

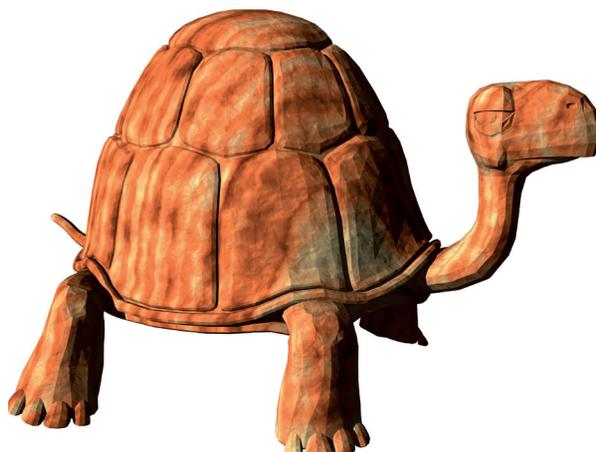
One of the principal reasons why people go into the helping professions is, well, to help. Another is to be helped. There are countless instances of people who went into the field of psychology, for instance, because they wanted to figure themselves out. Usually, there's a little of both motives involved in a person's decision to get into healing professions.

Of course, we all go through challenges. My life has been no exception. When I was 20, I went through a bit of a rough patch. While travelling abroad, I was the victim of attempted sexual assault - twice. I returned home to a dear grandfather deteriorating from Alzheimer's disease and a cousin dying of cancer. For the first time in my life, I found myself turning to the aid of my friends for help in getting me through this period as I was known, and comfortable with, being solely my friends' helper.

It is often said that the person who is able to be there for you in your time of need are those who have been through something as bad, or worse, than you. These are the people who can relate to your challenge, your pain. At that point in my life, I had one such friend who, not surprisingly, became my closest confidant. Fortunately for them, I had many other friends who hadn't been blessed with as much adversity or 'painful growth' in their life as he. Having grown accustomed to me playing the role of helper in their time of need, it seems they were not emotionally capable of trading places when it was my turn to seek out their assistance. It was a great disappointment.

I decided to attend a Tai Chi course as part of my self-healing. At the end of the first class, one of the students was complaining of stomach pain. I offered to assist him with energy work. He accepted and thanked me when I was done, saying that he was feeling better. I was glad to have done my good deed of the day and headed home.

Later that evening, I received a phone call from the Tai Chi instructor. She said that she felt uncomfortable with my having offered healing to the student. She felt it was inappropriate (not that the recipient of the healing felt it was inappropriate, mind you) and that she'd made the decision to no longer admit me to the course. No good deed should go unpunished.



The Importance of Having a Tortoise in Your Life

I remember sitting on the floor of my living room, doing the same energy exercise that I teach my students today in my Reiki and Aura Reading classes: building energy between my hands. My attention was clearly divided between the exercise and the hurtful experience I had just undergone.

As each event in our lives has something potentially useful to teach us, I started asking myself if maybe that Tai Chi teacher was right. My intention was to help, but perhaps my timing wasn't right. Maybe I needed to heal myself before offering my services to others. After all, it is a commonly held belief that one shouldn't engage in healing others when one is not in one's peak condition, personally.

As I contemplated these thoughts, I began hearing the low, rhythmic bang of something hitting the wooden floor of my bedroom. Within a couple of minutes, I noticed my pet turtle Freddie emerge from the room, clunking in my direction. Freddie was a tropical turtle that I'd rescued from the wild in a park area in my native Montreal. After bringing him to a vet to have his damaged eyes seen to, I was informed that he was likely an abandoned pet and would not survive a Canadian winter. It was then that I was pronounced his proud, if reluctant owner by the doctor.

Still practicing my energy building exercise, I watched as Freddie inched closer and closer to me. To my surprise, the typically shy animal walked right up to me, until his body was literally between my hands. He then turned his head to face my left hand and stuck his head out of his shell, until it made solid physical contact with the palm! The really interesting thing is that my left hand is the one that sends the healing energy.

After appreciating that a slow, introverted animal was motivated enough by the energy work I was doing to travel all the way across the house just to stick his little head onto the palm of my 'healing' hand, made me concede that maybe, just maybe I was doing the right thing that day in Tai Chi class when I offered assistance to that student.

Understanding that we can all make mistakes in our judgment, no matter how well intentioned we may theoretically be, I have only this to say to that Tai Chi instructor: 'RASPBERRY'

But seriously, it can be rough to go through the tough times, to feel judged even when you have the best of intentions. It can be hard sometimes not to become bitter.

When my best friend, the man who helped me through this difficult period, died, I was tasked with contacting friends and loved ones about his passing. I was overwhelmed by the number of emails I received praising him, how much of a positive impact he'd had in their lives, how he'd been there for them and taught them tools for life and rules for living with integrity and compassion. I firmly believe that his ability to be that person for them was a direct consequence of both the number and intensity of the challenges that he faced in his life, as well as that which he chose to take away from these experiences for the good of himself and of others. I thank you so very much, Hugh Quinn.

Knowing that the tough times we go through today can enable us to be better healers, better friends and support systems for others tomorrow, wiser from the experience, maybe Churchill was right when he said: 'If you're going through hell, keep going.'

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