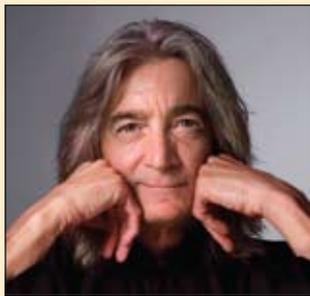




A BRIDGE OVER TROUBLED WATERS



By Terry Gordon

ground parking garages became submerged in the murky, debris-filled water; store-front windows imploded from the pressure of the waves crashing into them. Chaos abounded.

Nineteen people lost their lives in those few minutes, including a young family of four whose car had been swept away like a flimsy particle of dust into the roaring, wild wall of water.

I was perched on the peak of a stone bridge that arched over the creek, a passive witness to this awesome expression of Mother Nature's unleashed power. I watched as large trees were easily uprooted, tossed downstream like matchsticks. I was intrigued at how we tend to underestimate the power of such natural forces.

The raging river engulfed everything in its wake. Nineteen people lost their lives in those few minutes, including a young family of four whose car had been swept away like a flimsy particle of dust into the roaring, wild wall of water.

Many times since, I have found myself reflecting on that frightening and deadly rampage. I have often contemplated the important metaphor it offered.

A bridge over troubled waters: This is what is offered to us.

We consider ourselves fortunate as we lollygag along savoring life, accruing pleasurable experiences here and there. There is no question that smooth sailing can be a marvelous experience. Its enjoyment should be appreciated

to the fullest.

But at some point, the calm waters of life will become tumultuous and unsettled, occasionally raging out of control. Setbacks and obstacles will be encountered. Deep and wide crevasses might appear before us on our previously smooth path. They will threaten safe passage to the other side of the canyon where we think the sun must surely be shining.

As we apprehensively peer over the edge of the precipice, perilously looking down at the rapids slicing into the floodwaters, we might find ourselves fearful, hoping against all odds that we don't lose our footing. We pray that we won't fall into the abyss of the turbulence below.

As the pressure surges, the waves begin lapping up against us and steadily rise higher and higher, grabbing at us, threatening to engulf us. If we can't escape their clutches, the waves will surely carry us away in the fierce fury, dragging us into the deep darkness of the frigid undercurrent.

It would be nice if we could avoid such turmoil – and the suffering and fear generated by it. But sorrow, sadness, disease and loss are all part of life as we know it in the material world. None of us is immune. The challenge is to find the way to navigate through these

seemingly difficult experiences. The question becomes how to bridge the divide over such troubled waters.

How does one learn from these apparent negative experiences? And are they really negative experiences?

When faced with adversity, it is how we respond to the difficulty that determines who we are. Our life experiences will become calamitous only if we make the conscious decision to make tragedies out of them. We might just as easily choose to view them as opportunities for personal growth.

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The search for discovering the way across the deep canyons of our journey with all of its inherent difficulties and dangers can become the driving force of change. The more daunting the challenge and the greater the apparent obstacle, the more potential there is for enlightenment.

Rather than lamenting the troubled waters we encounter, we can choose to be grateful for them, as these obstacles in life can be the source of strength that empowers us to rise above the very adversity that appears

to obstruct our way. We can embrace these tumultuous times and challenges, accepting them as gifts from the Divine. By being grateful for the raging river that blocks our way, we can use the experience to bridge the gap from turmoil, disappointment and suffering to a place of understanding, wisdom and insight.

"To see through the eyes of the mountain eagle ... is to look down on a landscape in which the boundaries that we imagined existed between life and death, shade into each other and dissolve." —Sogyal Rinpoche

Dr. Terry Gordon, a retired cardiologist is known as The Wounded Healer. His book "No Storm Lasts Forever," published by Hay House, will be available in July. To pre-order or to receive his daily affirmations, visit online at www.drterrygordon.com. Photo of Terry by James Vaughan - www.jamesvaughanphoto.com.

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