

The Spiritual Meaning of Crisis

Dear Connie,

I seem to be lurching from one crisis to another. I rear-ended someone last month, and the cost to repair my car was much more than our insurance will cover. I'm dealing with an injury to my neck, which is painful and is taking time and money to heal. The company I work for is going through major changes and I'm in danger of losing the position I've had for nine years.

On top of that, our four-year-old Husky got out of our fenced yard last week and we haven't seen her since. I feel exhausted and overwhelmed.

Can you help?

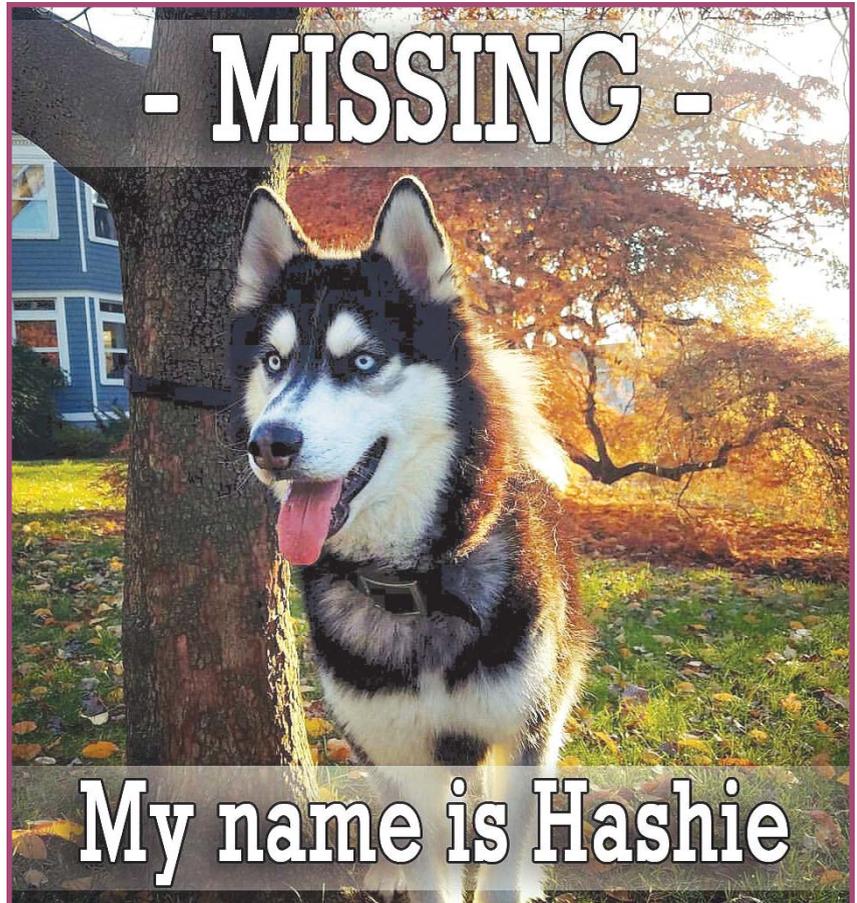
Sincerely,
—Sheila

Dear Sheila,

I'm sorry you've had so many crises in such a short period of time! Your feelings of exhaustion and overwhelm seem quite normal given what you're going through.

I will try to give you a spiritual perspective on these crises, which may make them easier to deal with. The Chinese symbol for crisis means both danger and opportunity. The Pathwork (www.Pathwork.org) defines crisis as "an attempt of nature to effect change through the cosmic lawfulness of the universe" (PW Lecture #221). What that means is that crisis calls for change. The crisis occurs because the person undergoing the crisis has been resisting the necessary change. When there is a crisis, we are asked to look carefully at what has happened and to make an adjustment of some kind. Every crisis requires an adjustment. The spiritual purpose of the crisis is to shake things up, to rebalance, to encourage new growth.

When we encounter a crisis, we have a choice as to whether we will recognize the purpose and mean-



ing of the crisis or choose to ignore or escape from it. If we choose the latter, it is only a question of time before there will be a bigger crisis. In other words, sooner or later we will be "hit upside the head" in a way that brings the message home in an inescapable way.

The Pathwork says, "Crisis can be avoided by looking at the inner truth when the first inklings of disturbance and negativity manifest on the surface." When we look at our lives with scrupulous self-honesty, we can often see where we have been stuck in some false belief or have been willfully disregarding signs of potential trouble. If we question our own assumptions and attitudes when unwelcome events come our way, and fully open to truth and change, our lives will alter for the better.

Here are a couple of questions that you can ask

yourself in regard to the specific crises that you have experienced recently:

- Is there any attitude or behavior related to your driving or your dog's escape that may have contributed to those crises? If so, are you willing to change that attitude or behavior?
- Are you willing to chance temporary upheaval for the sake of reaching a more desirable outcome at work? This might involve riding through the changes there, or it might mean looking for another job.
- Are there any general areas of negativity, discontent or unhappiness that could, with serious inner contemplation, be addressed before they erupt in a crisis?

I encourage you to think about and then write the answers to these questions. Best of luck getting through this difficult time, and I do hope you find your dog! ■

Blessings,
—Connie



Connie Myslik-McFadden, MSS, LCSW is a psychotherapist with 30 years of experience working with individuals, couples and groups. She leads workshops and retreats, and teaches Dreamwork and Pathwork. Connie devoted

nine years to Jungian analysis, training, and supervision, after graduating from the Bryn Mawr School of Social Work. She went on to graduate from the Barbara Brennan School of Healing, and Society of Souls, a kabbalistic school of healing. She is the author of "Gathering the Soul, a True Story of Spiritual Healing" and "Willow's Gift."

Do you have a psychology question? Connie is now offering sessions in person and by phone from Bozeman and leads regular groups and workshops. Call Connie at (406) 582-7450 or e-mail: mtlionlady@gmail.com.

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