

MY SECRET LIFE: Ten Tools for Transformation

Chapter 14

Body IV: From “Security Systems” to Real Security

“Maintaining” and “Losing” Security”

Many people are so frightened of “losing security” that they stay in jobs which they hate, or marriages which they hate, or live in places which they hate, or keep on paying medical and other insurance policies that they hate — all in order to “maintain security.” What happens when we make “security” our priority is that nothing ever happens. Instead, we repeat ourselves endlessly, which means of course, that we become bored; we maintain the status quo, but we are not challenged. Without challenge, we get stuck emotionally and physically, and end up unhappy and diseased.

If we are going to live that way, with security as our top priority, then of course we’re going to need those insurance policies, because we certainly will get sick.

Something will happen after all! There is no such thing as “maintaining security,” because nature is not mechanical, and no matter how much we attempt to wall ourselves off from nature it is impossible. Our bodies are part of nature. So is what lies behind the wall. There are no closed systems in nature. Natural systems are open, energetic, in motion. Life energy is like water; if thwarted in one direction, it will find another route. If we don’t continuously grow emotionally, mentally, and spiritually, then life’s energy will work upon our bodies, creating cancers and other long-term diseases.

(Of course there are individual karmic exceptions; situations where the arrival of disease and even death is actually healing — for the person, and sometimes for the family and others affected. I do not subscribe to the idea that if you get sick, you should feel guilty, because “there must be something wrong with you, or you wouldn’t get sick.” I cannot tell another person why something in his or her life is happening, as the laws of evolution for that individual’s nature are unique.)

Part of the reason why we are so frightened of moving out of a position of “maintaining security” is that we feel so isolated from others, even threatened by them. It’s “every man for himself,” so we dig in

and maintain control. Mainstream culture assumes separation; mainstream media reinforces separation, emphasizing mayhem and violence, thus promoting violence, chaos, and paranoia. From an early age, we are taught “never trust a stranger.” This happens because we do not accept our own shadows, the parts of ourselves we do not understand, the unconscious aspects of our own psyches. So we project what we refuse to see in ourselves out, onto others, and “evil lurks everywhere.”

Maintain security “or the bogey-man will get you”! This might as well be our motto, as that old childhood fantasy lives on inside.

Once we let go of security, and resolve to do what we are afraid of — including facing isolation, paranoia and the demons inside — then we stretch our boundaries and move into an exploratory mode. Everything changes. Over time, we begin to realize that we *can* trust our instincts, we *can* trust our natures. Paranoia dissolves. We begin to sense our unity with the whole universe and are surprised to discover how little we know, how much there is to learn. Like small children, we begin to feel the life force coursing through our bodies and we respond to that original joyous exaltation of simply being alive. The whole universe becomes our playground, and

we, the players, actively at one with the forces of creation.

Follow Your Nature

Prior to being able to consciously articulate this earth-based mysticism, I had sensed it, at some level. From the beginning of my career as a professional astrologer in the mid-‘70s, I would tell my clients: “*Follow your nature, and nature will take care of you.*” They would look at me, mystified. Such pretty words, but what did they mean?

I would explain. “What I mean is, if you follow your unique nature, as indicated by the lawful pattern and ongoing process of your unique astrological birthchart, you will take your place within the natural order of things, and not be separate from it. In fact, until you do this, there is a tear in the fabric of being, a hole in the universe which you and you alone can fill.”

I had discovered this hookup with nature on my own, years prior to my meeting Joseph Campbell and his famous remark, “Follow your bliss. Follow your bliss and doors will open to you that will open to no one else.”

Campbell had followed his nature, which was off the beaten path, and I had followed mine by leaving, not only my husband, but my children. This decision had opened me to the charge of being not only crazy (as some said anyway, because of my ideas), but *unnatural*. And it's true, there is a natural bond between mothers and children which I "chose" to break, opting to follow another and stronger part of my unique nature, as a fiery, freedom-seeking, double Sagittarian (Sun and Ascendant in that sign). In order to do so, however, I had to deny and neglect my own Moon in Taurus, its huge mothering instinct. I was not mature enough at that time to consciously incorporate and simultaneously express these two paradoxical qualities.

I had been acting out Moon in Taurus all my life as mother's little helper and then as a young mother. When the strong Sagittarian nature finally broke through, it could not be denied. This breakthrough, naturally, occurred on schedule (though I didn't know it, not being an astrologer at the time) when another fiery Sagittarian planet, Mars, "progressed" for the first and only time over my fiery Sagittarian Ascendant. The "Ascendant" is the point where one meets the world. One could say that I was born on December 19, 1942, at 8:02 AM in San Antonio, Texas, *so that* in September of 1969, Progressed

Mars would cross my Ascendant, I would dance like a dervish on mescaline all night long, and subsequently fall ill with peritonitis that, in turn, since it didn't kill me, would transform my life.

I say this, not to make excuses for “why I left my children.” That was a tragedy, and had I been older and more experienced at living out the complexity of my nature, I would not have left them. But the fire, once aroused, would not go out. I could trade the fire of starting out on a new path for the fire of abdominal infection, but I could not go backwards into wifely and motherly obedience.

That first peritonitis hospitalization had taught me that “God” was not hovering over me, judging my every thought, word, and deed. The soul's voice had boomed, “Live or die. It's *your* choice.” If I chose to live, I would be free. And to be free, was to take responsibility for my life. Two years later, I discovered that leaving my children with their father was part of the bargain. Some 20 years later I visited with a psychic who said to me, “If you hadn't left your husband and children back in your late 20s, you would have died.” She gave me this information without knowing anything about me, except my name.

Intricate, Invisible, and Visible Support

Time and again, I have been presented with information from unexpected sources which confirm the rightness of the unusual course my life has taken. When this happens, I am always stunned — and exhilarated. Not to be proved right, but to be handed a revelation, once again, that another thread is inextricably woven into the web of my journey. I begin to sense the marvelously intricate texture of this web, how it has been there all along, supporting me.

For many years, while I was learning astrology, I lived on very little money. For me, the priority was my studies, and everything else had to fit within that context of the long-term objective. As a result of setting that priority, I also learned to make an art out of living lightly and simply, so that I would have plenty of time left over from sporadic part-time jobs (like painting houses, or being a gofer for a construction company, or cleaning houses, or substitute teaching) to study. I learned to live well on \$300 a month — in a room of my own in communes; doing without a car; buying second-hand clothes; trading and/or sharing goods and services; walking, biking, hitching, catching rides with friends.

I did have plenty of friends, and I knew that if things got really tough financially, I could stay with friends until I got back on my feet. There were times when I took advantage of their generosity. The longest period was after I finally got up the courage to leave Phil, and went to live for a few months with my ex-husband Dick and my old friend Judy, now his wife.

I was doing what these friends did not dare to do, and while they admired me for it, we were all aware that their secure lives helped make my freedom possible! So I appreciated them, too. At Dick and Judy's I spaded the ground for their first garden and washed all the dishes, and of course, did astrology for their family for free. Judy found paying astrology clients for me, and provided a private room for me to consult with them. We were a tribe. We still are tribal. During those years my "security" consisted of knowing that my friendship net underneath supported me; that if I fell, it would be into the net and come to no harm. And clearly, that was true.

As time went on, I began to realize that there was an even more valuable supportive net, though invisible. And that was the way my life was weaving itself, daily, hourly, monthly, yearly. That with each experience I was feeling stronger, fuller, richer. That I could trust the entire universe, not just my friends.

The strands of my net reach out in many directions and travel vast distances — to the stars and beyond. I know, with every fiber in my being, that we are all connected. I know that I am a part of nature, of the Earth, that Earth is a part of the solar system, and the solar system a part of the larger cosmos. Sitting in the middle of my net, I sense the reverberations from everywhere. The universe is alive.

Security, in this vast, expanding, opening system, consists in simply being present in the moment. The point of power is in the present, is the moment itself, as it stretches into space.

But How Do I Dare?

But how, you might ask, did I discover this? How did I dare to leave my “secure” life in the first place?

Well, it was not because I wanted to leave, or because I knew what lay on the other side of the wall I had so dutifully and unconsciously constructed as a young wife and mother. Simply, there came a time when my life was intolerable, when death was preferable to the life I was leading. “I,” my ego, did not recognize that, but my body did. And through the crisis of what was becoming a terminal illness, my body brought me to a complete stop. Both duties and

distractions burned away. There was nothing to do but lie there, feverish, tossing, and unknown to me, opening, to admit the soul, its booming voice, its truth: “Live or die, it’s your choice.”

From that moment on, I began to take the first hesitant steps in following my own unique nature, no matter where it might lead, no matter how strange it might turn out to be. From that moment on, if I was to live, then I had no choice but to be and become my whole self. Those who struggle with what they assume to be a dichotomy between fate and free will have not yet experienced this unification of fate and free will. Fate, freely submitted to, transforms into destiny. No longer is one a puppet manipulated as on a string by outside forces. Rather, one is pushed from within, flowing like a river, blooming like a flower.

Following the personal rule of doing what I was most afraid of meant that I would be continuously pushing my own envelope, instructing myself to push through fear and undergo new experiences. Some of the situations I got into as a result were objectively dangerous, like the time I hitchhiked to Mendocino from Marin with one dollar bill in my pocket. (See Intro, p. ____). And some situations yielded lessons so dramatic, so brilliant, I could only bow my head in wonder.

Once, during the years I was studying astrology, living on very little money, I took a trip to another town, to work as a visiting astrologer, staying in a cheap motel room. On the morning I was to leave, I got a sudden urge to steal the thin washcloth, towel, and bathmat from the motel room. Immediately, the urge was followed by my conscience telling me not to steal. “Of course I shouldn’t steal those these things. I’ve never stolen anything, why do I feel the urge to take them?” I owned neither a washcloth nor a bathmat, so I could have used the items. But more than that, there was the thrill of doing what was forbidden, of overriding conscience to see what would happen. Fascination won over fear. I stuffed the items into my suitcase, all the while shocked at what I was doing.

When I arrived home I was amazed to discover that a window had been broken into, my tiny basement apartment ransacked, and the shelf where my boombox had sat now bare. This shock was followed, instantly, by exhilaration. “YES!” I exulted. “The universe works!”

I knew why it had happened. Never had I stolen anything before. Never had I been stolen from before. The connection between the two was only too

evident. The universe was gifting me with a lesson in instant karma, letting me know that my action had set a train of consequences in motion; that action does happen at a distance. As I had sowed, so immediately, did I reap. I now speak of these kinds of experiences as “whip-lash karma.” Action, reaction, *right now*.

In learning this lesson and others, I was bit by bit exploring the forces (spirits, powers) that guide this world from an unseen level. Learning that the appearance of this world is not the reality. The more I learned what lay behind the veil of appearance, the safer I felt. I was actually learning to trust the universe, learning that in following my individual nature, I was taking my place within the larger nature, and so Nature herself, took great care of me.

By the time I was in my late 30s, I would be driving down the highway in my old car, with no home and no destination, my last ten dollar bill in the pocket of my well-worn levis — in a state of exhilaration. I was on the edge, the walls were down, there was nothing separating me from the mysterious ways of nature, and my own inner guides. “Okay, okay,” I would yell exuberantly: “Now what? Show me the way!” And inevitably, something would happen. Food, gas,

money would be provided as necessary. I had given up control, so the universe could find me.

I tell these stories, not to recommend hitchhiking up highway 101 to Mendocino in winter with a dollar in your pocket, nor to recommend stealing thin white bathmats from cheap motels, but to let you know just how far I pushed my luck in my quest to discover how the universe works. I wanted to learn through my own experience, that I could trust the unseen forces guiding my life.

Now, when I talk with others about my experiences, they look at me skeptically, unable to imagine even contemplating such foolishness. They are astonished at my “nerve,” and assume I have no fear. They don’t realize that it is precisely my fear that alerts me to what I must do next. That fear, as I have said before in these pages, is my compass.

Levels of difficulty

When I began this chapter, I wondered why I placed it after, rather than before, the third essay, on earth mysticism as accessed through the body. But then I realized, as difficult as it will be for some readers to bear with me in talking about descending into our bodies, and sensing our bodies as part of the earth,

etc., it will be even more difficult for them to entertain even the bare idea of letting go of security structures which prevent this descent from happening! So I place these chapters in the order of their psychological “difficulty,” you might say. For until we risk tearing down the walls which separate ourselves from both our bodies and the world around us, we do not realize that our isolation is self-imposed, and that what awaits us is beyond our wildest dreams.