

WAVING THE WHITE FLAG

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OF CLASSIC PHOTOGRAPHY
GODDESS OF WINTER PEACE,
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Consider how many times you've used terminology like battle traffic, gather the troops, fight a cold, divide and conquer. Now, consider how many times you have said what appears to be almost unthinkable among people proudly juggling the number of responsibilities typically assumed by Americans, "I surrender." Having waved the white flag of surrender at different times in our lives, what we've discovered was that disengaging from a senseless battle with circumstances out of our control was not defeat, but a necessary and welcomed maneuver toward peace.

Neither of us consciously waved the white flag; for each of us it happened in a single moment while at a time when, faced with overwhelming familial, social and work responsibilities, life's challenges steadily faced us like soldiers on the front line, bayonets ready. With egos fully engaged, we felt as though we could take on this army of oppressors one by one and conquer them, as we had done so swiftly in the past. But this time, we were up against Goliath-like circumstances, and, like David, needed some divine assistance. It came in the form of a miraculous spontaneous surrender, which we both experienced as a calm, warm wave washing over us, cleansing us of near paralyzing stress and fear, and replacing it with a profound sense of peace. It felt as though the wave had literally scooped us up from near suffocation and gently placed us on a warm, sandy beach, from which we could watch the events of our lives from a new perspective.

Our state of surrender lasted long enough to allow us to accept life's current set of circumstances. In fact, none of the events or issues we were drowning in at the time disappeared; they proceeded as necessary. Rather than fight them, though, we were able to observe and allow them to unfold as they were divinely intended, and therefore find acceptance and sometimes even joy in the experience of them.

WHY CHOOSE PEACE?

We reflect back on the moments before our surrender, likening it to a fly beating its head against the windowpane in a "never-give-up" attempt to make it outdoors. No matter how hard the fly tries, it is never going to get through that piece of glass. But, if the fly were to still himself, go within, listen and observe with an open mind, the perfect opportunity for freedom would present itself; eventually a door would open, and it could peacefully pass through it without the

headache acquired from beating its head against the pane.

Why is it that so many of us attempt to battle uncontrollable circumstances or stand our ground when the ground beneath us is crumbling? Is it because we've been conditioned to fight, be strong, pull ourselves up by our bootstraps, stay in control, persevere and never give up? It appears that just about everyone is willing to go to great lengths to avoid appearing weak or vulnerable, but from our experiences, this comes from fear and surrender is where real strength and conquest is possible.

CONSCIOUS SURRENDER

Occasionally, stress and the feeling of being overwhelmed find their way back into our lives, but we realize after having experienced the incredible, peaceful strength that comes from surrender, that when we suffer the illusion that we have control over all of life's circumstances and engage life in the battle, the struggle begins anew. Now, surrender has become a conscious choice for each of us.

To release fear or stress, we first recognize that to do so is not to lose anything, but to gain peace. Then, realize that it is vital to release expectations and attachments to outcomes. By doing so, one finds freedom from the worry habit, which is always tied to the past or future, and is born of expectations and attachments. Think about that for a minute. How invested are you in the outcome of every little thing in your life that you believe you have control over? Whether the weather will cooperate with your plans; your children's behavior; your spouse's inability to pick up his socks, or concern over your own; your friends chronic tardiness; what others think about you or you about them; how others feel about themselves?

Believing we have control over everyday occurrences is an illusion. We cannot control anyone's behavior, thoughts or feelings any more than we can control the weather. The feelings belong only to that person, who is solely responsible for them. When we release the expectations we place upon others, everyone benefits and relationships can build from a place of mutual respect and personal responsibility. Release attachment to outcomes, and allow destiny to unfold. We have found that when we are no longer attached to outcomes, often what comes to us through surrendering is much greater than we could ever have conceived of ourselves.

Surrender takes trust, and trust is only achieved by trusting. Through our experiences, we have faith that no matter how difficult a situation is, the challenges it presents are the wrapping paper around an unexpected gift, and when we recognize the gift, we can be grateful no matter how difficult or trying the situation is. Trust is necessary for surrender, and once we achieve that, incredible growth and blessings unfold in our lives.

We are careful not to suffer the illusion again that we have a better strategic plan than the Universe. This doesn't mean that we sit back and wait for life to happen, without taking responsibility for the roles we play in the creation of it. For the most part, we know what we want and take action towards it, but when significant obstacles present themselves, we consciously choose to release expectations and surrender the outcomes.

C.S. Lewis said, "There are two kinds of people: those who say to God, 'Thy will be done' and those to whom God says, 'All right, then, have it your way.'" We recommend the first!

Musings of Modern Goddesses reflects the observations and philosophies of Darcy Simonson and Sheila Sornsin, co-creators of The Grateful Goddess.

To meet Darcy and Sheila of The Grateful Goddess in person, join them at the 3rd Annual Fargo Holistic Expo, April 18 and 19 at the Fargo Civic Center.



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