

Claiming the Lessons and Gifts from Childhood Adversity

Hardship challenges us, and in facing this challenge we grow. From the pain of an unhappy start there often comes steely determination, deep compassion and piercing insight. In searching for the things that were missing - safety, peace, respect or acceptance - we learn much about life. Only too aware of suffering, we find it difficult to ignore others' plight. This makes for a well-developed social conscience. Constant effort to prove our worth can propel us toward excellence. Our empathy often answers the needs of those around us. As we search for understanding and solace many of us develop spiritually. In order to overcome, we create values and personal philosophies that help make meaning of suffering and guide us toward a better way of life.

Unfortunately, the personal lessons and gifts acquired through our own determined efforts often go unrecognised - overshadowed by feelings of inadequacy leftover from childhood. For most of us, the cost of early challenges has been huge. Nothing can take away the early misery we experienced, but we can be enriched by the insight and wisdom we've gained on the journey.

The special qualities I have developed out of my challenging childhood are:

- _____ I've a well-developed empathy for people.
- _____ I'm broadminded and usually don't judge people.
- _____ My heart goes out to people who are suffering.
- _____ I'm usually responsible and trustworthy.
- _____ I'm a loyal and supportive friend.
- _____ I'm very sensitive to other people's feelings.
- _____ I'm committed to my growth and healing.
- _____ I'm able to adapt well to changing situations.
- _____ I strive to be honest in my dealing with others.
- _____ I'm capable and resourceful in the way I tackle challenges.
- _____ I understand the importance of perseverance.
- _____ I tend to automatically support people who are struggling.
- _____ I have a good gut instinct which guides me well.
- _____ I'm determined to make the most of my life.

The values that are a compass for my life are:

- _____ I'm committed to making sure my children don't suffer the way I did.
- _____ I hate injustice, so will often challenge it.
- _____ I do my best to treat others as I'd like to be treated.
- _____ I tend to be on the side of the disadvantaged.
- _____ I am strongly committed to making the world a better place.
- _____ I'm passionate about social justice.
- _____ I endeavour to always treat people with respect.
- _____ Act with honesty and integrity is very important to me.
- _____ I'm involved in contributing to my community.
- _____ I can be a staunch advocate on someone else's behalf.
- _____ I hate seeing other people suffer.
- _____ It's very important to me that I contribute positively to the world.