Illusion is the first of all pleasures (Voltaire)

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I fondly remember a time with feelings of comfort. My feelings produced such a wonderful state of being in the know and in control. Those feelings came from me thinking that I truly knew what was going on—when things made sense—and there was an understandable knowledge of why things happened. With free will, I could make decisions based on predictable consequences—and I could predict the outcome of my decisions. Cause and Effect manifested.

That was such a short time ago. These feelings of comfort, as they occur now, last only fleeting moments. I began to yearn for the past—when feelings of comfort lasted. When I basked in the warmth of knowing and could hold keen insights into the workings of the world with confidence. Why am I being denied such comfort? What changed?

I began to blame technology and the information age. I used to eat well—until I learned that my diet was detrimental. I used to jog—until I read about knee risks. I used to scoff at supplements—until I learned they can really help. I used to drink tap water—until I read about the risks. I used to enjoy red wine—until I learned of the risks—until I learned it was really good for me in moderation. I used to meditate with a mantra—until I learned it was really about watching my breath—until I learned it was about being still & present—until I learned……

I realized that my feelings of comfort (by knowing) were always changing over time—but they changed SLOWLY. Inbetween "knowing" and "learning" new contradictory information, I dwelt in long periods when I was comforted in believing I was right. I was under the illusion that I was in control and knew things—and that gave me comfort. Now, information contradicting whatever I believe is available to me immediately and is revised frequently. I've lost my anchored state of knowing. Truth has become clouded in vagueness. The inbetween times of being in that comfortable state of knowing are now illusive. Feelings of comfort fly by. I feel cheated and grieve my loss. But is the fault our information age—or me?

"*There is a difference between what something is and what we think it is. Actually what we think is utterly inconsequential to what is. Illusions do not exist in the world (out there) but in here (id est: in our mind). The inner world is fertile ground for illusions to take root which then get projected into the world, thus influencing the perception of others about reality. These distortions, in the realm of reality, have no purpose other than for distraction and delusion*." (from blogger daubmir)

It is an illusion to think we are in control—or that we ever were—or ever can be. If things continue to change at an ever increasing rate, we must choose to either to grasp at the illusion of control with more intensity, or learn to adapt and adjust more nimbly. Or is there another option? Perhaps we can live into our feelings without fighting or denying them? Spiritual teacher and author Adyashanti says it this way:

"Abiding means letting everything be as it already is—no matter what it is. If you're feeling good, let that be as it is. If you're feeling bad, let that be as it is. No matter what your emotional, physical, or mental state, let it be as it is and don't wish it to be otherwise. If you want it to be different from what it is, you're not abiding; you're picking and choosing and trying to control your experience."

But how can we just "be" with our feelings? Why can't feelings of comfort and understanding last? I know I feel wonderful when I am at peace—so how do I sustain that feeling? Is my desire to be at peace just another illusion?

I heard something recently that is helping me bridge the chasms between being at peace and being swirled in the chaos of uncertainty: Feelings of contentment, feelings of being at peace, feelings of comfort—they do not last. They come to us, then pass on…. BUT they leave an imprint. They are not meant to reside in us, but are meant to leave an imprint on our psyche that can shape us. When I embrace the beauty of those fleeting moments of being at peace—my resilience increases, and I'm able to walk into the uncertainty arising. The illusion of control disappears—and I hold onto what I thought I was losing: comfort and peace.

These are trying times and often so dynamic that uncertainty is the only certainty. May we all find a path forward into the unknown future gathering imprints that carry us through the chaos……..yours in shared ministry……..Russ

