

The Philippines – and a deeper meaning

"Life has to come through the heart for it to be meaningful." - Anonymous

I seldom write about "current events." However, the disaster that is taking place in the Philippines has grabbed me and won't let go. So, like so many others, I feel compelled to ask "why?".

How often as children did we ask our parents or primary caregivers "Why?" Why is the sky blue? Why don't I feel well? Why did mommy/daddy leave? Why don't fish drown?

While someone was often able to answer our questions, there were times that there were no answers, or no truly satisfying answers. Sometimes we heard, "Because that's the way God made it," or "Because that's the way it is," or "because it's a mystery."

While many of us continued to ask "why?" even when there was no answer, many of us stopped asking. Even when we stopped asking, however, the question or the curiosity was always there. It never went away. Today, the question still remains for most of us as does our wanting to find answers – answers that help us lead a meaningful life and answers that help us make meaning of life.

We ask why as a search for meaning and the search for meaning is often an attempt to grasp on to the significance of events and circumstances that are hidden, unclear, and not obvious. Sometimes the answers to "why?" are objective, factual and impersonal.

But when disaster strikes, there's often a bigger "WHY?" that is unexplainable by the simple information of facts, physics, and fault lines. This bigger "WHY?" is about pain and suffering and the meaning of it all. This bigger "WHY?" is about separation and death.

"The least of things with a meaning is worth more in life than the greatest of things without it." - Carl Jung

The ultimate "why?," more than anything is about "me" – not from an egocentric perspective, but from a place of curiosity about why I exist and why I'm having the experiences – near and far - I am in my life. While I may not be directly connected to the disaster in the Philippines, in a way, I am. The spiritual, soul-based questions are "how so?" and "why?".

The search for meaning does not reduce or eliminate the pain and suffering, but it allows us to explore death, dying and immortality from a place of equanimity, serenity and peace. Understanding the meaning of disaster, from a deeper place, does not heal the pain, but it can open our heart to the experience and expression of love.

Human beings are the only species that has a desire for seeking meaning - it's in our DNA, our cells. In times of tragedy, travesty and tumult not to seek meaning, not to ask, "why?" is an attempt to function without our heart and soul. Moving through life – the good, the bad and the ugly – from a heart and soul perspective is the way we find answers when we ask "why?" – and the way we give true meaning to our lives. Typhoon Haiyan, as all disasters, has a meaning for each of us. The question, of course, is "why?"

"When we seek for connection, we restore the world to wholeness. Our seemingly separate lives become meaningful as we discover how truly necessary we are to each other." - Margaret Wheatley

Some questions for self-reflection:

- Do you ever explore your motives for your everyday actions?
- Name a recent important or emotional experience you had and ask "Why?" – what was the deeper meaning for you and why did this experience happen FOR you?
- Find a time and space to go into deep silence. What deeper thoughts or urges come to you? And, why?
- Why do you think you're on the planet? What makes life truly meaningful for you? How so?

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