



All Betrayal is Self-Betrayal

“Into each life some rain must fall,” wrote Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. Ella Fitzgerald embellished it, singing, “Into each and every life some rain has got to fall, but too much of that stuff is fallin’ into mine.”

Been betrayed lately? Ever? By someone you trusted? Feels like that downpour Ella complained about, doesn't it? And there's no umbrella in sight.

Acts of betrayal are such bitter pills to swallow precisely because they do involve people we trust—a spouse, a business partner, a friend, a parent, or the poster boy for modern times, Bernie Madoff. And while betrayals don't leave physical scars, the deep emotional and psychic wounds they inflict, if not healed, taint all future relationships. “I will never trust again!” is a familiar refrain we've probably all uttered at one time or another.

But what is “betrayal”? As with other life lessons, it's one way to learn about ourselves and the world around us. Betrayal is the ultimate test of faith designed to expose the limits of a rational world and our inability to control it. We get hung up when we personalize and judge the lesson. It helps to think of betrayal as a universal rite of passage. “The kiss of death” depicts the archetypal Judas experience, and seals the fate of Jesus. That seminal betrayal offers as well the possibility of resurrection or rebirth that occurs as fear is transformed into faith.

Betrayal not only forces us to grapple with issues of loyalty, but with vulnerability, security, helplessness, self-doubt, and our fallibility in judging people. When those we trust fail us, we feel victimized. Logic and reason are useless in making sense of acts of betrayal, and about as therapeutic as taking an aspirin for food poisoning. In holding tight to victimhood, we hemorrhage vital energy.

To successfully navigate betrayal demands that we surrender pride, self-righteousness, the desire for vengeance and our expectations that life should accommodate us. Refusing to succumb to the withering attacks of the inner critic who savages us for not seeing *it* coming reduces our sense of feeling like a victim. If we let it, that voice immobilizes us with self-doubt. In reality, nothing keeps us safe. Blindsides are part of life, and all the magical thinking, rituals, and good deeds cannot protect us from these painful life lessons

Life in Earth School often feels like we're walking through a minefield. We don't get to choose the ones we step on. The only choice we have is how to deal with them once they've exploded. Railing against our fate is one option. Wringing out as much wisdom as is humanly possible is another.

Life isn't logical. Bad things happen to good people, and good things happen to bad people. No amount of rumination will elicit a satisfactory intellectual explanation for this. We delight in



God's blessings, or what we perceive as blessings—a new job just when we need it, a miraculous healing, a winning lottery ticket. Yet, we don't even think to look for God in hardship. Our first reaction is to accuse God of abandoning us.

What if God is in both, and one of our challenges is not to label or judge what lands on our plates? Faith is easy when life goes smoothly. But in the bumpy times, riddled with pain, and with no apparent end in sight, faith can be the first to go. We accuse, we blame, we rail at the unfairness of life. We resist looking within for answers.

If we're brutally honest, we've all betrayed one another in ways big and small. We've transgressed, engaged in indiscretions and lapses of integrity that we rationalize. Few of us have not betrayed confidences or indulged in self-serving gossip and shared privileged information, the sole purpose of which is ego-gratification.

We think nothing of betraying or abusing our bodies. We don't eat healthy, don't exercise, or go the other direction and punish our bodies through over-exercise. We endure toxic relationships and jobs we hate. Workaholics on overdrive don't stop to smell the roses. We studiously rationalize our way out of our intuitive guidance or ignore it altogether in favor of our intellect. Out of touch with our bodies' subtle and not so subtle messages, we're shocked when those same bodies betray us. We pooh-pooh the mind/body connection, preferring to place our trust in "mind over matter."

We give away our power and abdicate authority to *experts*, and when they fail us, we blame them. In hindsight, I must acknowledge the warning spark of intuition I have ignored on more than one occasion when I deferred to a so-called expert. Learning self-trust— developing a strong connection to our inner voice is another gift in betrayal.

I thought I was an expert on betrayal. Proud of my learned ability to forgive those who betrayed me and to find gifts in the shit, I was blindsided and humbled over the past two years to discover how much I still had to learn.

First, the body I prided myself on for taking such good care of, betrayed me. An infected tooth mushroomed into long-term, very *costly* (I'll get the significance of "costly" soon) dental work that insurance didn't cover. That one tooth, surgically mismanaged, became re-infected, and though treated with antibiotics, continued to leak undetected into my gut. The months-long drip, drip, drip led to long term stomach disorders and symptoms that left me fatigued, queasy, achy, and brain-fogged. For eighteen months, I was on a very limited food regimen. Eating out was so stressful that I lost my desire to socialize. I lacked the energy and motivation to do what was necessary to grow my ReVisioning practice. I hibernated.



Then, a contractor we hired to renovate our master bath defrauded us of a sizable amount of money. Lastly, I could no longer ignore a financial situation I had spent years avoiding and rationalizing, and, riddled with fear, took steps to get to the bottom of it.

If an expert is defined as someone who has screwed up a lot, then I'm an eminently qualified expert who has harvested a lot of wisdom from those experiences. This set of circumstances felt different, though, as if I'd been blindfolded and dropped in the Arctic tundra and instructed to find my way home without a compass or supplies. I felt vulnerable, unsafe, powerless and resourceless. I felt more like a child than an expert. Truthfully, the ordeals of the past two years felt as if I had traveled back in time to my formative years.

The tools in my toolbox brought me only temporary relief. No matter how much I excavated, no matter how many insights or epiphanies I had, nothing changed. Surely, the problem was within me. I was flawed. And that's when my Inner Critic piped up. "You're never going to be successful. You haven't got what it takes, plus you're a girl. What do you expect?"

The only constant in all these situations was my personal bogeyman, money. The word itself strikes terror in my heart and makes mincemeat out of my gut. "Finances" and "money" were concepts so emotionally charged that they turned my brain to mush. I became an unworthy, powerless child again, listening to my parents argue over what I *deserved*.

Money was a radioactive issue in my family. As far back as I can remember it was fodder for my parents' never-ending bickering. My mother's family was indulgent. My paternal grandparents, not so much. Though successful, prudence defined their spending habits. For my parents, because my father made the money, he determined how it was spent. My mother and father were definitely not equal partners.

Nothing was more important to my father than money. It was his god, the sole measure of his self-worth. Gift-giving did not bring him joy, especially with my mother or me. I grew up feeling not only unworthy of having money spent on me but incapable of ever understanding or managing it. My father simultaneously squelched any spark of ambition I might have had. The best I could expect, he repeatedly told me, was to get a teaching degree to fall back on. This double bind of feeling unworthy of having money spent on me and believing I didn't have what it takes to succeed on my own was a Catch-22.

Furthermore, I was taught that financial matters were the purview of men. Apropos of this, every April 15, my father placed his finger over the line item in my parents' joint tax return that listed his income and stubbornly insisted she just sign by the "x". Every year my mother acquiesced.

My awareness about my money phobia resolved nothing. I hungered for the Eureka moment when the swirling puzzle pieces wondrously fell into place, my anger, frustration and doubt



instantaneously vanished, and my soul became awash with clarity. All the veils would lift and, in one Divine moment, I would be free.

Desperate to get to the root of this infernal money hemorrhaging and betrayals, I talked with my wise friend and fellow introspective, Julie. “You’ve tried everything ‘on earth,’” she said. “Why not try a psychic?”

“I don’t do psychics, Julie. Never have. I don’t like giving my power away to anyone to tell me my ‘future.’ But there is someone... Not a psychic exactly, but a channel. I haven’t talked with him in almost twenty-five years.”

I wrestled with Julie’s suggestion. It was a long shot, but I was ready to try just about anything. Richard Lavin who channeled Ecton—I referred to him as a psychic therapist—had nailed my third marriage without knowing anything about my husband or me. His insights were extraordinary, and when he shared them, their truth thundered throughout my body. The marriage was not fixable, and Ecton’s take on it gave me the clarity I needed to unemotionally let go.

Maybe his x-ray vision could pull it all together again. I had nothing to lose.

Several weeks later, in a life-altering session, Ecton pointed out that I lived in a world of polarities, defining what occurred in my life as good/not good. By judging a challenge, I added an emotional charge that immediately doubled the intensity and the impact. It prolonged it.

As soon as I labeled an issue as not good, I judged myself as flawed, a failure. A lesson, even a repetitive one meant no such thing, Ecton emphasized. If anything, the repetitive nature of the past two years was meant to highlight the ways I do judge myself, not underscore my imperfections. Lessons are simply grist for the human mill, part of being human, no more, no less. Accepting them as such minimized their power to undermine my self-confidence.

And then the pièce de resistance. My teeth, my body and the acts of betrayal, he explained, were distractions I created to avoid focusing my time and energy on my late-blooming career. My childhood programming—stay out of the limelight, marry well, serve your husband—was surreptitiously running my life. The betrayers were actually situations I attracted to show me what I was doing to myself. They were my teachers, not the enemy. Every bit of it was *self*-betrayal.

The second I heard the word “distraction,” all the puzzle pieces fell into place. Eureka. What better way to distract myself than with my lifelong nemesis, money?

When I hung up the phone, I felt exhilarated, free. It was the epiphany I had craved. All the puzzle pieces finally fit together.



As I began to deconstruct my core beliefs about money, I saw my ambivalence and how it played out in my life. Yes, I wanted money and success, yet I equated them with questionable values—greed, manipulation, a virtual absence of integrity. It was as if, by having it, making it, and becoming successful, I was destined to turn into someone I didn't like or respect. This mixed message had stymied my progress.

The truth was the only person denying me money was me. I had shackled myself to family messages. Every time I spent money on myself, I felt exactly the way Geneen Roth describes in her book about her relationship with money, "Lost and Found"—as if I were breaking the law.

As I read Roth's book, I recognized more similarities. "By the time I was ten or eleven, I had a recognizable 'identity,' a way of knowing myself that was familiar and automatic: I was selfish; I was needy: I was a pain in the ass." My mother used those same words to describe me.

Like Roth, I hadn't been allowed to learn about money and finances. For much of my adult life, when I did have abundance, my deeply imprinted guilt and shame tormented me. The sleaziness and power-mongering I associated with many who had it and the belief that money is inextricably yoked to conflict generated an epidemic of money issues that drained my resources. I perceived them as betrayals. It took someone with the ability to see beyond the physical to break that spell.

Finally, the buried treasure. Divine timing demonstrates that when the student is ready, a teacher appears. I had a Sacred Contract to untangle my dysfunctional relationship with money and career. Armed with Ecton's insights, my wounded history no longer had the power to trip me up.

Prior to that moment, I hadn't been ready to walk through the emotional minefield that money and success represented. And then, miraculously, and without any effort at all, the distractions my wise advisor revealed dissipated like lifting fog. Anger I held onto about issues I could do nothing about vanished. In the inimitable words of the comic strip character Pogo, I had met the enemy and it was me.