



Susan Trout's Blog

Living Life Completely and Well

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That Was Then ~ This Is NOW

*Take the hand of tomorrow
for the yesterday is no more.*

*~ Susan S. Trout, **The Clarion Call** ~*



In my early 30's, I experienced a crisis in my life that stemmed from accumulated regrets and neglect of my physical, emotional, and spiritual wellbeing. In desperation, I decided to share my regrets with a spiritual teacher whose teachings I had grown to trust. I wrote her a letter that described my many regrets and asked for forgiveness. She answered my letter with two sentences: **"There is nothing to forgive. Use what you have learned from your life to help others."**

The power of her words dramatically refocused my life. I understood that my teacher's words meant **"that was then ~ this is now."** "That was then" represented choices I had made in reaction to childhood trauma. These choices were not always helpful for me or for others. I acknowledged my emotional pain and subsequently embarked on many years of personal healing combined with an ongoing search for the true meaning of service.

I sensed that my spiritual teacher's words, "this is now," reflected my deep desire to have a heart-centered life and a personal destiny of *true service*. I recognized that life, with its achievements and challenges, with its joys and sorrows, gifts us with many opportunities to learn, grow, and serve. **We serve when we willingly share, in some way, the wisdom we have gleaned from our life experiences.** The spirit of our life is thereby made visible in the spirit of our giving and receiving.

What is urgently needed in the “this is NOW” of our world?

Many of us are asking ourselves this question. It is essential that we focus our energies in a meaningful, sacred way if we are to help people grow and evolve psychologically and spiritually during this present dangerous and frightening time in our world. **There is no time to waste.**

Andrew Harvey, Founder and Director of the Institute for Sacred Activism, writes:

the large-scale practice of Sacred Activism can become an essential force for preserving and healing the planet and its inhabitants.... we need to invite concerned people to take up the challenge of our contemporary global crises by becoming inspired, effective, and practical agents of institutional and systemic change. Sacred Activism ... is born of a fusion of deep spiritual knowledge, courage, love, and passion, with wise, radical action in the world.

Three premises support our decision to live and serve in the spirit of the sacred NOW:

- **Service pervades all of life.** The spirit of service exists in all activities of life, whether we cook meals, teach school, paint pictures, tend gardens, sweep streets, build buildings, head an organization, or visit someone who is ill. It is present in our varied communications with family, colleagues, friends, and strangers. As we evolve spiritually, service is less about doing and more about being. More and more, we focus on the quality of our heart and mind while living and working in the outer world.
- **The quality of our motivations determines the quality of our service.** We are all servers and we are all being served. Our purest service occurs when we offer others more energy to heal and make helpful choices. To attain this, we
 - (1) give the right amount of the right thing for the right reason and at the right time,
 - (2) *show another way* to others through the example of our lives and our interactions,
 - (3) broaden our service to include the wellbeing of Earth and its inhabitants, and
 - (4) extend Light into the world through prayer and meditation.
- **We serve when we willingly share, in some way, the wisdom we have gleaned from our life experiences.** A three-stage Life Experience Inventory can help us identify our unique gifts of service *in the NOW*. The following inventory focuses on using what we have learned from our lives to genuinely help others and to willingly participate in Sacred Activism.

The chart below illustrates the Life Experiences Inventory using four examples from my life. **This blog essay's Reflection invites you to complete the Life Experiences Inventory using examples from your own life.**

LIFE EXPERIENCES INVENTORY		
That Was Then...	This Is NOW	
I Life Experience	II Current Status of Healing and Learning	III How Life Experience Is Shared with Others
<i>I know what it feels like to:</i>	<i>How I feel about it now:</i>	<i>How I serve others as a result of this:</i>
Be in a family where boys are thought to be superior to girls. I felt angry, diminished, and rejected.	I decided to achieve because I want to, not out of spite.	I understand the resentment one feels as a result of being discriminated against.
Have teachers that believe in me.	I feel grateful for these models.	I easily believe in my own students.
Have family secrets.	I see that it keeps family members from being authentic with one another.	I support others speaking secrets without shame or guilt.
Grow up in a farming community with fresh and uncontaminated air and food.	I feel Earth and its inhabitants have been seriously harmed by choices made for materialistic gain without consideration of the greater good.	I support Sacred Activism as a force of compassion-in-action and as a means of creating peace and sustainability.

(See below for a blank version of this chart to fill in with your own life experiences.)

Summary

As we heal personally, we have more energy and can become a clearer instrument of healing for others and for the planet – NOW. When we are willing to share the lessons we have learned, we serve in our unique way – NOW. We hold a space for others to be healed of conditions which we have healed or are healing within ourselves – NOW. When we serve in this way, our unique manner of service broadens throughout our lifetime to include Earth and its inhabitants – NOW. We choose to serve by participating in some form of Sacred Activism – NOW.

References:

Susan Trout. *Born to Serve: The Evolution of the Soul Through Service*. Alexandria, VA: Three Roses Press, 1997. www.ias-online.org.

Andrew Harvey and Carolyn Baker. *Savage Grace: Living Resiliently in the Dark Night of the Globe*. Bloomington, IN: iUniverse, 2017. www.andrewharvey.net.



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