

Ask Connie— Choosing Love Over Fear

Dear Connie,

My husband Lester and I own a small business here in the Gallatin Valley. We've worked hard for almost twenty-five years and have been successful in every way. We have good relationships with our customers, we built a lovely home where we raised two children, and we invested carefully in retirement funds and the stock market. We did expand our space two years ago, and that required a sizeable loan. Now all of a sudden our business has dried up. We have mortgage payments and payments on the building loan, we lost most of the money we'd invested, and unless things turn around soon we won't be able to pay our bills. Even though we're people of faith, right now we're scared. How can we live through this difficult time without being in fear?

Sincerely, —Jeanne

Dear Jeanne -

These are challenging economic times, no doubt about it. Particularly when you have worked hard and played by the rules, it doesn't seem fair that you should be in the financial position you're in. That said, there are some spiritual truths that might be helpful to you and your husband at this time. Here are two important principles that are

worth contemplating:

The first is that expansion and contraction are both normal and necessary parts of life in all of its forms. So is rest, or stasis. Think of the ocean—the waves come in, there is a pause, and the waves go out. Or your own breath—you inhale, there is a pause, and you exhale, followed by a pause. Think of an iris—the plant grows and blooms, then fades and lies dormant through the winter. This is the natural ebb and flow of life.

We tend to think, particularly in our culture, that expansion, or outward flow, is positive, while contraction is negative. We've lived through many years of expansion (with a few contractional blips), and we think this is the way life is supposed to be—all the time and forever. This is a distortion of the truth. It's impossible to maintain constant expansion—that goes against the natural order of things. It requires imposing one's will on life, and there will inevitably be a backlash. If the natural ebb and flow of life is resisted and expansion

is forced, sooner or later a contraction will occur. Our country is experiencing this now. Instead of just the positive manifestation of expansion—an active, creative force that moves outward, enlivening life—we have seen the negative expression of expansion—aggression, a hostile, conquering force that disregards others and creates more separation instead of unity and harmony. To the extent that expansion has been extended by will, the contraction will be more extreme, and painful. The negative aspect of contraction is a holding back, a refusal to flow and give out. It seeks safety; it is motivated by fear and distrust.

The second principle is that fear creates that which one fears. Fear of contraction can create further contraction and loss. To the extent that you make decisions at this time based on fear, you will suffer.

How do you, how does anyone, avoid giving way to fear? Remember that there is love, and the opposite of love is fear. The more that you can share what you have with others in



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your community, the more abundance will be created for everyone. Find a way to help your neighbors, some of whom may have no jobs. Show as much compassion as possible to those who have less than you.

If you can see the big picture, that expansion followed by contraction and a period of rest or dormancy is normal, and trust that it will naturally be followed by expansion, you will feel safer. You will have more trust in the future knowing that what is happening economically now is part of a natural cycle. You will make decisions based on an understanding that expansion will follow. Maybe not to the extent that we humans forced it over the past

few decades, but it will happen.

The Pathwork says, "Nothing can be created without the threefold interaction of the expanding, contracting and static principles, be it a small object of the simplest form, or the creation of worlds and universes, material or spiritual realities." [Pathwork lecture #235]

You are both people of faith, so pray that you will be aligned with the universal flow of energy that moves from expansion to contraction to dormancy, and then begins all over again. The specific steps you need to take now in your business and in your life will unfold as you do this.

Blessings, —Connie

Do you have a relationship question? E-mail Connie, conniem@mcn.net, or call 406-582-7450 and ask! E-mail sent to Connie is read only by Connie Myslik-McFadden, MSS, LCSW, and will be held in strictest confidence. No identities will be published. Disclaimer: The responses to questions in this column are for information only. Never disregard professional advice or delay seeking it because of anything you read here. Working with a skilled professional is highly recommended. Copyright © 2009 Connie Myslik-McFadden. All rights reserved.

Connie Myslik-McFadden, MSS, LCSW, is a psychotherapist in Bozeman with 25 years of experience working with individuals, couples and groups. She leads workshops, retreats and teaches Dreamwork and Pathwork. Connie devoted 9 years to Jungian analysis, training, and supervision, after graduating from the Bryn Mawr School of Social Work. She went on to graduate from the Barbara Brennan School of Healing, and Society of Souls, a kabbalistic school of healing. She is the author of "Gathering the Soul, a True Story of Spiritual Healing." Pathwork (Pathwork.org) and Imago Relationship Therapy www.GettingTheLoveYouWant.org are two easily accessible sources



for the theories upon which much of this column is based.

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