

A New Year Celebration

Di Curtis

In January 1977 I went to a beginner's workshop in co-counselling. That's only three historical years ago, it seems to be further in the past. I suppose I could tell you about how co-counselling has changed my life. But it hasn't because it is the process - I have changed my life by learning and practising co-counselling. Anyway comparisons of then and now would seem like a put-down of the other me, who simply lived in another universe. Instead I'll offer you a celebration of myself which started in my head at a New Year party and which like all my celebrations just grew and grew.

A man from another world New Year kisses all the other women - that hurts - and the music punks on and on. I can immerse myself in the rhythms to switch my attention and celebrate my appreciations of my energy. The demands for New Year resolutions are all around me, mine from last year hang faded on the wall. New celebrations for the decade are hard to find. I can see partings and endings, my children leaving home, my parents reaching the end of their lives, the ending of the cyclic compulsion of my hormone system. Out of the sadness comes the real celebration that I have the skills and energy to look at the landscape ahead, to inspect its shape and structure and to acknowledge that some paths might be more rewarding routes than others. That's not a constraint. I will celebrate that these days there are many levels of my self-awareness.

Look I am an exploding personage. Here I am expanding and filling my space, recognising its proper boundaries, reaching out to experience the lime green globe, the tissue-thin membrane that separates me from you, carefully self-protective of others' weapons of war, warmly appreciative of others who can perceive my boundaries and present me with their undefended faces. Here I am excited by the unexpected places I find myself in, free to move in closer and stay awhile, or free to detach myself swiftly (I've learned there is no benefit in lingering in a hostile world).

Now I will celebrate my body. I am my body, it is the instrument of myself. It needs to be nourished and appreciated; its the only one I've got, there is no choice in that. What is exciting is to hear my bodies noises - the gasp of fear and pounding of anger, the tightening musculature of unacknowledged feelings, the breath's outflow and spinal slump of overburdened giving up.

I can shout and enjoy being noisy and the quieter hums. Conversely I learn to vocalise my feelings and accept my body's response which is itself an explosion out of restraint.

Next I'll celebrate myself at work; strong powerful woman, economical with time. People say to me "I don't know how you have time to do so much." I do. Sometimes I'll share with them the co-counselling techniques which help. Or in teaching - how to help my students learn, the small slipped-in attention focussing exercise, checking that they see what I think is important and what is merely illustrative - and then not feeling personally responsible when they fall asleep in the after lunch lecture.

Finally I'll celebrate myself as a co-counsellor, reaching down into my primal parts - I'm too old to be reborn - I choose the slower restorative style. So I'll celebrate the realisation that when today's relationships are sabotaged by past history, it's just a recognition job and the discharge can be directed at the chronic pattern, clearing away the accumulated grot. Then in present time I can try again. I'll celebrate as well the reclaiming of myself, the searching sorting, and picking over of the material stored in my head, the work with unacknowledgeable memory, with dreams and fantasy.

And I feel lighter and stronger and fuller of energy
And coordinated and joyful and peaceful
And creative more and more of every day
And who knows where it will all end
OK, so then I have one clear celebration to make.
I was not responsible for my beginning
I am responsible for and will take charge of my end

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