

The Traveler Within



Emotional Movement: Life's Chariot of Deliverance

"It is the movement between the fear of being nothing and the love of being everything that inspires life to fully live."

– Val Jon Farris

Most seasoned travelers are pretty savvy when it comes to navigating uncertainty and change; like finding their way in unfamiliar neighborhoods, moving through crowds of strangers, or traversing dimly lit cobblestone streets. Yet when it comes to emotional movement, dealing with the intensity of fear or anger, the obstacles of conflict and anxiety or the abyss of depression and grief, many life travelers find themselves out of touch with the wisdom of fluidity moving within the estuaries of their own heart and soul.

In this week's post, (which is now published every other week) we explore the nature of "emotional movement" and the practice of caring for our emotional well-being. Allow me to illuminate three key points regarding the subject.

The first point is that **emotions are passionately alive**. "Alive" in the sense that they're meant to move freely rather than being stifled or suppressed. Consider this - fear held too tightly becomes panic, love coveted too long becomes need, anger suppressed over time turns to hatred and disappointment carried over years settles into apathy. "E-motion" is life-force energy in motion and when we stop its movement, our aliveness stops with it. This emotional stifling is much like holding our breath for too long, first comes numbness, then unconsciousness, then death. To be alive is to feel, and the more fully we allow ourselves to feel our emotions and move with them, the more alive we become.

The second point is that **emotions are paradoxical**. In other words they don't make sense, but it's necessary to understand them, in a feeling kind of way. In my opening quote I point to "the movement between" oppositional emotions such as fear and love. What we feel in any one

moment is steeped in contradiction because unbeknownst to us there is usually more than one emotion involved in our experience. Anyone who's experienced a love-hate relationship intimately understands this point. Even the deepest of love does not escape paradox. At an unconscious level, just on the other side of our deep love resides deep grief, for we know in our heart that one day we are destined to lose who or what we love so deeply.

The final point is that **emotions are chariots of deliverance**. Being fully alive is about moving with our emotions rather than suppressing them or attaching ourselves to them. We've discussed the detriment of suppressing our emotions, but what about attaching ourselves to them? When I feel and voice, "I'm angry" and I hold onto the anger rather than let its energy move through me I become attached to it, and as a result it enslaves me. Now I'm angry and I'm being right about why I'm angry. This enslavement intensifies when I hold a grudge to punish either another or myself. The more I validate the reasons for my anger, the more steeped in negativity I become.

The practice for the wise life traveler is to recognize that emotional movement is a "chariot of deliverance." Much like all our human faculties, each of our emotions has a unique purpose and is charged with delivering us somewhere specific; somewhere within our heart-center which we would not otherwise arrive at had the emotion not arisen and delivered us there.

Let me give you an example. When both my parents died, (first my Mother followed closely by my Father) I fell into the abyss of loss and sorrow. The "chariot of grief" was overpowering, but rather than suppress it I allowed it to deliver me to its very bottom. But once I arrived there I discovered it wasn't actually the bottom of grief, it was the center of my heart. Much like the bottom of the Earth is its center, I found myself in the core of my heart and soul, a place of deep humility, gratitude and love for both of my parents, and for the paradoxical nature of life itself. This deliverance to my depths is something I will cherish for the rest of my life.

No matter what has occurred in your life; no matter how deeply you've been hurt, abused, loved or misunderstood, every emotion you hold, positive or negative is a chariot of deliverance for you; a vehicle of grace that if you allow it, will carry you to the center of your heart, the core of your soul and the gift of what it means to be fully alive.



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