

When life sucks, just turn to the blessings

Contributed by ANTONIA WILLIAMS-GARY
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Because life sucks! That's one reason why people have been chewing on hallucinogenic mushrooms, smoking herbs and using other naturals, using/abusing prescription drugs, alcohol and other mind- and body-altering substances since the beginning of time.

And so what is it about the nature of being human and these choices we continue to make in order to make life, well, less 'sucky'?

Whitney Houston's recent death has brought this question back into the daily conversation about seeking relief outside of ourselves to get through the sheer magnitude of the human condition. So many of these bad choices, I suspect, are brought on by our misunderstanding of what it means to be human.

It is often said, in so many words, that we are not born with instructions. On the other hand, there are scores of ancient texts from across the globe that have given humankind a vast array of rules for living, all bibles, of sorts, from stories about the ancient circles, to the Hebrew Bible, to the New Testament, to the Qu'ran, and to more modern religious texts.

To me, they are all pretty much a variation on the same theme: You and God are one, so behave accordingly.

So why does life suck?

For me, it simply boils down to forgetting.

I don't know about you but what I know for sure is that I have been forgetful for moments and some moments lasting into years but I have never been disconnected from who I am — really.

I contend that all of us humans are in the same continuum, some by conscious and deliberate choice, some by accident and some by using mind- and body-altering substances but each trying to reach back and remember.

I'm no religious fanatic. In fact, I'm no fan of anything. I do have strong interests and opinions and I try to stay tuned in to what my fellow human beings say and closely observe what they do.

What I constantly hear threading throughout so many comments, conversations, complaints and celebrations is that, once experienced, that feeling of (internal) peace is the most perfect human condition. And, once experienced, we want it again, and again, too often using dangerous and lethal means to achieve it.

Patty LaBelle once sang:

When you've been blessed, feels like heaven, heaven. When you've been blessed, pass it on, pass it on.

Many of you understand that I have used this opinion column to practice my chosen (and given) "ministry;" i.e., passing on my thoughts about all things — political, social, cultural, spiritual, being a grandmother (smile), et al.

There has been no particular training that I've taken in order to write this column. I have taken it on in this time, in this space, on the page or online with your readership as part of a larger universal order that has, quite frankly, been delivered to me rather late in my life.

This has become my most satisfactory mind-altering habit: to be able to think out loud, to put these thoughts in order, to express them as clearly as I can, to pass it on.

I pray (yes, that's how I remember) that each of you can find the blessing already in you that you will use to get higher than anything else outside of you, that you'll all get it and, when you do, that you'll pass it on.

R.I.P., Whitney Houston.