

Health Challenges: A blog series on how to find the lessons and ease suffering

In my 15 years of being a practitioner, I have seen firsthand the emotional and physical toll that going through a medical issue can have on my patients. It brings up an array of difficulties & intensities. I've been able to discern the places in which people get stuck in their journey and have created ways to move through those times with grace. This is a great read for someone experiencing a health crisis as well as those supporting them.

It's important to remember that no matter how much you put into your body's health, there are different times and seasons in life. Think of the moon and the cycles it has, oscillating monthly between full and new with all shades in between. Mother nature naturally revolves through fall to winter and spring to summer. Some seasons are meant for going within while others are meant for being active. Our bodies have seasons as well and are not merely machines that simply respond to input every day the same way. We are meant to be transforming in this lifetime and often, unforeseen health challenges can awaken us to the need for change. Otherwise, we may remain complacent and neglect ourselves and move on with business as usual. Aim to look at this health challenge as a signal to dive deeper into understanding what your body wants and needs at this stage in your life.

People have an expectation that their bodies should perform for them and when their body doesn't meet that expectation, they feel as though they have failed. But when your car has an issue, you don't blame the car. You realize that cars need care and that it's your responsibility to take care of them. Notice when you want to blame your body and consider shifting into asking your body how it can best be supported during this time.

Ask yourself, “what is my body trying to tell me?” not, “what is wrong with me?” The latter carries a blame and shame concept. When something is “wrong” with your body, you spend time trying to “fix” it. This mentality metaphorically puts the carrot out in front of you and unconsciously makes it so you can’t be happy or fulfilled until you fix that particular issue. As a result, it puts you in a state of reacting instead of being proactive. It causes you to feel like a victim to the situation and that drains your life energy. Rather, allow yourself to lean into your life force and power. Take on the mindset that says even though you are going through something less than ideal, you can learn and grow from it. You can go so far as to take full emotional responsibility for the way that life events are unfolding. Even though this challenge is not what you wanted, it is what’s so. Given that we sometimes only have control over our reactions, how can we respond? How can I learn to love my body and accept it, even when I am struggling? Practice loving your body instead of separating your body from yourself and shaming it. As Brené Brown wrote, “We cannot grow when we are in shame, and we can't use shame to change ourselves or others.”

Healthcare is often oriented towards achieving a certain goal. This can result in an “in order to” attitude that doesn’t ultimately serve us. If you aim to change your health to accomplish something specific, you may miss the mark. If you do not get what you want, then what are you left with? People will often feel betrayed by their bodies when they put so much work and attention into their health and they do not get their desired result. Instead, aim not to do things with either self-righteousness or desperation, but instead out of a place of love for your body, mind, and spirit. The best way we can view health is that we are making the right choices because of how it supports us, whether it “works” or not. Treat yourself well as a way of saying thank you for this body. This is how to practice embodied gratitude. Self-love

and gratitude are true self-care. And when we are caring for ourselves, we can show up for the world in a loving and present way.

Hearing the intense health challenges that my patients cope with daily has given me an inside look at the complex array of emotions having a health issue can bring about. I have learned that through introspection, self-love, and gratitude we can face difficulties with a wide lens view of how this time may be helpful for growth. My hope is to share these lessons that I have distinguished in my practice to help someone who is going through something similar to be able to ultimately reclaim their power in a tough time.



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