



Walking On Thorns: Discovering The Meaning Of Suffering

Jeanne G Miller

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Life is hard but it is also beautiful. Often those two ideas are intimately connected. Our inevitable stresses and struggles give cause for fear, misery and despondency but they also give us the opportunity for resilience, hope and triumph. The greater the struggle, the greater is the potential for recovery and redemption.

We all have our struggles. Some of us may have more than our fair share, and some challenges may seem more dramatic than others. However, when we're going through our trials and tribulations there's no need to compare ourselves to others. Life is not a competition. We each lead the life we have fashioned for ourselves, the one that is that inevitable and inextricable mix of the things we were given and the things we have made. Our challenges are unique and so are responses.

If life challenges are unique, there is a one common element to the successful management of the things we wish weren't in our lives. That common element is courage. It takes different forms of courage to accept and handle the stresses, traumas and mistakes of our lives. Jeanne Miller's book is about the courage that is necessary if you're going to maintain integrity and find wholeness in a life that seems full of holes.

Courage is initially needed to face the truth and seek reality, rather than comfort. The human brain is capable of rational analysis but prefers an egotistical sense of righteousness, where we can rationalize away our biases and avoid the really hard and difficult work of seriously looking in the mirror. Our default setting is that it is everyone else's fault, an emotionally comfortable position that gets you trapped in a veritable vise of

victimhood. Jeanne describes her own courageous journey down the path of brutal honesty, beautifully illustrating the difficult confrontation with the truth. Her insight as a sufferer but also as a psychotherapist and spiritual director gives us tremendous guidance for this treacherous but necessary journey of self-discovery.

If it takes courage to seek and find our personal truth it also takes bravery to share it. It is so much easier to hide the guilt than proclaim it. Sharing, however, is part of acceptance, and acceptance is necessary for vindication. Moreover, sharing our struggles and our own search for meaning is a huge act of generosity. We are social animals who learn from each other, especially from those who have the courage to be honest. Jeanne's journey is relevant to each and every one of us, and every one of us can benefit from her lessons -- if we have the courage.

Jeanne's remarkable story about psychological disability, physical deformity and social difficulty, will echo in every reader. Hopefully, her lessons about honesty, faith, and courage will both resonate with, and inspire, her audience. In a world where trite self-help aphorisms offer little more than temporary entertainment, Jeanne's book is the real deal, a frank insight into the hard and sometimes very painful journey to finding the true meaning of one's life, purpose and identity.

Jeanne includes a workbook section full of questions leading the reader to think about his/her own internal journey.

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