

Single Serving Friends

by Dr Beverly Peens

Isn't it interesting how one lands up meeting the most unusual and unexpected travel companions on a journey. One is reminded of Edward Norton's "Single Serving Friends" description in Fight Club, who he refers to as the many different people he meets and shares a meal with on his frequent flights to and from Seattle.

Emotional journeying is often no different when it comes to meeting fellow travellers – since once you are heading to a destination, you will find many other people (often people you least expected) are also heading there – each with their own agenda and personal need – but often sharing your same willingness or yearning to be going to a place where they hope to find meaning, purpose or resolution. It is often by means of brief sharing and connection, that people embarking, or travelling on emotional journeys can find support and encouragement from one another. By hearing other people's stories and experiences, one feels less alone, more affirmed, more understood and more part of something – giving one a sense of belonging.

As part of encouraging you in your endeavour of journey, let us share in the stories of three women who have or who are still embarking on emotional journeying:

Meet our first traveller: a woman who has worked with vast varieties of people with varied emotional struggles and hardships. She comments on how these people, and the nature of such a job, fundamentally inspired her to want to journey. Through her work she realised that her own soul had grown tired of all the giving and trying to manage all the challenges her clients and she faced, - this encouraged her to seek a way to get away from emotional distress to emotional balance. She sought a time of journeying with a Jungian analyst who helped her to learn to trust her intuition. She describes the development of trusting her intuition as being like growing a second skin. She feels safer in this new skin and more in tune with her emotions. She also feels more in contact with her anima (feminine side of the psyche). Her intuition helps her to make wise decisions, helps her to get more honest with herself and to trust herself better. By allowing her intuition to govern her decisions, she feels more certain of herself and less able to lie to herself and others about her needs, intentions and vulnerabilities. Her journeying process enabled her to realise that she no longer needed worldly security anymore, since she began to find her security within her heart. "Things don't define me anymore, my inner world of experience and people close to me give me security now. I needed to put my suitcase down in my analyst's office and feel like a lonely traveller in the beginning – it helped me to learn to become honest with myself. When you travel, you often feel alone and cut off from what makes you comfortable – your home, friends, family and the familiar, especially when you go to a country where no one understands you or speaks your language – that's a bit how journeying feels in the beginning – you feel vulnerable and scared and a little as if you are in a foreign country. But as you become more in touch with what you need to learn, you become more honest and this helps you feel more understood, safe and more empowered as a person".

Our second traveller, a talented and creative woman, describes her journeying lessons as follows:

"Forgiveness and acceptance... of myself, was the essence of my journey. Forgiving myself for all the bad or misguided choices I had made, for allowing other people and the demons in my head to dictate where I should be and who and what I should be to be accepted / loved / etc. And accepting the fact that those choices were made with the knowledge and insight I had at that time; whether it was the best thing to do or not doesn't much matter anymore - it was done with what was available to me then. Knowing now that every decision I have made, or decisions that were made for me - made me exactly who I am today. Still with demons and voices and doubts and fears like everyone else, but I know them by name now, they don't have as much power over me anymore because by beginning to forgive and accept and ultimately taking responsibility, I have more control over how I will react and face the forces I actually have no control over. And the journey has just begun!"

The third traveller is a woman who has worked hard and sacrificed much to make a success of her business.

She remembers that it was the loss of her femininity that drove her to search for emotional journeying. Although she did not know it at the time, she had become tired and worn down by all the demands and expectations to be a hard-core business woman expected to cope in a traditionally male environment, which made her feel alienated from her own sense of being a truly vibrant and creative woman. Once she had given herself permission to become vulnerable and allowed herself to give expression to all the hurt and pain she had been experiencing through this alienation, she was able to become whole again and now, having journeyed, continues to practice the learned journey of being fully female – with all her needs and vulnerabilities, but also with all the richness of the creative and nurturing energy that the feminine brings, even though working as a business woman. She allows herself lots of time-out when it is needed, does not allow men to dominate her gut feeling or intuition and continues to seek to be all the woman she can be – and doesn't particularly care too much what her male colleagues think of it. If they cannot accept her for being the full woman she is and intends to be, well, she says, that's their problem – "I no longer am going to give myself up to please them".

When I listened to the stories these wonderful women conveyed to me in their interviews, I was once again struck at the miracle of being a woman – we are so complex, with so many rich beauties and talents innately given to us when we were created, - talents and beauties the busy-ness of our lives often rob us of, and how, in discovering these innate abilities, each of these very different women collectively reconnected with themselves and became more fully that which they were created to be. Isn't journeying amazing?