

Persistence II

Last week I began sharing a personal story on persistence that began with the visioning of a natural health clinic in Austin. If you missed Part I you can catch it right here.

At the close of the meeting I stumbled out into the thick August air in complete shock. What had I just witnessed? What had swept into the room and co-opted our meeting? There was that same shock one feels when witnessing a traffic accident. The biggest question however was whether this was new or had it been there all along? Had I been blinded by my ego in its desire to bring about this vision? That is still a question I wonder about today.

By the end of that long day the practitioner who led the meeting emailed to say that she was no longer interested in a group venture and then one by one, each practitioner stepped away for a variety of reasons. By the end of the week I had spoken to all involved and each individual was prepared to let go of this idea for one reason or another. While I tried desperately not to take their change of heart personally, the pain however was very personal. Let me share right now, it hurt like hell. It was the worst breakup ever as I had not just lost one partner but five!

Just what did this all mean for me? Where did it leave this plan, that had seemed so divinely guided, that now was discarded? So many questions led me into a period of deep soul searching but not before a few weeks of pure undeniable grief. It seemed as if an entire season had passed before I felt secure enough to venture out into the light of day. I was more than certain that I wore my failed vision like a cloak that could be spotted miles away. I believe we call that shame. This shame came from not seeing this coming and not being able to stop it. Wow.

Sounds like I took on quite a bit of responsibility for how this would all play out, right?

Since in my exuberance I had shared my work on the creating of this amazing clinic with everyone I knew, of course they all would be asking what had happened. Urghh. How could I face anyone? This feeling hit a very familiar chord. I was transported back thirty years; as often strong emotions will do to a very old wound. At nineteen, in a very similar fashion, I had experienced a shame of being caught off guard. Just weeks after the publishing a big splashy announcement of my pending engagement in our small town paper, my fiancé had a sudden change of heart and ended the relationship. I could not have been more shocked or hurt. On top of the personal pain, the fact that I was living in the quintessential small town America, completely exposed, did not help. There I was dealing with all of the shame stuff Brene Brown so eloquently describes. Yet Brene at that time, was busy growing up just like me, and not quite prepared to dish out her quotes of wisdom, such as this classic, she shares today,

“Courage starts with showing up and letting ourselves be seen.”

Had someone, anyone, been available to share this concept with me, the next year might have not been so excruciating and this recent loss might have not hit so deep. Fortunately, I was now thirty years wiser and much more resourceful and found my way out with some divinely guided support and teachings.

And this time I finally learned the greatest lesson in regards to my “cloak of shame”. It happened when I let myself be seen. I discovered that the, “failed plan,” that had been so personally devastating to me, was really no big deal to anyone else. I mean really, no. big. deal. Now that was news! They were all busy working their stuff and were not attached to what I achieved or not. What a revelation, an incredibly freeing! Once I got that, some incredibly beautiful things

began to unfold. Because I allowed myself to show up, even in my wounded vulnerable state, the guidance I needed came.

So what remained when this big plan crumbled? My desire to serve, my passion for natural health care rooted in my own personal healing experience, and the steady whisper of desire to be a practitioner that I had quieted for years. All of that remained, and it turns out that was enough, even more than enough.

The answer to every question I asked was to go within. Everything would be provided, I just needed to get clear and create a path I wanted to travel. Teachers would be provided and those that needed the help I could offer would follow. The very core of what I had attempted to do with the group was to build something to fill the gap in healthcare. While I had conjured up a grandiose plan, maybe there was an approach that was not so complex. Maybe there was an answer that I could provide on my own.

So what did I do? I became a student of everything I needed to know in regards to the body healing both spiritually and physically. I found my own unique path, not one that had been traversed before and my period of isolation, of solitude, provided me with the strength I needed whenever doubt arose. I read voraciously and traveled to be with practitioners who modeled what I believed, in the practice and personal lives, because it all must be in sync. And when the answer I needed required me to get on a plane and fly across the ocean, I did, multiple times. One of these trips is when I met Dr. Heiner Frei, a story I tell about in this blog post.

Before long my persistence paid off. I rallied the courage to open a small practice and my work has continued to evolve ever since.

As I shared in the beginning of the post,

Persistence comes from the heart of that deep love of what we

do, it is our core, our willingness to move all obstacles just so that the work we are called to do can continue.

It is truly a love for what I do that gets me up each morning and helps me to work through the obstacles of the day. I do this because never before in my life have I felt so sure I was doing the work that was connected to a greater plan.

In this story, persistence paid off, big time. But your story doesn't have to be so dramatic. Persistence can take many forms. It is exactly what is required to be able to return to your work after a bad night of sleep, or family demands that beckon, or repeated unsuccessful attempts. Giving yourself permission for a pause is always warranted but it's about the coming back, remembering the joy it brings, and the deep love you feel for what you do.