

Transforming Our Lives By Ending The Cycle Of Victimization – An Excerpt From “Your Messy Brilliance”

BY KELLY MCNELIS

Here’s a little-known secret: powerlessness is not real in the presence of choice.

Even if the events that unfold around us are completely out of our control, we almost always have an opportunity to choose how we respond to desperate situations.

It doesn’t matter what has happened to us in our past. It doesn’t matter if we were powerless over those things, or even if we made poor choices that led to those things. What matters is right now, today, and what we decide to do with our stories. Personal choice is a valuable tool that allows you to courageously choose an outcome that serves you so that you can make life happen, on your terms!

In my own case, as the feelings of overwhelm and depression became unavoidable shortly after my divorce, I began to see through the defenses I’d built around myself – namely, victimhood, blame, and the false idea that I simply didn’t know what to do.

So here’s what I did. I got help in every way possible. I took baby steps. At first, I looked to others for answers; I desperately sought a guidebook for existence, a carefully laid-out roadmap that would carry me reliably from Point A to Point B. I wanted proven steps that would take me to my desired destination: peace, passion, and joy.

I began to ask myself, who do I want to be? What is valuable and important to me in my life? As curiosity prompted me to continue to ask myself these questions over and over, the answers came into clearer focus.

I realized that no one had the answers but me. I also figured out that living a more peaceful life was about choosing to be present and accept my world as it is in the moment, with no shame or blame.

When you can accept what is without judgment, you free yourself from the clutches of victimhood and perceived powerlessness. You discover solutions in unexpected places. You become creative about how to align with your personal values.

At the end of the day, you discover that you, and you alone, get to choose how to live your life, spend your energy, and focus your attention – every moment of every day. And as you exercise more ownership over your power to choose, you will absolutely find freedom in places you may not have previously imagined.

Before we can make any truly conscious choices, we must acknowledge the ways in which our victimhood tends to manifest.

The victim mentality is pervasive in our world. Whether we were raised on the streets or with a silver spoon in our mouth, our culture lives and breathes the notion that we are the prey of circumstances that are beyond our

control.

Most of us are indoctrinated with the notion that life is hard. Even when things are going well, we might find ourselves waiting for the other shoe to drop. Our media is clogged with trauma drama and stories that feed into our collective fear and paranoia that something or someone (e.g., the government, criminals, anyone with values different from ours) is out to get us.

Politicians build their platforms on blaming and shaming their opponents, and on tearing down the dissenting party. We separate the world into simplistic caricatures of good guys and bad guys, victims and villains. Even though these are archetypes that each of us internally harbors, we use them as a way to create more separation, suspicion, pain, and conflict in our lives.

This ingrained victim tendency has far-reaching consequences. The fact that we live in a world that has been at war with itself since time immemorial reveals the huge divide that we are facing – one that is not only displayed in our tendency to split ourselves into factions, religions, races, political parties, and nations, but that is also a reflection of the sense of division we feel within ourselves.

In addition to splitting the world into good and bad guys, we are taught to compartmentalize, to differentiate, to deem certain aspects of ourselves “good” and to stomp out the ones we perceive as “bad”. Ironically, this misguided and tragic tendency arises from a genuine desire for self-knowledge and wholeness.

Essentially, we are at war with

ourselves, and only when we decide to stop perpetuating the vicious victim cycle will we be able to join together the parts of us that are at odds and stop projecting our conflict onto the world.

So, you may be asking, "How do we do this?"

First, we have to come into an awareness of our own inner victim. Every single one of us has an inner victim who may occasionally rear her head and convince us that the world is dangerous – and that a number of adversaries, seen and unseen, are just around the corner.

Our inner victim may have developed in early childhood as a survival skill. It could have been ingrained in us by parents, caretakers, teachers, and society at large – the kind that tells us we can't trust our own power and strength, and that if something is likely to go wrong, it probably will.

But lets you and I take a deep breath in, and a deep breath out, and acknowledge that no matter how awesome and full of integrity our choices may be, it is true that there are some experiences we have no control over.

If your expectations for life are governed by the theory that there is a one-to-one relationship between your actions and your results, you are likely to be more than a little disappointed. The truth is, there are so many things we cannot predict or prevent, and to believe otherwise is just another way to get stuck in victim mode, feeling more powerless than ever.

That's why, when I talk about victimhood, I am not denying the many horrific things that happen on a daily basis – from rape

to war to genocide and other forms of injustice. There are instances in which oppression and exploitation create clear perpetrators and victims. Terrible things happen to good people, and it's important to hold compassion for the wounds and battle scars that so many of us have picked up along the way.

We are not here to be the general managers of the universe or to bear the brunt of responsibility for every little thing that goes wrong in our lives.

It is simply not humane to imagine that karma is to blame for all the bad things that happen to good people. A baby does not choose to be abused, and an ethnic group does not choose to be wiped out by genocide. In fact, other people's unconscious choices can wreak untold havoc on innocent lives – which is why we must never succumb to explaining away the crazy shit that happens on a daily basis with blame or quasi-spiritual justifications.

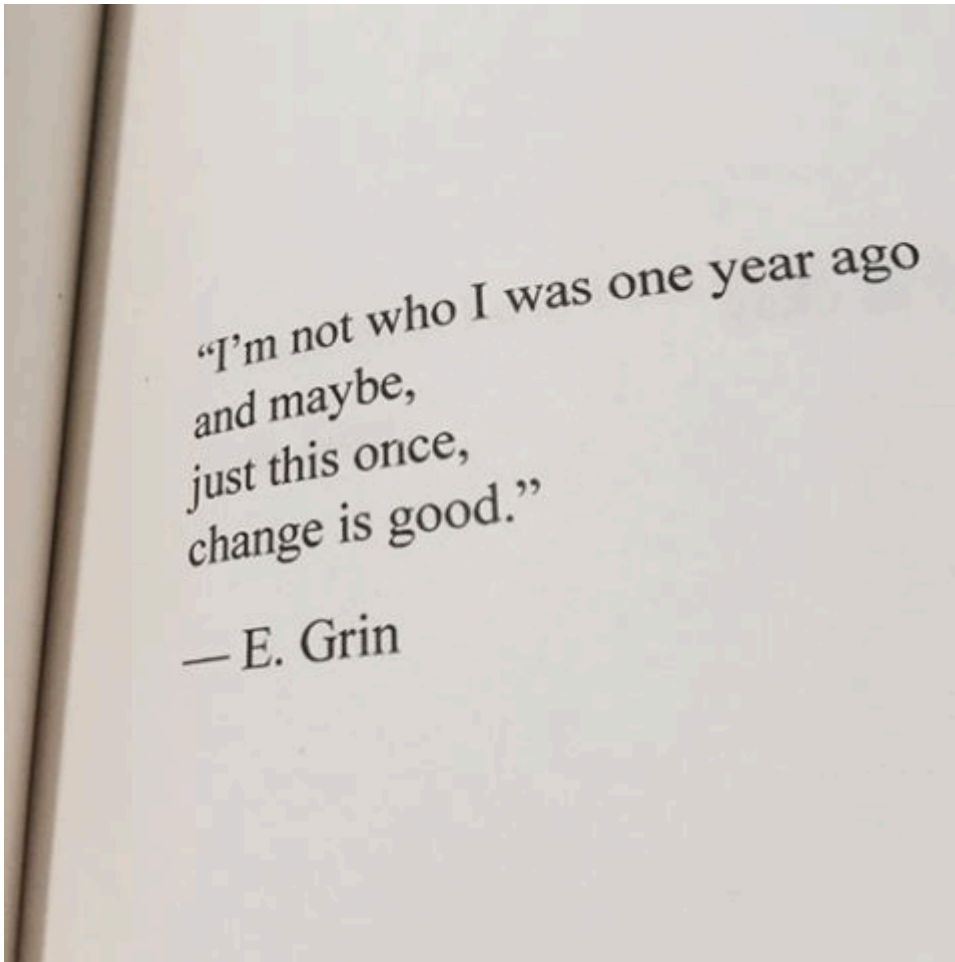
There are some things that we will perhaps never understand about the nature of the world, and that's okay. Awful things happen, and although we may wish to make sense of them, it is seldom easy to do so. And the truth is, we don't need pithy, prepackaged explanations for why things are the way they are.

When we focus instead on transforming our lives and serving humanity through genuine compassion, we do our part to end the cycle of victimization and terror that has so many people in its clutches.

For more self-study, [The Urban Howl](#) recommends [The Desire Map: A Guide to Creating Goals with Soul](#) .

Sip a little more:

[Women For One's Kelly McNeilis On How To Love Your Body](#)



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