

The Vault

Inside each of us is a secret room, a vault, where we keep our most precious experiences. These experiences we keep in our vault are not only our best experiences.

Occasionally, we take them out and, over time, learn to observe these experiences rather than relive them.

Decades ago, while trying to figure out the whys and the causes of the cruelty in my life, I concluded that I alone must be the cause. After more years of examining my past, I learned, from experiences also stored in the vault, that the grievous harm and even deaths I had done to others in a past life made this life one of retribution and severely harsh consequences. In my defense, the harm I did to others was a mistake, an error of judgment, but the “God damn yous” shouted, at me, by the families and friends of those deceased became the case against me for my current, near-lifelong sentence. Good intentions are not a valid defense.

After years of feeling I was a victim, I finally accepted my suffering was just, and a part of this life. As I aged, I took my suffering, time and again, out of the vault, and instead of reliving it, I thought about it.

Then, one day, I understood. I was not a victim. In a past life, I committed a crime against humanity, and I am now serving a life or near-life sentence for that crime.

Today, I apologize to all those affected by my inability to control my impulses. I hurried when I shouldn't have. I thought I knew better than anyone, even after reviewing the possibilities. Yes, I was headstrong and impulsive, and all that is left for me to do is apologize. I must add that I believe an apology is twofold: one is that an apology says I am sorry for my actions, and two, that I won't do it again.

Would I be as remorseful without the severest and harshest punishment having been meted out?

I don't believe so; therefore, I accept that the punishment fits the crime.

I also accept that while my crime was terrible, my sentence was lenient in that I got to live on earth, and I was free to come and go. I have been allowed to be curious about so much, and I've been able to live and experience almost everything I wanted. I got to experience freedom, love, and the highs and lows of everything I wanted. It is true that my closest relationships have been disasters and have caused me severe depression and anxiety, but that was part of my sentence.

Through everything, I have learned empathy.

As I exit my vault, I feel that this, my deepest and sincerest apology, may have ended the retribution for my past life.

I will go forward believing I am now free because my punishment has equaled the harm I inflicted on others.

Despite wanting the moment to be one where I waited instead of acting impetuously, I cannot have that. Those affected by my actions cannot have that moment back either, nor all the other moments they never got to live.

The sentences of perpetrator and victim are finally over. The destructive experience of our mutual past will no longer affect us but shall remain in our vaults as part of our collective history.

Written by Peter Skeels © 9-10-2024