

Beauty from Ashes ~ My Experience

I was burning all my life.

I was black inside.

I never wavered from the patterns of destruction.

I sought kindred love from other hurtful souls. The kind of love that never felt like it should.

I was the ashes from a deadened spirit.

My daddy died on December 10, 2015. I wanted to explore the power that it held over me. I wanted to identify my feelings that were leaving me stagnant. A grief program was offered by the Community Outreach Program from the Garden River Healing Lodge. During the last week of the program, I had an "a-ha" moment.

I realized that the emotions and feelings were only the tip of my grief. I decided, then and there that I wanted to experience another program that was offered by the Healing Lodge and that was Beauty from Ashes.

I had previously thought about it beforehand but was frightened by the thought of digging down deep and baring my soul and all its ugliness.

I stepped up to the plate. I owed it to myself to discover me.

I enquired about Beauty from Ashes and was told that it was going to be offered very soon and that there was a spot available. I went through the process of applying and I came Monday morning prepared to stay for the week, but it never prepared me for change that was to appear.

My life changed forever. We began the pleasantries after breakfast and went straight to "life-work". Never in my wildest imagination would I realize how much work there was to discovering ones self. I cried, cried someone and yet cried again. I asked Gzhimantiou (Great Spirit) to help me stop crying. Little did I know that he was preparing me for this intense healing.

Throughout my healing process by hearing others pain stories and sharing slowly of mine, I began to experience nausea, vomiting, neck pains and headaches. By the middle of the week, I realized that I was so imbalanced that my body reacted immediately. I experienced digestive, sleep and tension due to the intensity of the contents. My body was letting me know that it was "releasing all that shit" that I was carrying around in my lifetime.

I learned so many tools to walk mindfully, in the physical, emotionally, spiritual and mental senses by participating whole heartedly. I knew that in order for me to heal, I needed to be there fully in these aspects. Along my life journey teachings, I knew about Anishinaabe ways of life, but mostly paid life service to them.

After completion of Beauty from Ashes, I have since began putting them into practice with heart.

I have learned to be my genuine self - warts and all. I learned to accept love and respect. I have learned to be grateful. I have learned that the promiscuity, loose sexual boundaries, the "Jerry Springer" like quality of my sexual indiscretions all made sense. When I looked at the fact that my initiation into sex was very messed up.

I was a child who was lonely, neglected and desperate for love.

I craved attention, support, approval, respect and all the other things associated with love. My life, my identity was totally emeshed with myexuality. I lived in shame - filthy, dirty shame!!

I owe my positive life discoveries to the program called Beauty from Ashes. I arose from the ashes to become a marvelous person and to recognize that and pay homage to my inner child. I learned to create healthy boundaries. I learned to ask for help.

I've found another family to add to my nuclear family and I call on these people regularly to help me when I get stuck in the muck of life. I can trust them to feel along with me on this road called life.

Beauty for Ashes has impacted me positively that I am going to take further residential programs as well as leadership programming. One of my ultimate goals is to take part in the Warrior Initiative Training in Alaska, USA. I want to shout from the top of Trap Rock, our spiritual mountain, that this program will change your life as it did mine.

I want to sincerely thank the staff, facilitators, cooks for their love and care. Without all of you, my life may not have changed (as I accept my Beauty for Ashes Oscar).

Mligwech,