

Self-Discovery at Midlife!

2006

(by Claire Knowles - Lights On! Workshop)

Is this the year for discovering your authentic self? To know who you really are? To make the choices that will move you along a greater path?

It takes courage to "become"... "Life isn't about finding yourself. Life is about creating yourself!" ...(quote from: George Bernard Shaw).

So, what are you doing different in this new year, 2006? What are you becoming? What has your progress been during this past month of January?

- Do you see the possibilities?
- Do you have a vision? a map? a plan?
- Do you have the courage to consciously "Become"?

We know that we need to move forward, yet sometimes it is difficult to do. Interestingly, we are not alone--we've got lots of company! In the book, If Not Now, When?...Reclaiming Ourselves at Midlife by Stephanie Marston, ©2002, the author writes:

"The Call of the Authentic Self is real. While midlife is a natural stage in a woman's development, there's a good chance that somewhere between the ages of 40 and 55, a woman will be shaken to the core of her being. Suddenly, she is thrust into a period of heightened vulnerability--a midlife crisis of sorts. Although "crisis" has a negative connotation in our culture, it actually comes from the Greek word 'krinein' which means 'a separating' or a 'turning point'. The root implies that a crisis is a time of letting go of old ways of being, a time when we can ask ourselves what we need to leave behind and what we can reclaim."

Ms. Marston continues, "It's often not until midlife that a woman fully takes possession of her psychological strength and assumes complete responsibility for her own fulfillment. Midlife is a time when women come full circle and reclaim the outspokenness, enthusiasm, adventurousness and vitality that we once had...(the spirit of the adolescent in us). In speaking to numerous women, both in my private practice as well as during interviews, it is clear that while each woman's longing is unique, there is a universal theme: They all want to be who they truly are and to reinstate themselves as the center of their own lives. The truth is that women actually blossom, rather than fade, at midlife."

In my own coaching business, Lights On! Workshop, I find that there are recurrent themes raised by the women I've coached--including some in their early thirties. Some are overwhelmed with the negative side of life (emptiness, lingering life struggles--not knowing how to break the patterns or how to set healthy boundaries). Others sense the magnitude of life's transitions and the inner calling of deeper, more-subtle nudges to move forward. They feel compelled to move forward along different paths. Many are looking for a way to clarify their vision about life, career, family, community, and wish to see and to follow their personal roadmap with more clarity. Midlife provides you with a wake-up call, a time to re-evaluate where you stand in your life, a time when you can become the person you have always wanted to be.

Ms. Marston (in her book noted above) shows you that now is the time to reclaim your voice, your strength, and your long-neglected dreams. Now is the time to recognize an authentic self beyond the roles of wife, mother, and career woman. Now is the time to create a future brimming with tremendous possibilities--and make midlife the richest, most profound and satisfying years of all.

Lights On! Thoughts to Ponder:

"The way of cowardice is to embed ourselves in a cocoon, in which we perpetuate our habitual patterns. When we are constantly recreating our basic patterns of behavior and thought, we never have to leap into fresh air or onto fresh ground. We stagnate." |

(From: *Shambhala...The Sacred Path of the Warrior*, by Chogyman Trungpa)

Perhaps we allow ourselves to stay in our cocoons (or to go through life sleepwalking) with our abdication of taking the personal responsibility that's required to grow, to become. Here's to rebuilding oneself from the inside out - to becoming—just like the butterfly!

Conscious Living depends on finding out what goals are important to you, staying focused on them, and moving toward those goals at a pace that allows you to feel vibrant! (from *A Year of Living Consciously* by Gay Hendricks, Ph.D.)

Lights On! is about finding your path—your life tomorrow is determined by what you think and do today!
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