

How are your ‘problems’ trying to help you?



By Eve Menezes Cunningham



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Think of a problem you’re currently up against. There’s the famous Einstein quote about not being able to solve any problem at the level at which it was created, and yet we still try to think our way out of things. At time of writing, well, I am deleting lots of political thoughts...

While we’re familiar with the NLP presupposition of there being no such thing as failure, only feedback, problems, by their nature, are challenging.

When we add a sense of needing to get to another level in order to solve said problems, we might then beat ourselves up for not being there yet. Resourceful states are wonderful but Michael J Fox had years of wallowing about his diagnosis before he channelled so much energy, money and goodwill into the search for a cure.

Think about what might be trying to emerge at a soul level

The exuberance I feel when I reframe whatever’s going on by pausing to consider what might be trying to emerge at that deeper level instantly starts shifting the energy around the ‘problem’.

I’ve heard people undergoing major health issues recognising that, painful as it all has been, there *has* been a

gift in terms of them having to learn to set boundaries, take better care of themselves and accept help from others.

As we reframe our problem as something that *might* have some silver lining, we naturally become more curious and resourceful. This is something that has to come from within.

I can’t imagine having much patience for anyone who attempted to force me into any positive reframe. It’s like post-traumatic growth – a wonderful possibility for many trauma survivors but something that can’t be rushed or forced.

If the idea of souls and the transpersonal doesn’t appeal, you can still work with that highest, wisest, truest part of yourself. As Oprah asks, ‘How is this problem trying to HELP me?’ Typing these words, I’m reminded of Angelina Jolie in *Tomb Raider* with that little ‘Bring it on’ look she kept getting when I’d have wanted to curl up in a corner and await the sweet release of death. She (fictional superhero character) had amazing resilience and used each battle and challenge as an opportunity to get stronger, more courageous and adept at problem solving.

I see Oprah as a bit of a superhero too and her simple ‘How is this problem trying to help me?’ is a way of seeing whatever it might be as not just a lesson

from the universe (she also often says she says, ‘Universe, I’m tired – please don’t teach me anything today’) but also there’s a friendliness in this approach.

Pick a problem, any problem

- **Health issue?** How is it trying to help you? Maybe it’s forcing you to prioritise your own self-care and treat your body with greater respect? What springs to mind for you?
- **Money worries?** How are they trying to help you? Maybe you’re learning to negotiate better? Maybe they’re teaching you independence or interdependence? What springs to mind for you?
- **Uncertainty around something big?** How is it trying to help you? Maybe it’s teaching you to trust in divine order? To be patient? To enhance your resilience? What springs to mind for you?
- **Facing injustice?** How is it trying to help you? Maybe it’s meant you’ve had to speak up for yourself, feeling shaky at first but getting stronger and being heard? Maybe you’ve spoken up for others? Maybe it’s connected you with your inner power? What springs to mind for you?

Experiment with it and, if you’d like to share, I’d love to know how you get on – eve@selfcarecoaching.net ●