

Nothing is ever lost

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ON IT

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Among one of the most comforting truths that I hug to myself is that we never actually lose anything of ourselves. As we encounter life's bruising and even callous side, we often feel as if parts of us have been knocked off or destroyed. It's not uncommon for us to bewail our loss of innocence, for instance, after we have been betrayed or deceived. After the failure of a love affair, few of us feel whole. Mangled and butchered, we quite often believe that we have lost our ability to love or trust.

I was a fairly good student at school, and for the first two years of my college life. But I fell into a depression thereafter which badly interfered with my concentration powers. I could no longer learn with the same assiduity and concluded that my learning days were done. Some part of my brain had died, I thought.

Very often our love for a spouse, parents or friend becomes obscured under the weight of unexpressed pain. On the basis of this thought, relationships break up and bonds are sundered for a lifetime. However, once we work our way through the anger and hurt that cover our love, the love will surface again. This is a fact, not a theory as I have discovered in my life over and over again. The love we feel for the other is everlasting. All we need is to work on freeing ourselves of the negativity.

This is true of our health too. As we grow older, we believe that our health will fail. If we succumb to a chronic ailment, half our problem is the underlying conviction that it is here to stay. But the annals of medical science resound with accounts of people who have recovered from terminal illnesses like cancer and AIDS, let alone chronic ailments.

Most of us live out the belief that life wears us out and that we grow increasingly more attenuated in strength, energy, capacity for love and enthusiasm.

But this is not necessarily true. The fact is that there is very little in life which is not reversible. It is possible to get our innocence back, if by that you mean your innate trust and love of humanity and life.

It is possible to retrieve every one of the qualities you believed you had squandered through unwise living. All of them are lying in wait for us, none of them have disappeared; they are only obscured by negative emotions and conditioning.

Life has certain patterns that repeat themselves constantly. For instance, behind the grey clouds, the sky continues to be blue and the sun continues to shine. But if anyone were to come to Mumbai during the monsoon where for months on end the sky is overcast, it would take an act of faith to believe in the blueness of the sky. In the same way, behind our conditioning and negative feelings lurk all our positive ones. It is in the nature of life that the negative and the short-lived obscures the positive and the eternal. Therefore, all we need to do is to become excavators. Dig out the negative emotions and behold the positive ones surge out.

How often when in the midst of an emotional maelstrom I have felt my heart close to the person and believe it impossible to ever feel anything for them. But then the issue gets resolved and the negative feelings ebb away in a flood of love and gratitude.

Over time, through keeping this point in my mind I have worked at retrieving many of the things I had temporarily misplaced – even my concentration, for instance. It has taken time, but gradually all these lost qualities of the mind are showing up for work. I am now setting about the task of recalling my lost health. I know it's there somewhere lurking for me to come look for it, and I am jolly well going to.

In the same way, if we have sufficient grit and gumption, we can also reclaim our youth and beauty. Old age can be an illusion if you work hard enough to divest yourself of it. There are people who have succeeded in turning grey hair to black and so on. In fact ayurveda has a section called *kayakalpa* which specialises in restoring youth and health. So no matter how depleted and decimated you currently feel, every human quality that you have possessed is waiting for you to reclaim it. ☺