

## **Personal Growth Through Reading the Signs Around Us**

By Rev. Donna Miller Watelet

*In every moment the universe is whispering to you. Even ordinary events in your life carry communications...*

*The Secret Language of Signs* by Denise Linn

We all have a certain understanding of the fact that we receive information in a number of different ways beyond the verbal and audible ones. In his book, *Communicating and Adapting Across Cultures: Living and Working in the Global Village*, Riall W. Nolan says that *In fact, research shows that the majority of the meaning or impact of a message comes through nonverbally, with only about 40 percent or less conveyed by words or sounds.* But we are not only picking up these cues from the *people* around us, we are also picking up subtle information from *everything* around us. In a single second dozens of pieces of sensorial input reach us. The heart, mind, body and spirit are constantly processing those bits of information on both conscious and subconscious levels.

Furthermore, the human body, mind and soul repeatedly demonstrate the ability to self-heal. The wounded or challenged psyche also holds the ability to self-heal, reaching for solutions and clarity for our most pressing issues and situations. When symbolically significant signs appear, the psyche can recognize whether any of those signs relate to what needs to be addressed in mental pathways guiding behavior. That drive to seek health and wholeness connects with those signs and calls attention to them. In addition, when these connections are made they are often accompanied by strong emotional reactions and striking mental images or ideas. These have a significant impact on the choices made about that issue from that moment on.

That shift in perspective is not always made with full awareness. The subconscious self can take in and act upon stimulus it perceives within us without ever having the conscious thought that defines it for us. Sometimes those shifts are to the good, but they also at times feed and strengthen unhealthy patterns, should there be internal resistance to change or entering into unknown territory of exploring a new way of being can be especially strong. Our deeply buried fears and shames can effectively block our reception of valuable pieces of the puzzles we are trying to put together internally, out of

a sense of reluctance to move into the challenges and difficult work of moving out of those habits.

How can these obstacles be overcome if they lie beneath the surface of the awareness of experience? By making it a practice to examine more closely exactly what goes on in and around us. For instance, are there any out of the ordinary or strong reactions or sensations associated with a given situation? In other words, is there evidence that the subconscious self is reacting to a sign it has come across, and that that sign is triggering a response in us which implies a fear or block is being connected with below the conscious level? If so, by paying attention to exactly how that happens and what the details of the responses are, light can be shed on those reactions. By recognizing their common threads we can begin to unravel their secrets.

Once the practice of recognizing a reaction from within to an outside stimulus, the work of changing our frame of reference for that experience can begin. One very effective way to begin this reframing process is by asking a question about the reason for the reaction. A good question to pose is, “Is that really true? Am I really [too tired, that smart, unhealthy, deeply gifted]?” Is the internal assumption associated with this situation true today, or is it no longer a valid response? When the answer is no, the process of healthy change has begun. Personal awareness is being fostered.

There is a maxim that outlines an easy to remember process of three steps to use when working to check the validity of a pattern and when it is false, to reset it into a healthier direction. Those three steps are called the three A’s; Awareness, Acceptance and Action.

Here’s how *The Three A’s* work;

*Awareness*, is becoming consciously aware of a questionable pattern in our behavior and checking whether it is still valid. This is personal awareness as described above.

*Acceptance*, is opening the heart and mind to accept the truth of the patterns, habits and personal myths that no longer serve us.

*Action*, is making changes that begin the work of shifting the away from what is invalid by working toward or even practicing the desired outcome.

The second and third parts of the three A’s, Acceptance and Action, cannot happen until the first A, Awareness, is satisfied of course. Awareness is the

most important of the three A's. When it becomes a habit to interpret certain signs and symbols in certain ways, and the subconscious mind has information it is trying to bring to the surface, certain things will catch the attention more than others. When that happens, time must be taken to consciously interpret those reactions and figure out what it is that this reaction relates to. From this information, a new way of being can be established thanks to the connection made between our conscious and subconscious lives. Every sign, both in and around us, is an opportunity for self-understanding and growth when attention is shifted it is connected to experiences, and what the nature of those subtle reactions to them really are.

When developed, this conscious awareness of the reception of more subtle of sensorial information is obviously a great gift bringing health and clarity on all levels; emotionally, mentally, spiritually and physically. Improving the art of subtle awarenesses, the ability to pick up on more and more of the information and insights all around us, will lead the way out of negative patterns of behavior, problems and unsolved mysteries that burden the psyche. Whether the stimulus is in nature, the dream life, the creations of people, or from specific interactions with another person, experiences that can bring clarity are all around us. It is within the reach of the human spirit to open wide the senses in order to learn from and enjoy the limitless gifts that are hidden in each and every moment of our lives.