

I walked into Reverend Marla's office. She sat on one chair and directed me to sit next to her. If my older self somehow were to come back in time and tell me that I'd choose to schedule a spiritual coaching session with a Reverend who preached a sect of Christianity, I would not have believed my older self. A Jewish girl seeking spiritual coaching in a church? I was not very religious, but the idea would have seemed absurd to me. Plus, my parents would be, at least confused, and, at most appalled. Jewish people don't even acknowledge Christ!

If I remember correctly, there was a small table in between Reverend Marla and I. She spoke, "Let's pray." I nodded. I was not really sure what to expect. I don't remember the exact words. Knowing what I know now, it must have been something along these lines: "The Life that breaths us, thank you for the awareness of our shared Goodness. We are the Divine sparks in expression of Your Love Grace, Perfection and Peace. We gather during this sacred time, allowing all to unfold naturally. Giving thanks for our awareness of Oneness, we release these words into the Universal Law. All is well, and so it is." I had never prayed before. I definitely didn't pray like this. I felt a peace come over me. I felt safe and protected.

What brought me to this moment, you ask? That's a complicated question. The short answer is that I was attending a Unity of Bellevue's personal enrichment class. It was called "Financial Freedom: Duplicating the Nature of Spirit." I didn't know what "duplicating the nature of Spirit" meant. All I knew was that the authors of the curriculum had suggested spiritual coaching. I didn't know what spiritual coach was, either. Nevertheless, I asked if Reverend Marla was a spiritual coach. She said, "yes." I made an appointment with her. I didn't know it then, but this coaching session would shift my perspective in a significant way. Unknowingly, I was at a crossroads, and this moment would help me choose a more life affirming path.

After the prayer, Reverend Marla asked, "How can I help you?" I went into this drawn-out story of feeling like a failure because my career was going nowhere. I explained that my Master of Arts in Psychology turned out to be useless. I could never find a job in a community counseling center, because they expected me to drive to client's homes and take them to appointments. I continued my rampage - I had gotten laid off from my first job after university, in part, because I could not drive. I went on and on about how I could not get my ideal, purposeful job because I could not drive due to a medical condition.

Reverend Marla reflected back to me. Then, she said something I didn't expect. She said something to the effect of, "Sounds like you are making a lot of excuses. I know a lot of people that don't drive and still do community work." I felt defensive. That did not seem very empathic. She then got out a blank piece of paper and drew a circle. On the upper left side of the circle, she wrote "I can't get a job because I can't drive." On the right side of what could be considered the equator of the circle, she wrote "YES." Lastly, she drew an arrow from the bottom of the circle following the circle all the way back to the statement, "I can't get a job because I can't drive."

Reverend Marla continued to talk. "What you believe and say to yourself becomes your reality. She explained I could choose to change that reality with a new, life affirming thought. She drew the same circle again with a more life-affirming version. Though I could see the logic, I still wanted to argue with her. I had spent 10 years either out of work, volunteering, or getting temporary, unsatisfactory staffing positions. Didn't that count for something? She reiterated that my resistance stemmed from my initial thought, "I can't get the job I want, because I can't drive." Finally, she wrote down these words on

the back of the piece of paper: "I find a job that is convenient and compensates me well." She suggested that I read it daily. Then, she closed our session with another prayer.

During my session with Rev. Marla, she was basically describing The Creative Process." It is a significant piece of New Thought spirituality. Spirit, or God, is the Ideal capital "E" Energy of all things. As humans we carry the same Substance as this Energy. These include, but are not limited to, qualities like Love, Joy, Peace, Gratitude and so forth. We have the power to plant the seed of inspiration and imagination. Once the seed is planted and cultivated, nature takes its course. The idea finally comes to fruition. We experience the result in our physical human experience. Ultimately, we grow in consciousness.

Put another way, everything depends on how we choose to see unfoldment of creativity in our lives. We choose whether to plant the seed at all. We choose whether to give it enough room to grow, or not. We choose to either control how it grows, or let the natural process of growth unfold on its own. This is a spiritual principle, as well as a principle seen in the world of physical matter.

After my session, I resisted the idea that I was responsible for not getting or keeping a job in social services. I did not want to own up to the possibility that I was keeping myself from my own happiness and sense of purpose. I found over time, however, that the more I focused on my desired outcome, the closer it came to it becoming my reality.

I found a job that was "convenient and compensated me well." It was part-time, nearby to home, and it paid well. More importantly, I was working for an agency staffed by people with disabilities, who assisted and served other people with disabilities. Most astonishing to me was that the word "outreach" had no power over me. I knew I'd have to provide services in the community. Instead of becoming anxious about how I would get my transportation to community settings and back to the office, I knew I would find a way. Observing this change in my perspective was astounding. I feel so grateful and eternally blessed that Rev Marla and I crossed paths in the journey we call life.

Four years have gone by since that coaching session in 2018. Reverend Marla has moved on. The church is in transition. Once again, I find myself concerned about community outreach. I have been experiencing self-doubt a great deal, recently. I feel like I'm back where I started. On the other hand, I've grown in self-awareness. I know that I am at a high level of an upward spiral from fear to faith. I know, I can choose a path of self-doubt and self-loathing, or a path that affirms my strengths, perseverance, and faith in something grander than myself. I can choose to see endings as new opportunities for growth. The one truth I know is that I am not the self I was four years ago. I am four years older and wiser. I know how to use the creative process for good.