



How I Became A Warrior

A Poem by Jeff Foster

Once, I ran from fear
so fear controlled me.
Until I learned to hold fear like a newborn.
Listen to it, but not give in.
Honor it, but not worship it.
Fear could not stop me anymore.
I walked with courage into the storm.
I still have fear,
but it does not have me.

Once, I was ashamed of who I was.
I invited shame into my heart.
I let it burn.
It told me, "I am only trying
to protect your vulnerability".
I thanked shame dearly,
and stepped into life anyway,
unashamed, with shame as a lover.
Once, I had great sadness
buried deep inside.
I invited it to come out and play.
I wept oceans. My tear ducts ran dry.
And I found joy right there.
Right at the core of my sorrow.
It was heartbreak that taught me how to love.

Once, I had anxiety.
A mind that wouldn't stop.
Thoughts that wouldn't be silent.
So I stopped trying to silence them.
And I dropped out of the mind,
and into the Earth.
Into the mud.
Where I was held strong
like a tree, unshakeable, safe.

Once, anger burned in the depths.
I called anger into the light of myself.
I felt its shocking power.
I let my heart pound and my blood boil.
Listened to it, finally.
And it screamed, "Respect yourself fiercely no
"Speak your truth with passion!".
"Say no when you mean no!".
"Walk your path with courage!".
"Let no one speak for you!"
Anger became an honest friend.
A truthful guide.
A beautiful wild child.

Once, loneliness cut deep.
I tried to distract and numb myself.
Ran to people and places and things.
Even pretended I was "happy".
But soon I could not run anymore.
And I tumbled into the heart of loneliness.
And I died and was reborn
into an exquisite solitude and stillness.
That connected me to all things.
So I was not lonely, but alone with All Life.
My heart One with all other hearts.

Once, I ran from difficult feelings.
Now, they are my advisors, confidants, friends,
and they all have a home in me,
and they all belong and have dignity.
I am sensitive, soft, fragile,
my arms wrapped around all my inner children.
And in my sensitivity, power.
In my fragility, an unshakeable Presence.
In the depths of my wounds,
in what I had named "darkness",
I found a blazing Light
that guides me now in battle.
I became a warrior
when I turned towards myself.
And started listening.

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Insight Reflection from a Mindfulness and Self-Compassion Perspective



What does it mean to "honour" fear, shame, or anger without letting them control you? How can you practice this in your own life?

How might treating your emotions as "friends" or "advisors" change the way you respond to them?

What does "dropping out of the mind and into the Earth" mean to you? How might mindfulness practices help you ground yourself in challenging times?

When you experience a strong emotion, how can you pause and listen to what it is trying to tell you?

The poem speaks of wrapping arms around "inner children." How might you nurture your own inner child when you feel hurt or vulnerable?

How do you reconcile being both "sensitive" and "powerful"? What does this duality teach you about your own strength?

What would it look like to welcome all your feelings as having dignity and belonging? How might this shift your inner dialogue?

In what ways can self-compassion be an act of courage in your life?