

Discharging the Past

By Anna Von Reitz



If you have followed along and are taking my good advice, you are spending this time in January reviewing your life --- facing the things that make you sad and things that you regret, things that make you mad and things that make you ashamed-----and letting them go.

Even if these feelings appear not to concern you directly, like feelings about a war you never fought in, or other historic event that you haven't actually experienced in this lifetime, examine it. Examine anything that provokes a feeling of pain, sadness, worry, anxiousness, or fear, anything that makes you angry, anything that makes a shadow fall.

Just pull it up, look at it like a suit of old, dirty clothes, and let it go. Unclench your fists. Realize that you are hurting yourself by hanging onto it. It is like a piece of garbage you've been carrying around. You don't need it. You don't want it.

If it ever served any purpose in your life, that purpose is long gone.

I constantly meet people who don't know me, who, for whatever reasons, walk up to me and tell me things they wouldn't tell their Mother or their spouse. All the horrible secrets come pouring out.

This phenomenon has always startled me. I used to wonder -- literally-- why are you telling me this? Who am I to know?

The same thing happens with my Son. We wind up with some poor soul sobbing their heart out, suddenly grappling with their demons.

We have various theories about this, but this much is apparent. People somehow sense that they are safe with us. So they cast their burdens down. They let it all go.

"I killed my brother and never got caught. It was an accident...."

"I cheated on my wife (or husband). I feel like I broke something precious and it can't mend...."

"I'm sick. I've got three months to live. I don't want to die!"

"I don't know what's wrong, but I am always sad."

"My own Father raped me as a boy. I can't think about it. I want to kill him even now."

People carry around the most horrible secrets that cause them pain and sorrow and anger and fear and everything else, and they just bear the burden and try to cover it up, even from themselves.

This results in living limited, truncated, unhappy lives.

Sometimes it is something that they did, or something someone else did to them, but it yields the same results, either way.

"My Mother hated me. I grew up in a family of five and I was always the odd man out. I don't know why. She was always mean to me and nice to everyone else."

"I had this girl I loved in High School. I left her pregnant and crying...."

"My patrol came under fire in Viet Nam. I was rear guard, maybe forty yards back. I heard the guns and I froze...."

Sometimes the wound has become what I call "a festering pet". The pain has been buried so deep and for so long it's like a fistula of the soul, something that oozes pain like pus and provides a "familiar pain" that people use as a marker to tell them who they are, what their limitations are, and that they are still alive because they feel this pain.

Their pain has become so much a part of their existence that they can't imagine their life without it.

"My little Sister was on her tricycle in the front yard with me. We were playing. I went into the house to get a drink of water. She was out in the street before I knew it...."

"My Mom was in her final illness. She had dementia. One day she had the runs and soiled herself. I found her playing with it. Smearing it all over. And I just lost it. I slapped her. And she didn't even know what she'd done...."

"This kid was only fifteen and I killed him. I enjoyed killing him at the time. I thought he had a gun...."

We all carry around our share of the nasty, painful and shameful things of life, times when we failed others and times when we failed ourselves.

It's important to let those things go and to "confess" them, even if all we can manage is to admit these things to ourselves and to God, go out in the backyard or to a park or stop at the side of a country road, look up and let it all flow. Feel it pour out. Be glad when it's gone. Don't miss it.

I used to go to an old-fashioned cemetery high on a windy hill, and stand among the graves of strangers, feeling what their lives had been like, and just letting it all go, spiraling upward and away like a funnel cloud of lost dreams, regrets, and might-have-beens. For myself and for all of them.

Offer up your pain, like you offer up your prayers. Give it to God and let it go. Don't tell yourself that your pain or your anger or anything else that you feel is silly or invalid. Just feel what you feel, allow it to be, and then gently set it free --- free to go where it belongs in that realm of other things we call the past.

It's January, the start of a brand new year full of possibilities. So take out the trash and scrub your soul. Be ready to accept new life and new hope.

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