

Thoughts on Recovery – A Worker's Perspective

The sense of human shared experience is a truly powerful one: the knowing of our connection not only in words or language but within our hearts; of love and loss; sorrow and joy that awakens and moves our senses. This allows the acknowledgement of our true worth and value. That is our bond and connection to each other; here is the opportunity for reflection in both our own and another's experience. Within these relationships and in the quality of relating we find hope, recovery and well-being.

That is not saying that we can know from another's experience, but rather from our own sense of having felt a shared experience, so we can say we have felt sorrow, joy, pain, love, fury and more. Firstly we must acknowledge the truth and existence of such emotions and then we find the way resting with most ease in these, so we can move to a place where we are open to the sense of shared experiences, needs, hopes, values, dreams, loves and all else in which we share. All experiences are not the same and should not as such be compared in strength, intensity or degree but in a mutual awareness that there can be a connection, acknowledgement of common ground in our sense of the world, goals, needs, strengths.

I expected those who sat with me to face their fears and hold the space with the 'tigers' in their lives. I was not so brave. The courage that I have been truly fortunate to witness, feel, share and accompany has given me hope, inspiration and the desire to continue with my own journey of recovery.

For myself, what truly made the most fundamental difference was meeting another on their journey who allowed me to share at my own pace and in a way that allowed me to feel held, safe, cared for, loved and honestly respected. I was enabled to recover and continue on my way with an open acceptance, sense of equality and shared experience; all of which had previously been absent or limited.

We seem to share love with a sense of ease and openness but we are less forthcoming when sharing sadness or loss. For myself, working on my own recovery and with that of others, I am aware that trusting the sharing of feelings of vulnerability is a slow process. I had a realisation of the need to be honest in my relating, or perhaps initially I recognised a dishonesty in me that was hampering recovery.

In committing myself originally to working with the principles and qualities required of recovery, I had to engage in an open dialogue with and acknowledgement of myself. I used to avoid places that scared me and ran even from the hint of an approaching 'tiger' – in recovery I have learnt to confront its presence in the certainty that I am not alone, for in my connection with others who have also been stalked by the beast I find strength and hope.

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