

Rescuing is from Within  
April 28, 2016  
Taos News Article

***The Taos News has committed to implement a weekly column to help educate our community about emotional healing through grief. People may write questions to Golden Willow Retreat and they will be answered privately to you and possibly as a future article for others. Please list a first name that grants permission for printing.***

**Dear Ted,**

Due to some unforeseen circumstances, I have found myself in the role of caregiver for a person who is having a difficult time. I am noticing some behaviors in him that I am also noticing in myself. These are not very fun to look at or claim! I am experiencing such a high level of demand to be rescued and taken care of. He also consistently deflects any suggestion I make. I feel like I am working harder than he is to improve his life! I feel guilty due to his situation, but I'm feeling repelled and feel caught with guilt and anger all at the same time. Any words will be beneficial. Thank you, Jane

**Dear Jane,**

First of all, I'm sorry for your predicament. You must have strong feelings for this person and it is difficult to see someone going through a difficult time and still not being able to help or take away their pain or situation. You experience a loss when seeing someone else in any type of pain. This is called vicarious grief and it is very real and often forgotten about, or ignored. You may not even be aware of what the internal discomfort that you feel is. This internal agitation can cause someone to become confused about what healthy boundaries are. When one caring for another person, emotions and obligations can make it very difficult to navigate the path.

When someone is in emotional distress, often and understandably, the immediate reaction is to look to the outer world to try and take that pain away. This is a very young emotional response. A child does not internal resources to work out the distress within. As we mature, the hope is to start owning more and more of our emotional distress and to realize that the answer comes from within. We cannot be rescued by others or external resources.

Many people never truly mature to this level and continue to blame the outer world for their discomfort or negative situation and demand the answer, solution, and removal of the anguish. Even if someone has done a lot of emotional/spiritual growth, emotional regression can still happen in which blaming external situations and demanding external rescuing happen. No matter what is happening in the outer world the true solution comes from building internal resources, having emotional sobriety and healing from within.

Please don't get me wrong, we all need external support at time in our life. Support is, however, very different than rescuing. Support helps hold someone as they do their work during all types of situations in their lives. Professional caregivers do not have "the magic button for ease." They are able to give stabilization while the person rebuilds their

own internal foundation. Just like a child individuating from a parent, there is more support in the beginning while the person slowly builds their own identity strengthening their internal infrastructure physically, emotionally, spiritually, and intellectually.

The realization that the “prince in shining armor” is not coming to rescue from the outside, but is actually *within* our own psyche can change a person profoundly. When a person is demanding to be rescued, they are actually wreaking havoc on others as well themselves. When they realize they have the power to empower themselves while being grateful for the supports available, they will find more serenity as well as many types of internal strength and abundance of healthy support. I wish you well. Until next week, take care.

Golden Willow Retreat is a nonprofit organization focused on emotional healing and recovery from any type of loss. Direct any questions to Ted Wiard, LPCC, CGC, Founder of Golden Willow Retreat at (575) 776-2024 or [GWR@newmex.com](mailto:GWR@newmex.com)