

Roadblock or Sign Post?



The Springboard Group, Inc.
<http://www.LaunchingNewLives.com>

Janice Burroughs, President

In my hometown church, this is the first line of a short hymn that served as the offertory, “Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow”. It came to mind this morning as I was thinking about the role of blessings in our lives, and the various forms they may take. Blessings are sometimes only seen in hindsight, and sometimes pain is the birthing point of a blessing.

The clarity of recall of this one hymn is probably due to the fact that at age 5, someone passed me a very full offering plate, which proceeded to slip from my grasp and land loudly on the sloping hardwood floors of our church. The physics involved elude me even now, but the plate actually rolled on its edge, and each little coin (in the 60’s, coins still had some value) rolled its way to resting at the front of the sanctuary. This memory is burned in my childhood “slide show” of most embarrassing moments! I was particularly grateful to be able to almost immediately stand to sing the offertory, which helped me recover from the moment. “Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow” brings a smile to my face ever since.

What makes some unwelcome events blessings, and others, “curses” for lack of a better term? Perhaps it rests in our ability to respond in a way that transforms. Rather than being a victim, remain open to the possibility that this event or person may be a barrier, but perhaps only to deflect us towards a new direction.

Have you ever looked back to spans of your life that are fairly unremarkable, when you must have been flying on “auto-pilot”? Perhaps you were in an unfulfilling job or relationship. Did you have so much responsibility that it took everything you had to just get through each day, week or year? It feels like a loss of a valuable chunk of your life. Yet, life-altering events can serve to wake us up before we miss out on our life.

It is difficult to absorb transgressions by others. A strategy that helped me is reframing, by putting the hurt to the side to better view the possibility it brings. Pain is our body’s alarm system, to get our attention to protect us, but also so we can learn and process what has happened. If a person/event/ situation is toxic, we can release it from our life. Painful events also awaken us to the need for personal change.

A friend launched a new career after some people and events helped place her on a new path. Roadblocks do not usually stop us completely, but may detour us on a better route. If our “guides” are helping us move forward, are roadblocks just a different type of guide?

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Think of the role of Judas in the birth of Christianity. What would have happened had he made a different choice? The debate continues, and brings to mind the role of negative events and people in our lives. If there is a guiding plan for our life, it makes sense that it is sometimes necessary for painful events to get our attention, and redirect us along the path to our true life purpose.

So here is the challenge: can you visualize hurtful people and events as filling a purposeful role in your life, regardless of their intent? Why would you want to? Their intent is really irrelevant to how you choose to respond, and in how you apply the experience in *your* life. This choice, coincidentally, releases any negative power over you, allowing you the freedom to grow.

Some life events are so horrendous we cannot envision them as positive forces. Yet, there are many stories of Holocaust survivors, or those with terminal medical diagnoses who chose to use their experience in amazing ways, often in the last days of their lives. Remember them when coping with routine stumbling blocks and frustrations!

Be alert to the small signposts that signal something is amiss. Have you have wandered from your true self or purpose? Use your emotional radar as well as observation. The Universe may be trying to get your attention if your life has grown too busy to be fully aware.

Most of us see life as a giving force; the same giver of blessings creates barriers. Barriers may be blessings in disguise, if we use adversity as a signpost or redirection. Perhaps the boss who eliminated your job prevented your heart attack; you may not yet have the full story. A painful divorce may have inspired you to launch a new and rewarding career.

We may one day learn the “rest of the story”, but for now, take responsibility for writing your own story. Transform your losses into as many blessings as you can. Use adversity as a means of re-direction, and your low points as a springboard to a new chapter in your life’s journey. And whenever you can, freely share your blessings with others; they may not know what they have been missing.