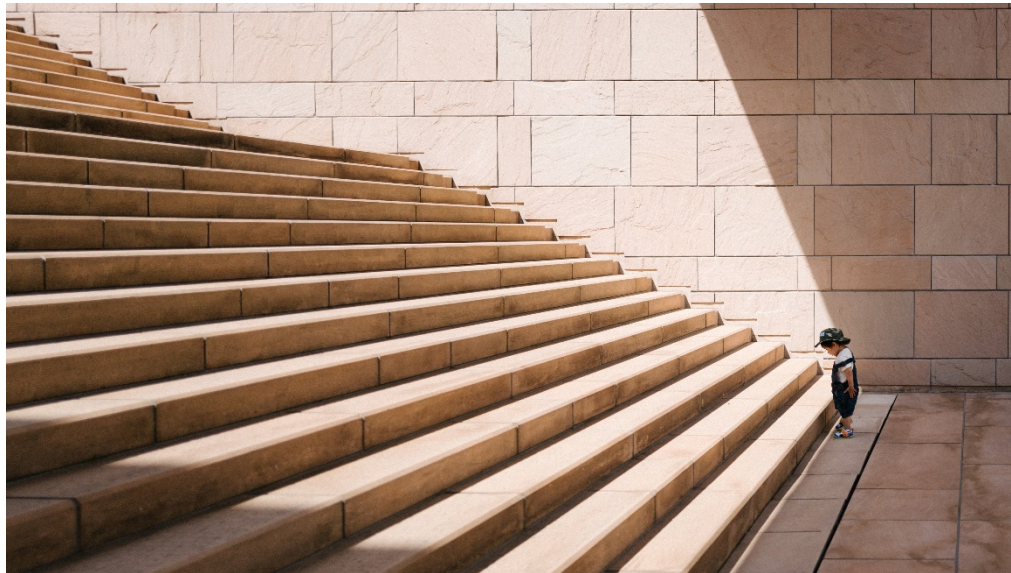
CHARLYNE GELT, PH.D.

Encouraging Self-Discovery and Empowerment



Hardship and Challenge by Charlyne Gelt, Ph.D.

*"In the depth of winter,
I finally learned that within me there lay an invincible summer."*
Albert Camus



Jung observed that “life is a short pause between two mysteries.” That fact is not in debate; what does matter, then, is how we live that short pause.

Rendition of Somewhere Over the Rainbow

“There is a reality in this country and that reality is that we are in the midst of a global, out-of-control phenomenon! The whole world is threatened by the same tragedy at the same time by the same invisible virus! Despite these strange and uncertain times, this pandemic has brought us all face to face with death, either imagined or in reality. The mind negotiates this gross affront to our sense of survival, amplifying the deepest fear that we may cease to exist. We are in a state of prolonged fear in the face of invisible danger, the sense of mortal threat, and the realization of how little we are able to control.

We are all experiencing losses and inconveniences together. And we are all fearful of the future — together. How long will the virus last? Will it ever end?

Particularly during this time of COVID, I’m finding in my own practice that many clients are getting “triggered” by the current health crisis. By “triggered” I mean that bodily-based fears arising in response to this life threat have stirred up implicit memories of fear associated with earlier threats and traumas that originated in childhood as a result of abuse, neglect, abandonment, and deep loneliness. That early trauma resides in the nervous system and is expressed via bodily symptoms. Trauma therapists conceive of such unconscious bodily memories as traumatic

“flashbacks.” In response to mortal threat, or to live with flashbacks or current threat to life, the mind resorts to defense mechanisms, unconscious processes. Sometimes these “memories” may even appear in dreams as nightmares. With dream work, such “ghosts of memories” can be coaxed from the darkness and into the light of day. Our capacity to recognize how the underlay of past traumas, recognize how they oppress and terrify us particularly when unremembered, can make the treatment of present difficulties much more complex.

The question is how do I handle it?

"Everyone gets tested. You never see it coming. But sooner or later the moment arrives and you have to account for yourself."

— Adam Baker

Same catastrophe; different responses

Even though we are all being impacted by the same event, we each have responded to it differently. The upshot that can come from the experience of hardship, illness, or the sudden risk of a contagious fatal illness, can also awaken one's undiscovered gems such as resilience, adaptation, connection, altruism and the binding force of love. For some people, the chaos surrounding the Pandemic has stirred up early childhood traumas, bringing an awareness of a great need for guidance and reassurance. Many have sought therapy even being willing to learn new technology, like Zoom or Skype, to accomplish this.

Others have reacted in a downward spiral, becoming deeply depressed, unable to get out from under their sense of fear, isolation, and anxiety, unable to reach out for that necessary wisdom and support. Some of these people have expressed suicidal thoughts. Sadly, some have gone through with it. Still others have reacted to the virus by escaping into alcohol or drug use, or acting out in anger as though being personally attacked by an invisible enemy.

The surprising upside of the pandemic

When countries around the world responded to the spreading of the virus with lockdown orders, calling for people to stay home, it forced millions to abandon busy schedules, hectic jobs, offices, schools, restaurants, and even long-planned special occasions, such as weddings, graduations, conferences, conventions, and vacations. Even Bar Mitzvahs and funerals were put on “hold.”

At first, few viewed the lockdown as bringing with it the possibility of “opportunity knocking.” But as it has turned out, hard as the shutdown has been, it has forced many of us the opportunity to look inward and self-reflect, perhaps for the first time. Covid-19 has created in some people an inner transformation, like the workaholic businessman interviewed on TV who said that, for him, the pandemic has been “a blessing,” because it has allowed him to spend time going fishing with his young son, something his schedule never made possible before. His life had been out of balance and he saw it and it changed him. Others, too, in forced solitude, looked within and saw that something was missing, or needed fixing. They noticed Red Flags they'd been ignoring. Now, they had the time to come to grips with the broken parts, take stock, and take action.

What if it happens again?

Covid-19 could happen again. Something even worse could happen. But even though it's true that a crisis, such as an accident, illness, or a consequence of some dreadful action, can bring a person to their knees, begging and praying for a way out of their pain, or destructive patterns, or their inner prison — *we shouldn't count on it. We can't “schedule a crisis!”* Nor is waiting passively for a crisis to happen in order to enlighten us about a personal issue a good plan. While the virus turned out to be a blessing for some, it was a disaster for others. So, what do we need to do to help us deal with life's big surprises?

We need to be better prepared — ahead of time

Even if the Covid-19 virus goes away, it's inevitable that one day the world will once again be faced with another rude awakening of one sort or another. But *what* happens is less important than *how we handle* what happens. Better preparation allows us to handle the next event with an upgraded arsenal of coping skills so we don't end up with over-the-top reactions such as suicide, high-anxiety, escapes into chemicals, or rioting.

Look beyond the realities

What can we learn from this? How do we move forward? Having been thrust out of the comfort zone, “home,” we must transition into a new way of thinking, to heal, which may mean to serve a cause greater than the self. Working with these insights, consider what the fear-based and rapid response to the virus tells us about our capacity to make huge mental adjustments. Ask what stops us from applying that capacity to the threat of climate change? Rise up and face the world with optimism — even assess the role that business, the film industry, individuals and corporations can play in addressing society’s most pressing challenges. Working together, there’s no limit to what we can achieve. Together, we can create a legacy of vision and change while on the journey from the old thinking to the new. If “sheltering in place” is starting to get old, it is also the time to Dream BIG!

The lessons of Covid-19

Perhaps the greatest lesson of the 2020 Covid-19 pandemic is that we need to *take charge of our own survival* and prepare ourselves for “the next time” — not wait for others to decide our future. We need to take Covid-19 wake-up call seriously and begin to build a future that addresses issues that have provoked an international turning point: the global pandemic! We were all in it together; let’s make it better together. We have a choice.

Charlyne Gelt, Ph.D.

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Resources

Subject: Important Message from Mother Earth

<https://youtu.be/cGm6VYU6iPw>



The Huntington is open for [Evening Strolls](#). The Huntington's gardens will be open 5:30 - 8:00 p.m. most evenings with advance reservations.





In case you missed it, you can still watch last month's [Countdown to Mars panel](#) featuring space science experts at USC and the California Science Center. The panel featured the Science Center's very own aerospace curator [Ken Phillips](#), USC's Research Associate Professor of Astronautics [Anita Sengupta](#), former JPL project scientist for a Mars Mission [Ken Nealson](#), and [Garrett Reisman](#) — former NASA astronaut who flew aboard Space Shuttle Endeavour!

[Learn more](#) about NASA's historic Mars 2020 Perseverance

Launch. Although summer camp has concluded, you can continue the hands-on science learning at home with over 50 free videos and activity guides available online. Visit [Stuck at Home Science](#) to explore, investigate and have fun without leaving home!

Watch Now 

 VIKING.TV



WATCH LIVE or ON-DEMAND

From St. Petersburg and the glories of the Hermitage Museum to the life and times of the Vikings, from royal portraitists to catching up at home at the dacha, enjoy history, culture, and local life this week on **Viking.TV**.

Have you taken any interesting photographs recently? If so, we'd love for you to share them with us in our *Looking Out, Looking In* **photo submission** with Viking photographer Alastair Miller.

Museum **MONDAYS**



Natalia Sokolova

Our expert Hermitage guide shows us the halls and hidden treasures of the legendary Hermitage museum in St. Petersburg and talks about Viking's Privileged Access experiences.

TUNE IN

In Conversation with... **TUESDAYS**



Alexander Talbot-Rice, portrait artist

Meet one of the world's greatest portraitists and adventurers, whose unique style of portrait painting has even been commissioned by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth.

TUNE IN

Art & Music **WEDNESDAYS**



Opera Holland Park, part 2

The founder of London's Opera Holland Park, Michael Volpe, returns to talk more about his work, and how he introduces people to the art form.

TUNE IN

Guest Speaker **THURSDAYS**



Geir Magne Røvik

Anne Diamond interviews Geir, a renowned expert on Viking life and culture, who often lives, eats and works in the Viking tradition.

TUNE IN

