



There comes a time in your life when you finally get it ...

When in the midst of all your fears and insanity you stop dead in your tracks and somewhere the voice inside your head cries out: ENOUGH!

Enough fighting and crying or struggling to hold on. This is your awakening. You realize that it's time to stop hoping and waiting for something to change or for happiness, safety and security to come galloping over the next horizon. You come to terms with the fact that he or she is not Prince Charming and you are not Cinderella and that in the real world there aren't always fairytale endings (or beginnings for that matter) and that any guarantee of "happily ever after" must begin with you and in the process a sense of serenity is born of acceptance. You awaken to the fact that you are not perfect and that not everyone will always love, appreciate, or approve of who or what you are ... and that's OK. (they are entitled to their own views and opinions)

And you learn the importance of loving and championing yourself and in the process a sense of new-found confidence is born of self-approval. You stop bitching and blaming other people for the things they did to you (or didn't do for you) and you learn that the only thing you can really count on is the unexpected. You learn that people don't always say what they mean or mean what they say and that not everyone will always be there for you and that it's not always about you. So, you learn to stand on your own and to take care of yourself, and in the process a sense of safety and security is born of self-reliance.

You learn that it is truly in giving that we receive. And that there is power and glory in creating and contributing. You stop maneuvering through life merely as a "consumer" looking for your next fix. You learn that principles such as honesty and integrity are not the outdated ideals of a by-gone era but the mortar that holds together the foundation upon which you must build a life.

You learn that you don't know everything, that it's not your job to save the world and that you can't teach a pig to sing. You learn to distinguish between guilt and responsibility, and you learn the importance of setting boundaries and of learning to say NO. Then you learn about love: Romantic love and familiar love. You learn how to love, how much to give in love, when to stop giving, and when to walk away. You learn not to project your needs or your feelings onto a relationship. You learn that you will not be more beautiful, more intelligent, more lovable or important because of the man or woman on your arm or the child that bears your name. You learn to

look at relationships as they really are and not as you would have them be. You stop trying to control people, situations and outcomes. You learn that just as people grow and change, so it is with love. And you learn that you don't have the right to demand love on your terms. And you learn that alone does not mean lonely. And you look in the mirror and come to terms with the fact that you will never be a size 5 or a perfect 10 and you stop trying to compete with the image inside your head and agonizing over how you "stack up."

You also stop working so hard at putting your feelings aside, smoothing things over, and ignoring your needs. You come to the realization that you deserve to be treated with love, kindness, sensitivity, and respect, and you decide you won't settle for less. You learn that fatigue diminishes the spirit and can create doubt and fear. So you make more time to rest. And, just as food fuels the body, laughter fuels our soul. So you take more time to laugh and to play. You learn that for the most part, in life, you get what you believe you deserve ... and that much of life truly is a self-fulfilling prophecy. You learn that anything worth achieving is worth working for and that wishing for something to happen is different from working toward making it happen. More importantly, you learn that in order to achieve success you need direction, discipline, and perseverance. You also learn that no one can do it all alone and that it's OK to risk asking for help. You learn that the only thing you must truly fear is the great robber baron of all time: FEAR itself. You learn to step right into and through your fears, because you know that whatever happens you can handle it and to give in to fear is to give away the right to live life on your terms. You learn that life isn't always fair, you don't always get what you think you deserve and that sometimes "bad" things happen to unsuspecting good people.

Slowly, you begin to take responsibility for yourself by yourself, and you make yourself a promise never to betray yourself and never, ever to settle for less than your heart's desire. And you hang a wind chime outside your window so you can listen to the wind. And you make a point to keep smiling, to keep trusting, and to stay open to every wonderful possibility. Finally, with courage in your heart, you take a deep breath and you begin to design the life you want to live as best as you can.

written by an AA member as a testament to her Spiritual Awakening