



MAKING FRIENDS WITH CONFLICT

Finding the I of the Storm

How much do you love conflict?

A little bit?

A lot?

Not at all?

How do we view conflict?

As something to be avoided at all costs? Or as an opportunity to deepen our relationships, to develop intimacy and authentic community?

Conflict is a signal that we are reaching for something higher. Conflict places us in relationship with the parts of ourselves that are not connected to who we have come here to be.

In *I of the Storm* by Gary Simmons, we liken conflict to a storm system, or hurricane: When two weather fronts converge there is displacement, movement and friction. The forces within the system build in intensity as temperature, dew point, wind velocity, barometric pressure, jet stream, humidity and landscape combine to form a distinct rotation of influence - and thus a hurricane is born.

This is what happens within interpersonal relationships: Competing needs, wants and values - combined with misperception, defensiveness and the need to be right - converge to form a storm, or conflict.



At the center of the hurricane is its eye - a single theoretical point in space where the forces of the storm are in perfect equilibrium.

At the eye is peace, calm, clarity and stillness. To further our analogy, then, the storm of conflict also possesses a center ~ the I of the Storm of conflict is your wholeness .

So how do we get to this center?
How do we make friends with the storm of conflict?

First, we look at what we're making the conflict mean...

we identify the filters through which we're seeing the situation.

Remember the Four Boxes?

Our Conclusion in Box 1 determines the evidence we gather in Box 2, which determines how we behave in Box 3, and ultimately how we experience the behavior of those around us - Box 4.

So, what are we making it mean?

Is it that some one or some thing is against us?

Have we decided that a person is "who's the matter with us?"

Perhaps it's a situation or event that's against us,
that's something we're pushing against.

Awareness is the first step...



What were the people like in your last city?

Next, we look at the elements of our “hurricane” that are present...

Just like with a physical hurricane, all the elements need to be in place before an actual storm is created:

Has there been a breakdown in communication?

Are there competing needs or wants?

What about misperception? What are we not seeing clearly?

Are we being defensive, needing to be right?

Are we on our “card” or have we fallen off?

On a physical level, are we hungry, angry, lonely or tired,
and reacting out of who we’re not?

Now we look at what the conflict is trying to bring to us...

We make friends with conflict by changing how we see a situation and what we make it mean.

Another definition of conflict is an interference pattern of energies. Wherever there is change, movement, resistance, pressure or interaction, there is the potential for conflict. When change or movement is resisted, shock waves are created.

When these shock waves collide - conflict.

Conflict takes us to the edge of our resourcefulness. Conflict encourages us to try it a different way. Define insanity: Doing the same thing over and over and expecting a different result.

In other words, conflict motivates us.

Whatever is going on in our life is there to bring us into greater alignment with the Truth of who we are.

So what is that Truth? Do you have your Standards of Integrity card handy? How about your Life's Intentions Inventory?

How would a person with those qualities, with those intentions, show up in this situation or relationship?

How is this conflict supporting you in showing up as who you have come here to be?

When we become willing to make friends with conflict, we open ourselves to the gifts found in the I of the storm.

Identifying our filters ~ what are we making this mean?

Getting back on our card ~ who have we come here to be?

Remembering what's most important to us

Being a demand for coaching ~ am I open and receptive?

Seeing others through the green lens

Becoming temporarily sane