

LEARNING TO LET IT FLOW

Recently, I learned an important lesson about letting go and allowing things to flow. I thought I'd offer it here. A close family member died recently, and I was the primary person in charge of making the funeral arrangements. As the mother of young children who were experiencing their first close encounter with death, I felt pressure to make sure that they understood that death was a part of life and not scary, that it was indeed sad that their grandfather would no longer be a part of their lives, and that I needed them to behave at the wake and funeral! I also felt the need to keep the depth of my own mourning in check around them. No pressure!

And here's where we tie in to this month's water theme. Picture, if you will, the water level rising, rising, rising, against an earthen dam. And the pressure on the walls of the dam getting stronger and stronger. That's pretty much how I was feeling. And I think that's how many of us feel at times in our lives, that the pressure keeps growing, and somehow we must withstand it and be strong.

But suddenly I had an "AHA!" moment! It became clear to me that I had a lot of supportive people in my life, but that I could not feel their love and support if I kept the walls of the dam so strong. I had to find a way to let their love and support in, in order to feel it. How to do that?

In part, sometimes that pressure is about the role we see ourselves in: the perfect daughter, mother, wife, worker, etc. We know what the expectations are for that role, and we try to fulfill them. Once we give up the role and its expectations, we can just be ourselves. Being authentic allows you to do what you need to do, while still being able to acknowledge that you might need something too. It puts you on the two-way street of mutuality. Back to our water analogy, it allows water to flow to where it's needed, instead of it flowing in one direction and backing up against the damn.

For me, I was able to realize that I needed to feel everyone's support and love more than I needed to have perfectly behaved children. I delegated some tasks, and I unloaded on a loving husband. It helped me weather a very tough week. And every time I received a card in the mail, it felt like another big hug.

So when you feel under pressure and the dam's about to burst, consider whether you are trying to live up to role expectations. Is it really necessary? Who put you in this role? Is there another way to do it? What do you need now? What does it take to get it? I invite you to jump into the stream, and see if you can find that place of flow, letting in what you need and as well as giving out what you have to share.