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Holistic Happenings

A Conscious Choice Resource

Holistic Living Expo Program Guide Page 9



Conscious Relating

Shifting From Disappointment To Opportunity

Ingrid Hart

Sometimes life gives us an opportunity disguised as a disappointment. It is up to us to reframe the experience. I had a trip planned to Death Valley National Park with my cousin. One week before our departure, my cousin cancelled. I was disappointed. I had two choices: go alone, or cancel the whole travel experience. My awareness at that time did not reveal there were other choices present.

"Go alone," my friend said. "You need this place to feed you. It will nurture your soul; a sense of place to fill you." I felt encouraged by her words. The wide-open space of the desert does something for my spirit. There is a mystical enchantment that permeates my essence. I can see and think with greater clarity and vision. In the desert, I am at peace.

Ingrid Hart earned a B.A. from California State University, Humboldt, in Journalism. Ingrid writes a column for the Modcom website called "The View From Here." Her goal in life is to maintain balance in business, family, fitness, relaxation and spiritual fulfillment. She hopes to inspire others to make the best of their lives. www.modcom.com/lifestyle/view.html.

I picked my daughter up from school and told her my plans about going on my travel adventure alone. "I'll go with you," she said. I felt a rush of emotion overtake me. "Come because you want to, not because you don't want your old mom to go alone." She rolled her eyes and shook her head in a teenage you-are-so-pathetic way. "I really want to go. I love Death Valley. Okay?" Okay.

If you've never been to Death Valley before, don't let the name fool you. There is no death here; only raw, stripped

Continued on next page...



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Conscious Relating

...continued from Page 48

down beauty. The desert adventure that my daughter and I experienced created a strong bond that transcended the mother and child relationship. We were equal beings sharing in the spiritual bounty of the environment. There were times of solitude and times of intimate conversation. I reminded her of when she wore cloth diapers and would hold her little arms up in the air and ask for *up, up, up*. I remembered her asking "Let's talk about kindergarten," as a four-year-old, so eager to begin her life.

We girl-talked: George Clooney or Brad Pitt? Ashton Kutcher or Orlando Bloom? We jumped. We skipped. We inspected. I revealed what was in my heart more than before. Without the distraction of dishes, folding clothes, or cleaning the house, I was more present and we both felt it.

My stories expanded from their original telling. I realized she was old enough now for further revelation, but not so much detail as to scare her away. "I should have kept my independence longer," I said referring to a recent, amicable divorce from her father. "I never had a chance to know

myself before. How can you become part of a successful relationship without knowing who you really are?" I asked, not wanting an answer.

I realized that I wanted to protect her from making the mistakes I had in life. I didn't want her to suffer or feel any emotional pain. The best I could do for her is to communicate my experiences. I could not protect her anymore than my mother could keep me safe from the world.

As we sat along a mesa on the Funeral Mountains gazing over the badlands, with Zabriskie Point at our backs, I was filled with gratitude at this tender moment with my daughter. As we were ready to leave this desert oasis overflowing with revelation and beauty, I said a quiet prayer of gratitude for all the blessings in my life. I was thankful for the gentle healing that allowed me to view a disappointment as an opportunity and make it a powerful lesson in living. ✨

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