

Ascending Depression to Peace

By Donna Bishop

The slow journey of a shift in consciousness is filled with periods of ecstasy only to be required to be relinquished to return to the cold floor of this world's reality.

Who among us doesn't dream to shed the cares of this alien land to abide in a place of no time or space? To be enfolded in the knowing of only love with our minds free to allow the flow of creations of beauty, goodness, wholeness and joy.

Forty-three years ago I thought I had started living this dream. That fall I left behind my status as stay-at-home mom to work part-time as a counselor aide in a middle school. My task was to help develop programs to lessen racial tensions in the school. The challenges were enormous. The daily experiences with students, staff and the community were invigorating and rewarding. My creative ideas were accepted and implemented. My cup of energy was never empty. All my senses were heightened. My ten-year-old daughter remarked "Mom, you think everything is beautiful!" Little did we realize that all of this euphoria was a form of mental illness which would forever alter the projections of my life and my family. In the past my illness might have confined me to an asylum for the insane or the family attic for the sickly wife; however, with more modern treatments of medication, psychotherapy, or short periods of hospitalization many mentally ill individuals like myself are able to gain mental stability and overcome obstacles of ignorance, fear and discrimination to become trusted members of the community.

The biggest obstacle, however, is to regain the trust in yourself. Once I was told and believed that I had a lifelong illness with no hope for cure and over which I would have no control that illness dominated every aspect of my living. Relationships and careers were damaged and lost. The periodic disruptive episodes of irrational behavior followed by long periods of stability were tainted by fear. That was the then of my experience.

My now experience of peace is only a change in consciousness. As I matured I realized I was not a flawed person with an uncontrollable illness. Rather I started to see myself as a competent individual struggling with a difficult medical condition. I begin to recognize that the fear of experiencing another mental breakdown was the largest pain I had suffered over the years. I allowed fear to limit my relationships, I allowed fear to contain my passions less I cross that line of euphoria again. I know how it felt to fear my illness. Over the past several years I have slowly let go of that fear and now the fear is gone and I'm at peace. I may never have another episode or I may have many episodes. That is the now of my experience.