

## Generation's of Perception

Sitting in the quiet solitude of my own four walls, my mind and thoughts will gently carry me back to very clear images of my past. These vivid memories are a touch tone towards greater understanding and healing of past experiences that I have had. In a blink of an eye, it doesn't seem real all the time that has gone by since my father's passing and my grandmother and Uncle's physical deterioration with Parkinson's disease.

These three important people in my immediate circle, were products of another era. It was difficult for them to express how they felt and what they desired. But, they were all souses of life giving lessons to me whether I agreed with them or not. They were an instrument towards my understanding the generations of dysfunction and lack of hands on affection in my family, and the wisdom of a young child who saw beyond the whelm, and wanted to move beyond, and towards the light of a better way of living, interacting with others, and being harmonic within the world around me.

All of these people were viewing someone very close to them, dealing with a disability, in a time that was thought to make a normal life impossible. I was from the very beginning, determined to live as though I didn't have the limitations of my body, or, the "crippling attitudes" of the larger society to deal with. It would never have seemed possible for me to go out into this world and thrive with the attitudes and beliefs I was brought up with. Because, most of my family; especially my mother, was caught up in the daily business of dealing with a disable child and everything that came along with it. While my father came from even an earlier generation than my mother, and he had lost his mother, and was raised by a grandmother, so his focus was on earning a living. That left little time for anything else.

I had to figure out a lot for myself because my father passed away when I was only fourteen. This was just one experience in a period of several years that I lost loved ones. This forced me to be very self reliant, confident, and interdependent. So, it was all put upon my mother to raise my older sister and myself. Although, my dear Mama Katie didn't quite know how much I could handle, or, how to totally express herself to me or say what was on her mind; she truly understood that I needed a lot more to become the person I was meant to be.

It is hard to remember what a radical idea this was in a time of separation for our community very similar to the segregated south. My mother had to remember the

balance I needed, so that I could thrive, grow and develop my inner and outer self. My mother needed to understand two great truths. First, that there needed to be time to relax, regroup, and rest. And secondly, this was even harder, I knew there were things I needed to accomplish which she wanted to protect me from.

The first time my mother ever had the courage, the strength, and the ability to acknowledge her own error in thinking there were limits to what I could do, was the day I earned my college degree. Who would have thought, that a dysfunction so deeply rooted, could have melted 35 years of pain, hurt, and loss. I was able to use my own positivity to help heal my own wounds, as well as try to restore the physical strength of loved ones in agony. It takes a really strong person to not fall into the trap of isolation and self pity. All of us reading this magazine had channeled this kind of strength and will power to lead a life and beyond that which experts tried to limit us too.

I never fully recognized my inner strengths. But each and every hurdle, blockade and barrier I came across, which called me to full attention, I knew I had to face. I knew I had to deal with it, and I knew I could not run. I had to take the bull by its horn, and all that came with it. I also knew that I could neither avoid, or refrain, nor deny.

My strengths came out of experiences that I just mentioned. This would help me to help others when they needed me the most. When my uncle struggled with Parkinson's, I was able to give him my positive ways of thinking to deal with his disease and the pain it inflicted upon him for well over 10 years. Throughout my life, achievements have come out of my own struggle and the inner resources I have used to maintain a strong mind, body and spirit.