

CQ LLC – Embracing Emotions: God’s Gifts for Thriving My Emotions Journey In Brief – From Grim Wrestling to Embracing Gift

Since I was a child, my emotions and I had been locked in a grim wrestling match. For decades I tried, to little avail, to get the ones I felt most to leave me alone or at least calm down some...shame, anger, fear, anxiety, depression. Mostly they knocked me over and I learned to push them into a deep closet, lock the door, and then wall over the opening. Occasionally I would notice a knocking but generally I was numb.

Unresolved trauma as a child with not enough help to feel what happened and understand what happened and integrate into my person had left me with few other options than to become a master “stuffer” of emotions. The thing is that if you stuff emotions, you stuff them all. My happiness also got stuffed.

I prayed and others prayed for me. I studied the Bible with very good Bible teachers. I did this spiritual practice and that spiritual practice. A little better but abundant life with God, being God’s beloved was still mostly a “I wonder what that is like?” for me. I professed it with great sincerity and determination. But it wasn’t alive for me. I read so many books, reached out to a therapist. But still, abundant life with God, being God’s beloved was still mostly (not entirely) an unfulfilled yearning.

I joined the CenterQuest School of Spiritual Direction’s inaugural cohort and found a community that was gracious and welcomed all of me and all my emotions. It was transformative beyond what I could have imagined when I enrolled. The shame, anger, fear, anxiety, depression calmed down a bit but to my dismay, they were still there with plenty enough intensity to knock me over...to overwhelm me into a small isolated child. I thought, “Maybe this is as good as life with God gets, at least for me with my history, family, DNA, etc. Maybe this is as good as it gets and I need to just be content.”

Then I was led by God to a community of people who understood emotions and worked with them in a way I had never even heard of. They not only welcomed me and all my emotions, they showed me how to welcome them, learn their language and harness their power so I was not knocked over but moved by their intensity into an aliveness...to know abundance and I was God’s beloved and to love God in a way I had never known before. This being with and learning from this emotions community was transformative beyond what I could have imagined.

I initially joined this community because I was so desperate. There was something in me that loudly protested “this is as good as it gets and I need to just be content.” Now I am eager to pass on what I have learned and am still learning, to others who maybe sense an invitation from God to know abundant life, their belovedness and to love more deeply than they have ever known before.