

## **Defense.**

I have been thinking about why I feel a need to defend myself in certain situations and with certain people who have treated me with meanness. I defended myself because I believed their assertions were mean and baseless. I went into great detail to say, “No, no, no, yours is the fictional story of what happened, and mine is the non-fiction account.” Still, it felt like I was playing a game that was never enjoyable.

Before a morning meditation, I laughed aloud as I recounted my arguments and defensiveness. Once I stopped laughing at myself, I decided to find out why I felt the need to defend myself, and the reason I found wasn't the reason I first thought of. I continued to quiet myself, which is the same as turning down the heat under a boiling pot, and as the pot cooled, I realized that there was another, far healthier reason for my defense, and that was I was trying to preserve the relationship.

I then looked up the word defend, and one of the definitions is “to preserve.”

I'm not going to wane into the past or talk about psychological issues, but I will say that the ability to let go of someone I love isn't something I do easily.

I allow very few people into my intensely independent life because I experience earthquake-like tremors when people and pets I love move on for whatever reason. I have decided to pass on the responsibility required to have new relationships that are more than friendships. However, a few relationships from my past still exist and are making demands on me.

A week has passed, and I've found peace since turning off the heat that kept the pot boiling: there is no need to defend myself because I have stopped caring about what people think of me. I cannot undo the past; I can only go forward. I care about people, but not their attempts to demean me.

Some of the persistent trauma I lived through seems to have rearranged my brain so that it became my gatekeeper, and if the signals it receives require that I suffer or need to give up the path I have chosen to take, then I take a pass.

If I said or did something you misunderstood, or if you said or did something that I misunderstood, then yes, defense is appropriate. Explaining myself to preserve a friendship is appropriate.

But mounting a defense during a mean, emotional assault that withers my heart is pointless.

I finally learned that lesson. I finally learned to walk away.

I finally learned that the best defense is useless if the other person isn't listening. Yet the loss of someone I love feels potentially devastating, especially since I have so few loves left to lose.

Gold sinks to the bed of even a raging river, and as I get to the bed of my raging emotions, I find my gold. I find that this freedom, freedom from responsibility, is what I have been yearning for for decades. Perhaps no longer caring about those who have stopped caring for me means stepping off the precipice and into the abyss of freedom right before me. I will be carrying nothing and no one, and all I have to do is to do it.

Okay, I'm taking that step now.

Written by Peter Skeels © 4-15-2024