



A Complimentary Newsletter from the Desk of: Michael J. Alicea, M.S., M.S.W.

On the Issue of Fairness

Why is Life Often Not Fair to Us?

By Michael J. Alicea, M.S., M.S.W.

The Question of Whether Life is Fair or Not?

The question of whether life is fair or not seems at times for us to be one of the most difficult if not most painful concepts to accept. Perhaps the reasons for this lies in how we were oriented, and taught to believe that life would be fair; and if you strived hard enough, life would repay you in accordance with what we each put in. Perhaps the ideals of such a concept was embedded in us early on, where values such as equality and fairness were often stressed, and led us, like so many others to believe that this is the way the world works. Whatever the reasons, the fact remains that we want the world to be fair. We want to be able to depend on something concrete and we want some guarantees for our safety, security, and most of all, we want a guarantee that the one's we love will always love us, and that they will be there for us as well. The fact that these guarantees do not exist does not stop us from wanting them. Many of our own self-made mechanism for survival, our illusions, and denials, have to do with not accepting the fact that life is at times just simply unfair.

Life is Not Fair

Life is not fair because fairness is a self-proclaimed value judgment. This means that what is fair is oftentimes subjective; it changes according to who is judging what and when and the why of us. What is fair to me today may no longer be fair tomorrow. The importance of accepting this concept that life is not fair is not in securing an explanation of the why, but in the acceptance that life is what we make of it. The question remains, why not? Why shouldn't life and the people we meet and exert a positive influence upon, and the one's that we look up to, respect and love not be fair to us, and that they will always be there for us as well?

Where does the Answer Lie?

The bigger issue of life's unfairness, the life-and-death questions will never be explained to us or to anyone's satisfaction, nor ever be explained in a manner that will always make sense to us. There is no answer to the why question when someone you love is dying, or for that matter, when someone we love does not return love in a manner that is fair to us. We may be fortunate enough to know the how, but we will never know with some reasonable comfort the why and pondering the why can conceivably led us to become sad and remove us from accepting and grieving befittingly for the one's we have lost in our life. I'm told that grief eventually ends; it is a natural process. Wondering why may never end; it is counterproductive to attaining the state of existence that we were blueprinted out to be; that of being the loving person(s) we were intended to be. At some point, we must let go of the why, accept the reality of circumstances presented to us, and get on with living. The secret lies in accepting the fact that the only real control that we have is in how we react to the circumstances and people in our life who influence us. Attempting to make the world fair can be injurious to our self esteem, and can eventually lead to self-defeat. Many of us (including myself) have tried to fix the unfairness that exists around us. We become

co-dependents, living martyrs, and seldom will reach a state of ever being appreciated or loved by others as we would like to be. We can become filled with anger and resentments. We can create for ourselves a sense of unhappiness, and pain, preventing the possibility for growth as the person we were meant to be, that would surely be unfair!

Acceptance is the Key

The paradox here is that the eventual acceptance that life can at times be unfair often will lead us to understanding things in a more objective manner, one that is more loving and caring. Accepting and coming to terms with this simple premise can allow us to grow and accept the world and the people we love without unfair expectations, and is conceivably much more fair than trying to force the world and everyone in it to be fair with us.

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