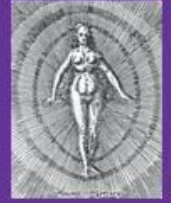


CHARLYNE GELT, PH.D.

Encouraging Self-Discovery and Empowerment



Seasons Change — So Can We! by Charlyne Gelt, Ph.D.

Most of us are unaware of how old "templates" — the old myths and beliefs we grew up with — still shape our life choices, giving us a firm base from which to break free and move on. The challenge is to raise awareness, "turn the page," and actively participate in rewriting your own story. ***"Your sacred space is where you can find yourself again and again."*** — Joseph Campbell.



All spiritual traditions use awareness as a healing power. This includes Old Chinese writings that view a dangerous crisis as opportunity for growth, new awareness, and change. This awareness may come in the form of a job loss, a divorce, or even disturbing dreams of death.

Looking more closely at duality of life and death, we can bear an awareness to the possibility that there is life / death / and life again. The cycles of the seasons teach about the wheel of life and death: spring follows winter. What's important is that we face our fears and learn to move in concert with the cycles of life/death/life within the psyche. A transition from emotional death to the vitality of life takes you to a deeper understanding and maturity. Psychotherapy offers the container for this wheel of life/death/life: the end of life as we know it, birth of what is hidden, and a new stage of psychological maturity and development

Annie, a 70-year-old widow, experienced her own "death" after her husband passed away. He did everything with her and she believed she could not go on without him and his support, financial and emotional. It is not uncommon for one to feel depressed, lost, and lonely after one's spouse dies. Annie struggled to find balance in the realms of old friendships, home, and family. She also struggled to find some wisdom, some meaning, in the death of her beloved husband of 40 years. She relived their relationship during the day and in her dreams at night. She questioned, "How could I live without him?" In times of crisis, we forget the wisdom buried deep within ourselves (and each other). Annie recognized her emotional isolation and began searching for something to fulfill her. Soon, her life became an ever-changing kaleidoscope. Acknowledging her loneliness became a turning point, a transition that pushed her in a new direction; propelling Annie in a search for meaning. While struggling through the aftermath of retirement, death, and life change, the importance of searching for identity becomes high on his list. Annie's shift in consciousness was a wake-up call for personal change, new life!

I wonder if this thought might resonate with one close to you: With emotional support, we can throw off the shackles of other people's imposed values and learn to develop our own. We can find mentors and powers greater than ourselves whom we trust and allow them to help us through the dark night of the soul. Sometimes we will fail and make mistakes, but that, too, is part of the cycle of life/death/life. ***The real voyage of discovery consists not in seeking new landscapes, but in having new eyes.*** — Marcel Proust

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