



## Perfection is a False Expectation

A man I know recently learned his daughter is pregnant, out-of-wedlock, again. Few experiences in life are as tragic as a child seemingly gone astray. Sometimes as a parent we can maneuver them back on track. When we can't, we -and perhaps others -may label us as failures. Somehow, inexplicably, we failed at perfection.

Perfection is a false expectation.

There's no such thing as a failure. There is only an expectation that goes unmet. A failure is a situation to learn from. It's time to stop categorizing children, parents, or any situation as "bad". Pointing fingers only creates guilt or shame, which exacerbates the problem. Let's look at this from a cosmic view.

Each of us is a soul, born into this life with a purpose.

Although our purpose is always meaningful to us, it may not be grand, or readily evident. Indeed, it may be as varied as overcoming a limiting belief, experiencing ongoing challenges to build courage, or living in a distressed community in order to provide support to other souls. None of these options may prove to be "successful" in the eyes of our particular culture. Living on this third dimensional planet is exceptionally challenging. It is easy to lose track of our intended purpose. A benefit of living on our planet is to gain knowledge, to expand our understanding of existence. Yet we don't take this journey alone. We travel with others, each on her or his own search. Need I point out how confusing this can be; how many detours we take as we try out life?

Each culture hands out its own rules and expectations through parents, religions, and institutions.

These conditioned beliefs then run into contrary beliefs of others, and we play soul bumper cars. Navigating this labyrinth can challenge the wisest among us. I personally have met spiritual and governmental leaders who are deemed the spearhead of perfection, and they struggle with this, too!

A Buddhist nun shared her experience of failure with me.

She was imprisoned, raped, and repeatedly beaten. She didn't understand how she could be so persecuted when she had sincerely sought to live an exemplary life. After months of

imprisonment, she grew to curse her captors, breaking every spiritual tenant she had espoused. Finally, at the end of her courage and wits, she gave up resistance and turned to love. “The only thing left for me to do, to hold on to life itself, was to show compassion. My goal became one of showing kindness to my guards.”

She smiled. She thanked them each time they delivered her bug-infested food. When she overheard a guard mention a sick child, as he left the room after beating her, she told him she would pray for his daughter. In the following days, he came to her cell to ask for more prayers, and finally to report his daughter was well, thanking her for the prayers. In that prison cell, a dank concrete room, she practiced simple compassion and came to understand the depth and power of love.

Her beatings decreased, were lighter in intensity, and one day she was finally released. As she limped out of the prison, permanently crippled from the beatings, she thanked her guards for their mercy. As one walked her to the gate, he quietly told her, “This is the only work I can find to feed my family. But I am a changed man. Thank you for your kindness.” Was he a failed man, or only someone trying to survive, and open to gaining new insight? Was it unfair or wrong if she was in that cell to deepen her own understanding of love, while simultaneously teaching him compassion? Or were they both in exactly the perfect place at the right time?

It’s been said that where we are, is exactly where our soul wants to be.

*From a cosmic view, what is bad can be good.* What does this have to do with being a parent who didn’t raise a perfect child? It demonstrates that our lives bring unexpected challenges. When we let go of resisting our life situation, and release all self-recrimination of having failed another soul, we set them free to be soul-responsible.

We cannot carry another’s soul journey in a bag on our back.

After you have done what you can, open that bag, set them free, and allow them their own lessons and insights. Watch, and assist when you can, without enabling. Learn. Change. And then grow into your next level of wisdom. Set them free so they can do the same.

*Take life into your own hands and make it happen.*

*It’s your life; lead it.*