

Thrive –Don’t Just Survive

We all make choices every moment of the day. Most often we live a life of many small habits that are woven together to create our daily experience that is part of the tapestry of our life. When we get up in the morning, we choose how we feel for that moment; are we rested and refreshed? Have we incorporated habits that are healthy and life affirming? Are we looking forward to what is ahead or is there an underlying dread of what is coming? Have we completed our homework on a project that is due?

When we make a choice that we are going to have a good day, it is more likely that we will have a good day than if we get up and assume that things will go wrong. Recognizing that we have the power to choose how we feel also means that we cannot continue to blame our circumstances on others if things go wrong. In the first line of M. Scott Peck’s classic book “The Road Less Traveled” he states “Life is difficult.” I might also add that at times it seems “life is not fair.” Accepting these two statements can be challenging. However, when we accept them we can learn to be flexible and bend when needed. A coconut palm tree bends with the wind to survive the high winds of a hurricane or typhoon but when the storm has passed it again stands tall. When a storm passes through our lives we may need to reach out to others for support during a difficult time. This is where counseling can be beneficial. If we are unhappy with ourselves, our relationships with our partners, children, parents, friends, or work colleagues, it may be time to explore what is causing our distress. Often we fight the same battles, have the same arguments and expect different results without changing our worldview.

It takes courage to step into the counseling arena and to stay with the process. While friendships are very important, friends most often tell you what you want to hear, or side with you in an argument. With guidance and acceptance from a trained professional counselor or therapist, you will gain insights from a different perspective. Counseling is an educational process and one of many ways to find inner peace, self acceptance and to become our authentic selves. The concept of resilience indicates there are many roads to the same destination. Outside of counseling there are many other avenues people have used to find serenity. For some practicing yoga; meditation; getting consistent exercise; attending support groups meetings (like AA or Al-anon); or reading self help books can bring them to a clearer state of inner knowing.

Learning to accept what is before us greatly reduces our own anxiety and that alone can impact all of our relationships. We owe it to ourselves and to our loved ones to be the best we can be. That means we are in charge of our own happiness and therefore affect the happiness of those around us. Learning to love ourselves, letting go of judgments and assumptions; and doing our best can shift our relationships into new and happier dimensions. Life is not meant to be an ordeal to get through, rather it is an opportunity to grow and learn about ourselves and others. We are part of a global family- it is important to learn how to engage and thrive despite the challenges that life throws our way. So make a decision each morning to make life affirming choices to thrive for today!