

## **Suffering is a Great Teacher**

Embrace a healthy ok'ness with suffering. Suffering is the only tool that leads to acceptance of reality. By suffering through hard times we learn new strategies for life. People who avoid reality by running from their hard times have a tendency to present themselves as better than the rest of us, they tend towards blaming others for their own mistakes, and they also become self-involved narcissists who don't mind hurting other people to protect their very shallow and frail sense of who they are.

People who do not allow themselves to suffer are inefficient. They never thrive in life, only just survive, because their energy is spent protecting themselves from feeling shame or vulnerability. Their thoughts are not based in reality and so they frequently over estimate their own abilities and, when they fail, blame others or the system for their shortcomings. The wisest people have allowed themselves to suffer through the hardest of times. The lessons they have accepted through suffering have helped them to adapt and thrive in their present reality. Their new acceptance leads to a life based in reality, a healthy sense of being present and belonging to ones experiences. Realistic hope allows us to predict our future success all the while preparing for the inevitable setbacks of life.

The challenge to people reading this article is simple. Don't run from suffering or pain, go through it. Don't be a perfectionist. Your performances in life are only based on your best efforts at any given moment and the results of your performances often change, so they can never be an accurate reflection of your static and whole self. Your static and whole self is judged only by whether you can honestly say that you really like who you are at any given moment. The end result of accepting and liking yourself is a happy and good life. Perfection is a fool's pastime. Take calculated chances. Allow and learn from mistakes. Keep moving forward. Don't avoid pain and suffering by taking part in avoidant or addictive behaviors. Do seek support to process pain and suffering. You have everything to learn from it in the end.

Mark Huttemier

UWRF Student Health and Counseling Services

(715) 425-3884