

Your Life Only Makes Sense When You Look Back on It

Now that Gloria and I have successfully run our first ever 'Radiant Living Assisi' retreat, I look back over the last 20 years or so and absolutely marvel at the way everything came together over so many years to make such a miraculous, fulfilling and joyful event possible.

I first went to Assisi when I was in my 30s just because it was on the itinerary of a luxury walking holiday I had chosen to go on as my summer holiday. At that point in my life, I was an academic and an atheist. But when all of us on that walking holiday went to an English mass in the Basilica di San Francesco, I do remember feeling as though I had fallen in love with the Franciscan monk leading the service.

However, it wasn't until around 20 years later when I went back to Assisi with Jason and Gloria that I was blown away by the incredibly powerful spiritual energy there. I still vividly remember walking into the Basilica with Gloria and then falling to my knees crying my heart out for quite some time. By that point, I had already made a strong personal connection to Christ energy, but I was still totally unprepared for the deep heart opening and heart-centred release that I experienced in the Basilica on that visit.

Moving on a decade or so, and I finally went on my first *Simple Peace Retreat* in Assisi and absolutely loved every minute of it, particularly the powerful meditations that our retreat leader David Nowe led every morning. Just because I had such a fantastic time on that retreat, I kept going back to Assisi for more, but still with absolutely no inkling that one day Gloria and I would be running our own retreats there.

But last week when we did run a 5 day retreat in Assisi for 4 of our dearest friends, the way in which so many great souls had contributed to training Gloria and I up to lead such a retreat totally blew me away. I then felt incredibly grateful to all the amazing spiritual teachers who had supported my spiritual growth over such a long period of time.

What about you? Can you look back at certain events in your life and with the benefit of hindsight begin to explore the possibility that even those aspects of your life that may have felt like failures or even disasters at the time, in the long

run turned out to be just perfect for your personal growth or your spiritual awakening?

If I look back at my heartbreak when one romantic relationship after another failed to lead to a longed-for wedding followed by children, I can now see so clearly that that marriage and motherhood was not meant to be my path this lifetime. Whilst I was planning the perfect white wedding, God had other plans for me!

Another example of my life only making sense backwards is the Pandemic lockdown. When the lockdown first started, I was beside myself at not being able to visit Assisi and at being told that I could only go out for a walk for 30 minutes a day – I actually took absolutely no notice of that ridiculous advice. But I did start doing the two guided meditations on Zoom that the Mindfulness Association began soon after we were all locked down the first time. Looking back, these expertly guided online meditations taught me so much about guiding meditations. I can now see clearly that my guided meditations are now so much better than they used to be before the lockdown.

Of course, it does no good wishing that we could see the whole picture more clearly as we wade through depression or heartbreak at certain points in our life. But it certainly now helps me a lot to begin to realise that everything that ever happens to us in our life may have a much higher purpose than we could ever imagine. Even the darkest night is going to merge into the most beautiful of dawns sooner or later if only we are open to believing that everything that ever happens to us is assisting us to awake and to heal our wounded, separated, suffering self.

Knowing that life is ultimately kind and that what we think of as death is just a transition to a different layer of existence does not mean that we will not totally lose it from time to time. The very last time my dream of romance was shattered, I cried my heart out for months on end! But even whilst I was going through this deep heartache, I was able to say to myself, 'Meeting this man again was just not meant to be and you will probably be much happier in the long run without him.'

I am so sad these days when I meet someone who just cannot get over some kind of loss or perceived injustice in their life – such as losing a loved one to

cancer 'far too early'. Losing a loved one to cancer or any other deadly illness is always beyond heart-breaking. But these days, I am really open to the possibility that each soul simply moves on from this earth at the perfect time for their own soul's evolution and the evolution of all those souls with whom they shared their very brief journey on Planet Earth.

So this month, maybe you would like to look back at the key events in your own life, some of which you may have really enjoyed at the time and some of which may have seemed at the time to be nothing but an unmitigated disaster or nightmare?

Then without thinking too hard, see if you can now understand how these key past events in your life contributed to your personal growth or to your spiritual awakening. If a past event in your life still seems to you to be an unmitigated disaster or tragedy, no problem! But maybe you would be willing to be open to understand that event differently? Who knows, one day soon you may have one of those 'Ah Ha' moments when the deeper, positive meaning of your past suffering or heartbreak suddenly dawns into your heart and mind.

Then and only then, you will genuinely give thanks from the depths of your heart for the miraculous way in which life can awaken and heal us on the deepest of levels - if only we are prepared to let go of the very bad habit of constantly fighting against it!

Peggy Foster
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