

A Season of Growth

In New England, you don't need a calendar to know it's the first week of October. The trees tell the story quite well as their leaves change from shades of green to the bright vibrant shades of orange, red and yellow. At the peak of the fall foliage season, it's truly a magnificent sight that draws people from all around to behold the beauty. The season progresses and the leaves fall to the ground one by one where they become nourishment for the grass, flowers and gardens in the spring.

As I spent Sunday collecting some of the fallen leaves with my 7 year old daughter, I wondered what would happen if a tree stubbornly held onto to its leaves - refusing to let them fall to ground and nourish the new season that awaits only a few months from now. How would that tree be affected? How would the rest of life be affected?

The tree would become burdened by the accumulation of dead leaves it collected each year. Its branches would begin to sag under the weight of those useless dead leaves. Future growth of the tree would be impossible as it ran out of room for new leaves to bloom in the spring. It would soon lose its beauty as the lifeless brown leaves cluttered its many branches.

Eventually the tree wouldn't look like a tree at all but only a pitiful brown clump waiting to die and fall to the ground from which it once sprang with such vitality and zest for life.

And what about the grass, flowers and gardens that use the fallen leaves as nourishment and further growth in the spring? Certainly there are other sources of sustenance but none as natural and readily available as is provided by the fallen leaves. Instead, they would have to rely heavily on human intervention for their growth and survival - the tree no longer offering its own natural gift of nourishment. The entire circle of life would be burdened by the refusal of the tree give up that which no longer serves it.

Sometimes we are like that tree. We refuse to give up beliefs and memories that no longer serve us. We hang onto them, preventing our further growth and the growth of others. We become burdened by the accumulation of useless dead thoughts that should have fallen away long ago to be used as intellectual and spiritual nourishment. If we're not careful, we can become - like the tree - a miserable creature who's lost our vitality and zest for life, eventually living in quiet desperation, refusing to be a natural source of nourishment for the rest of the circle of life.

Spend a few minutes each day this week to think about what beliefs you're holding onto that may be burdening you - thoughts that should have fallen away long ago to nourish yourself and others. Some of them may be very old, dating back to childhood. For me, one of those useless beliefs came from the memory of an assault by the town bully when I was 5 years old. Once I finally let go of that belief, it became a source of further growth for myself and others.

Try this exercise. Watch a movie of your life. The movie starts with your earliest memory and progresses chronologically through your life up until now. What memories stand out as painful and what beliefs did you create from those memories? Maybe you remember your own bully or perhaps a time when a parent or guardian was particularly angry toward you.

Maybe you tried to accomplish something and failed in your attempt. Perhaps you still carry the guilt of a wrong you committed against another. Whatever you come up with, write your thoughts in a journal. Write everything that happened in the experience and the useless belief you developed from it. Then ask yourself how you can use the experience to nourish yourself and others. What can you learn that empowers you and others to experience further growth and learning?

Shed those old limiting beliefs just like the trees shed their leaves in the fall and make ready for the new season of growth that awaits. Send me an email and tell me what belief you're going to let fall away this week. I'd love to hear from you. Have a great week!

Its your life. Create it the way you desire!

-- By Michael Pollock

