

Why Doubt is My Friend

by Kathleen Stilwell

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Recently I had a conversation with a friend that got me thinking about doubt.

This friend was offended that I questioned some things he told me. Instead of answering my questions he responded only with (and we've all heard this before when we've questioned things): "You doubt me?"

I was very surprised that, instead of answering, he became defensive. I wondered why questions were seen as offensive. I explained to him that doubt is not the same as suspicion. I was just asking questions about a topic he himself brought up in conversation.

I told him that doubt is my friend and that I ask questions/doubt all the time.

He did not respond right away, but used my statement later on when he wanted to "put me in my place", to show that I have an inferior spiritual perspective (the negative thinking taboo among some "enlightened").

To this day, he still hasn't answered my questions.

In my home, in my world, it's not only okay to doubt, it's encouraged. Challenges are encouraged – not attacks – but questions. Even my friend's challenge to me about my doubt was illuminating. It would never have occurred to me to stand up for doubt if he had not brought this issue to my attention.

Since When is Doubt a Sign of Weakness?

Who knows for sure, but my guess is it might have something to do with “the gods”.

In that sneaky world of the gods that turns everything true on its head, genuine strength of character is painted as weakness.

Imagine a god. Any god that is not as open-hearted, loving and forgiving as yourself.

Imagine this god says to an awakening-human: “Here’s an adult coloring book. Forget about freestyle painting. Your work is always a mess and never good enough. Color only inside the lines and you will be creating perfect beauty.”

Imagine this awakening-human says to this god: “I find that too boring. I want to explore shapes and colors on my own.”

Now imagine how this god (and we are all familiar with this type of god) responds. He/She inflates itself like a [howler monkey](#) before bellowing out, “You doubt me? You dare doubt ME?”.

This god might continue on with words to tell the awakening-human how ungrateful or how unloving she is, but it knows it doesn’t really need to. It knows this awakening-human has already been programmed to feel shame when she doubts its authority or, even worse, doubts its love.

It knows if the awakening-human does doubt, she is likely going to doubt her own goodness or worthiness. (Worthy of what, one might ask. And who came up with this worthiness stuff, anyway. But that’s another question and another rant... and I digress.)

This god knows she is not likely to question the shame itself or to question who this god is that, truth be told, doesn’t feel like intelligent life or loving life at all.

Let’s face it. Controllers, Gods, and Mini-Me-Gods Don’t Like

Us to Doubt

Overlords, friends who want us to believe a lie, and authorities of all types don't like us to doubt. They lose power over us if we do. They tell us we are evil if we doubt them. And, if we are like these gods, if we are their children (or their "constituents") as they tell us we are, we will do as they do – and shame our own children if they doubt us.

When someone is trying to control the narrative, it is important that truth be damned. Allegiance to the storyline is what is important.

There's something quite odd about anyone thinking they should never be questioned. It's one thing to not want to talk about something, but once a half-truth is put out there as a substitute for what we don't want others to know, then it's all open for challenge.

If someone questions us, it doesn't mean they don't love us. It doesn't mean they'll lose all respect for us if they find we were born and raised to pretend lies are truth and, therefore, are still in the process of "peeling the onion", as a friend of mine is fond of saying.

The Emperor Has No Clothes

The children can see and smell the bullshit, and will point it out to us if we listen.

Have you ever had your child say to you, "Mom, you aren't telling me the truth."

I have. Twice.

I'll start with the second time. It was in the month of November, many years ago now. I was struggling financially and exhausted by life. I was also trying to keep my 10-year-old from knowing what was going on. Christmas was coming (ugh, another lie I had bought into). I had no money for

gifts and felt so guilty about working endless hours just to keep a roof over our heads and to keep him out of public schools. I wanted so much to be there more for him. I knew he was lonely and deserved so much more than I could give him. So I started buying him gifts on credit cards. Lots of gifts. Stuff as a substitute for quality of life.

He saw stacks of packages in the closets and asked me what they were. I don't remember what I answered, but it was definitely a lie of some sort.

I do remember his response. It is etched in my brain. "Mom, you aren't telling me the truth. You don't have to buy me stuff to make me feel loved. I know you love me. It's going to be okay."

I know I cried. I was relieved to have been called out on my bullshit. I didn't even know it was bullshit until he called me out. That we were there for each other and communicated our love was all that mattered.

The first time my son called me out on a lie was also an event involving Christmas. It must be significant that this pervasive Christmas lie, which is used by both religion and the monetary control system – a highjacking of our love, joy and the celebration of genuine caring for one another – brought forth the liar in me.

My son was four.

"Mommy, is Santa Claus real? I'm starting to think he's not real."

We had been doing the "Santa left you these gifts" thing for the past four years, and now that his fifth Christmas was coming around, he was wising up.

I remember wondering if I should tell him Santa Claus was real. But I didn't.

I remembered my own disappointment as a child in finding out this magic man didn't exist. And especially the reindeer. I had wanted so much for the flying reindeer to be real. I had fully intended to go out on search for them when I grew up. I even wondered if Santa was married. Maybe I could marry him and live up there in the North Pole.

So, instead of continuing the lie, I fessed up. I told him it was a story. I justified my lie by telling him that Santa Claus was symbolic of giving and loving, or some such bullshit.

He wasn't having any of it. Instead he was deeply hurt. And I was ashamed that I had been so blind in not knowing that he would be.

"Mommy, you were the one person I thought would never lie to me. You made Santa Claus important to me and he isn't even real. Why would you lie about something important?"

Why, indeed?

I don't remember the conversation after that. I know it was the beginning of a lifelong conversation I've had with this precious son of mine about why we lie.

Being Called on the Carpet is a Sacred Opportunity

The tendency to lie about something is there within all of us. At least I've never met anyone who does not have this programming within them on some level.

As my son grew through childhood, he observed his own lies, often long after he'd told them. One time he came to me and told me some things he had told his friends. He had made up stories about things he did with his dad (who was mostly absent from his life), he made up things about vacations we never took and superpowers he had. He asked me if that made him a pathological liar. As he talked he seemed relieved. He

told me that he was realizing that, just by telling me about the lies, he knew he'd stop telling them.

Those who've read a few of my essays here on the blog will notice that I often talk about my son. His entry into my life was, and still is, a powerful guide in an ongoing awakening. Loving him taught me more about how to love myself. We pushed each other to become more authentic, to be more true.

He's 28 now. A few years ago, he said to me: "Mom, I think you grow more beautiful all the time. When I was a kid, you were unhappy and didn't love yourself as much even though you loved me. Now we can talk about anything. The freedom shows in your face."

And, yes, he's given me permission to talk about him here. "Why not," he said. "It's just the way it is."

In this life, my cup runneth over with all things that allow me to grow and expand. I have a life filled with doubt, with wondering, with challenges, with kindness, with some very dear friends, and with so much love.

Doubt is my friend because it comes from love. We've been lied to, we've repeated those lies to ourselves and others. Doubt says, "Hold on. Something feels off here. Let's look into it a bit further before we buy into it."

If I had a permanent home where I could place a sign over the front door for all to see, it might say:

Welcome explorers of reality. Come in. Relax and share your dreams. Question everything. Laugh. Cry. Create something. Fess up if you'd like. Above all else, do no harm and be true.

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