

3 Lasting Spiritual Benefits of Taking Time to 'Deal With Your Stuff'

Doing something hard becomes a lot easier when you know the awesome result that's coming. Looking under the surface and dealing with your stuff is hard! But the life you have after dealing with your stuff is truly amazing!

Imagine what it would feel like to no longer lash out and harm others with your self-protective anger, to not lie awake ashamed over your latest excursion into porn or to respond to your spouse with an open heart instead of bitterness. What freedom. What joy!

The wounds that happen to us and the wounds we do to ourselves can be healed. The sting can be gone! And the results are beautiful.

The hurt, dysfunction and mental health diagnoses I experienced as a young woman are in my past. What I describe as my "four years of hell" are so far gone that I never think about them unless I choose to remember. I'm not holding on with clenched fists trying not to fall apart; I function daily with courage and joy.

What your journey will look like only God knows. But I *do* know you'll never get beyond the mess without dealing with your stuff.

So what does living Fully Alive truly look like? What kind of life is there after you and Jesus together have dealt with your stuff?

Healed, Not Perfect

My dermatologist removed two suspicious spots on my face

recently. Everything is fine, and now you'd have to look hard to see any scars. But my skin is still aging and has irregularities and wrinkles.

It's the same with the wounds in my soul. They are healed! Today I do not respond out of pain or hurt, and my heart can truly be open. But my soul needs regular care, nourishment and cleansing from the stuff it's exposed to daily in our world.

Healing means your wounds will not define you today or in the future. The traumas happened to you in the past; they are not happening to you now. There is nothing chaining you to what happened to you or what you did. You are not practicing any addictions. Your heart and mind are clear and able to engage with God and others.

Are there other things you still need to learn? Of course. We will need to continue to grow as long as we are on this earth.

For some people, the journey to experience that kind of healing takes a long time. Don't give up! If you're not there now, make sure you're dealing with your stuff. Keep going until the wounds become healed scars.

Substance to Bless Others

When I tell people that my husband died nearly four years ago, they always say something like, "Oh, I'm sorry." And the journey of grief is hard. Very hard! (If you're walking that journey now, this comforting email series will help you.)

But when someone says that to me, I'm quick to respond, "I'm not thankful my husband died. But I am profoundly thankful for what the journey of grief has done in my own soul, for who I have become as a result."

And what I'm grateful for is not only the fact that I can empathize and support others who are experiencing the death of a loved one. There's also a deeper substance in me that is

available in all the things I do.

Whatever your stuff has been, when you unpack, wrestle with and do the hard work necessary to get to the other side, you too will develop a substance within that becomes priceless for both you and others. God can use you in deeper ways. Your perspective on life, yourself, others and the future becomes healthier. And it feels good.

Free to Soar

When the weights of the past have been dealt with, the freedom allows you to soar in ways you have never imagined. Stuff that's undealt with is like tethers holding a balloon to the ground. When those tethers are released, the balloon can catch the air currents and fly high and far.

After listing so many faith heroes in Hebrews 11, the writer says, "Therefore, since we are encompassed with such a great cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and the sin that so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us." (Heb. 12:1).

God created you to soar. Sure, living in our sinful world we will continue to experience troubles. Big troubles. But you can still soar. When you deal with your stuff, not even the very real troubles you experience can keep you stuck.

Lightness in your soul is truly amazing. And the way you "lay aside every weight" is by dealing with your stuff. We too often think of laying aside sin as trying harder to be good. That doesn't work! Yes, we must have God's forgiveness, repent and determine to live according to God's ways. But once you make that decision, the only way you can follow through is by dealing with your stuff.

And once you do, your soul can soar. You are now able to function in the purpose for which God created you without tethers holding you down.

Is It Worth It?

Without question, the answer is yes, it is!

When you're in the middle of a mess it can seem too hard to push forward in dealing with your stuff. It seems doing so will cost too much.

But from one who has "been there, done that," and from many others, I can tell you it's worth it.

Don't quit! The view from the sky as your balloon soars will make you glad you didn't quit.

Your Turn: *Has it seemed too difficult to continue dealing with your stuff? Have you taken time to imagine what kind of future could be available if you keep going? Leave a comment below. {eoa}*

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