



Conscious through crisis.

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"I hate change and crisis. They block my normal flow of life as it should be. Like a rock. I try to move it, overcome it, manipulate it, work around it with trial and error tactic, feel more and more exhausted and insecure. Even if I run from it, I still know: It is still lying there, with sharp edges, waiting... not dissolved yet!"

(Author's diary, December 2016)

As I am analyzing my second in-depth interview of my dissertation the themes that emerge are so rich, I need to pick out one of them for now:

The idea that crisis can be endlessly beneficial to our personal development - although we hate being in it!

In both of my interviews, my interviewees' biographical stories show impressively how they personally grew in awareness through personal crisis and change. Before their crisis, they followed their natural flow and mechanisms that were unconsciously coined in their childhood (e.g. a strong adaption habit to external demands and the "decent way", or trying to fill an inner void of appreciation through performance).

In one case, the participant broke down due to an overwhelming life and job situation, additionally, the marriage broke, too. He really had to dig deep into his existential core in order to find some sense and discover the root cause - supported by therapy. In the other case, the participant finally decided to give up his job position and stepped back due to the pressure of responsibility.

In the transition period they had quite a hard time. They suffered, cried their eyes out and really depended on their family, stressed their spouses, friends, even their bosses to help them with orientation, finding their way. Should they stay or leave? How can this go on? What can I do? What other options are there?

How can this be good?

The goodness shows in the current life feeling: Both were now living balanced and impactful lives according to their values and goals. They displayed a self-rootedness and one-ness, what I call the "authentic self". Both had made peace with the painful past, they could make sense of it and learned important lessons. In one case, this meant to stand up for oneself and negotiating one's interests courageously and consequently. In the other case, it meant to manage a challenging transformational change process with great political positioning and networking tactics and achieving first wins.

How do we transform crisis into a success?

Apparently, the reflection and awareness of one's motives and personality structure are one of the most significant development enhancers. Comparing the two cases, the crisis of one was deeper and more existential. The degree of consciousness by time of the interview appears higher - as a researcher in the mode of "suspicion" I couldn't find any hidden orienting structures in the narration that weren't in line with the participant's self-concept.

In the other case, there was an increase of consciousness as well, but more like: "Ok, I know now what I want and next time I would do this and this" - not so much concerning the own personality and contribution of own motives and blind spots to the crisis (like a rather unquestioned fulfillment drive, high external reference, and beliefs like "I have to be competent in order to be heard", etc.). These partly denied aspects of the own personality can all be traced back in childhood and youth experiences.

Consciousness as the way to freedom

My hypothesis for now is, that the more we identify, understand and make peace with our unique inner structure, beliefs, neediness, motives, etc., the more freedom we gain to live our full potential and find creative, lasting solutions for any problems that occur to us in life.

Consciousness works like a light beam that illuminates the landscape: The traps we should avoid for our sake and the paths we might choose safely. It increases our potential to respond authentically and with agility to change and crisis.

Stay bold and conscious,

Enjoy the ride.

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