

AN EXPERIENCE OF SURRENDER

3 years after my wife left me, promising that she would “never take the children away from me,” I received the news that she was now applying for a new job in another part of the country! I had felt sure, in spite of assurances from my wife and her family, that this was “on the cards” ever since my wife had moved out. It had caused me real hurt then and now, as my children were telling me the news, as they came through my front door, my insides lurched. How could I bear this? For so long now we had this routine going of half the week and alternate weekends here with me. It had seemed to be working well. I loved my children as much as ever and our lives had seemed to have got settled and steady. Now it was in danger of falling apart for me and the children again. Living 200+ miles away, how often would we see each other? What would that do to our relationship? How could it remain this close? Instead of a weekly dad, I would become a holiday visitor. And how long would that last as they built up their lives so far away from me? Oh dear! Oh dear! I honestly did not know how I was going to cope with this.

My ex-wife confirmed the news to be true. She had, in fact, applied for jobs in various parts of the country: Yorkshire, Kent, Wales...She was determined to move. As soon as I could, I turned to the latihan. Testing said that I should NOT support her in this wish to move and that I “should stand strong and look BEYOND it!” I asked to receive what I needed to do this because I knew that by myself I simply could not do it. As each day passed, so my anxiety and negativity were growing more and more. The overriding feeling I had was of the power my ex-wife still had over me. She could move those children away so easily and devastate me! Worse, the latihan and testing left me feeling totally unable to influence her at all: once again she had all the control. My pain, even the children’s pain, was not strong enough to stand up to her wish. First, I spent an afternoon trying to reason with her and then I heard some of the most chilling words she had ever spoken to me: “I have spent all my life doing what other people want. I am going to do what I want now. Yes, there are some disadvantages for the children but they will be leaving me in a few years time anyway” so “she could not live her life for them now.” My response that they were still children, not even teenagers, was met with stony silence. Conversation was obviously not the answer!

I did some more testing, first about the children. With my son, I was to be “manly” and show him “a strong, upright example”; with my daughter there was to be a deep sharing of our feelings and through this it felt as if we would be brought closer together and the pain somehow “spiritualised.” For myself, I should allow the tears and not try to inhibit them. By doing this they would eventually be “emptied out” and I would survive. It seemed that I “should see myself as an American Indian going off on his own in order to prepare myself for something important in my life” (aptly named a “lamentation” I believe) Yes, I needed to withdraw “for a time” and look to the Inner. It was at this point that my son opened up to me and revealed how much hurt and dislike he felt about what was happening. So I tested again and was surprised to receive that I should again speak to his mum but this time I was to go there being prepared to be “aggressive with the two of them (mum and partner)” This I did. I walked into my old home feeling upright and extremely tense. Almost immediately my ex-wife started talking about her “needs” whereupon I interrupted and demanded to talk about the children At this point, her partner spoke and pointed his finger at me- that was like a red rag to a bull! “The only good thing for the children,” he said, “was what was good for their mother.” I was scandalised by this and gave him a firm “piece of my mind” and he said not one word more. For once I felt I had led the conversation with the two of them in such a way and I came away feeling that some important things had at last been clearly said. It did absolutely nothing to change their minds, however. Something more than strong talking was needed.

Things then looked increasingly desperate for me when my wife was interviewed for a job in Yorkshire (some 250 miles away!). She got through the first day’s interview so that she, and *one* other, was to have a second interview the next day. She was confident that she was going to get the job by now and I heard that she had already put down an offer on a remote farmhouse, which she was intending to renovate (much to the children’s disgust!) That night I was in alternate panic and despair. Then, after tiring of the almost unbearable emotional storms, suddenly- inexplicably- there was a shift in my emotions to what I can only describe as to “a state of surrender.”

Suddenly, amazingly, I felt a huge sense of relief as I honestly felt the “matter had now been taken up by God.”! This immediately meant that I could no longer blame my ex-wife for whatever was to happen (boy, had I been doing that!): it was God I

would now have to blame because whatever happened now was His doing. This did not seem to be rational at all to me but nonetheless I was utterly convinced of it! God was now involved with me, my children and this situation in a more intimate way, somehow, than before. This completely calmed my feelings so that I went to bed on what was one of the most worrying nights of my life and slept more soundly than for ages! The next morning I awoke inexplicably convinced that my ex-wife had not got that job and – what is more- my children would not be moving away! This conviction stayed with me all day so that when my friend came round that evening I had a celebratory glass of whisky in my hand. “What are you looking so happy about?” she asked as soon as she came in and saw me. “She has not got that job” I said. “Oh, has she rung already? (my ex-wife had promised to phone me as soon as she knew whether she had been successful or not) “Oh, no!” I replied, “I JUST KNOW she hasn’t got it!”

As it was, my ex-wife did not phone me that night or any night. It did not bother me. I never faltered from my conviction that she was not going to be moving off to Yorkshire and thereby seriously limiting my contact with my children. Three or four nights later the children just happened to mention that they were not now going to be moving because “mum had not got that job.” By then it was all so low-key that it was almost said as an aside! Who would have believed it?

I was to look on this incident as one of the few times when I somehow managed to experience a real state of surrender in my life. As is so often true with me I had to be brought to a point of real desperation for it to happen. I think I was brought, through extreme emotional pain, to a point where there was no grasping “me” left in the situation! I know that may sound an odd thing to say but it is how it felt. The “me” was simply exhausted, totally defeated, and that it seems allowed the surrender to take place. It was unmistakable because it immediately took away all those previous emotions and replaced them with a feeling of absolute conviction that did not, even to my mind, seem rational. I think, too, it was something of a miracle that at a time when I felt most bitter towards my ex-wife, I was to feel that she could no longer NOW be blamed! The blame surprisingly was squarely with God and I could not argue with Him, could I?

Actually, my ex-wife was still to move but only to the next village about 10 minutes drive away.