

Five truths by Richard Rohr

1. Life is hard -suffering and difficulty are part of life, something that should be expected. Accepting suffering does not mean we have to like it. But acceptance of the fact that life can be hard at times means we get less angry and anxious when it does come. We do not lose serenity. Accepting that suffering is inevitable, brings a strange sort of peace. We are freed from unrealistic expectations that merely breed resentments. We also become more grateful for the joys we do experience. Accepting that life can be hard is a truth that sets us free.

2. Your life is not about you- If you want to make God laugh tell Him your plans. If you really want to give him a belly laugh, tell Him, His plans! We often like to think that we should just be able to do what ever pleases us and maximizes our “self-actualization.” However, we do not decide alone what course our life will take.

In this age of “nobody tells me what to do” it is important to be reminded that our true happiness comes not from getting what we want, but what God wants. Our destiny isn’t to follow our star but to follow God. True peace comes from careful discernment of God’s will for us.

It is sad how few people today ever really speak with God about important things like careers, entering into a marriage, pondering a large project. We just go off and do what we please, and expect God to bail us out if it doesn’t go well. You and I do not exist merely for our own whims, we have a place in God’s plan. Our serenity is greater when we prayerfully discern that place and humbly seek God’s will. Accepting the fact that we are not merely masters of our own destiny, and captains of our own ship, gives us greater peace and usually saves us a lot of mileage.

Humbly accepting the truth that my life is not simply about me and what I want is a truth that sets me free. This is true because we often don’t get what we want. If we can allow life to unfold more and not demand that everything be simply what I want I am more serene and free.

3. You are not in control- Control is something of an illusion. You and I may have plans for tomorrow but there are many things between now and tomorrow over which I have no control. For example, I cannot even control or guarantee the next beat of my heart. Hence I may think I have tomorrow under control, but tomorrow is not promised and may never come.

Because we think we control a few things, we think we can control many things. Not really. This in turn leads to great anxiety, and often anger.

We usually think that if we are in control we will be less anxious. This is not true, we are more anxious. The more we think we can control, the more we try to control, and thus, the greater our burdens and anxiety. In the end we get angry because we discover that there many things and people we cannot control after all. This causes frustration and fear.

We would be freer and less anxious if we would simply accept the fact that there are many things, most things, over which I have no control. Our expectation of everything being under control is unrealistic. Life comes at you fast and brooding over unpredictable things and uncontrollable matters is bondage. Simply accepting that I am often not in control is freeing.

4. You are not that important- we are loved by God in a very particular way, but that does not over rule the fact that I must often yield to others who are also loved by God in a very special way. Other people are more important than me. I might even be called on to give my life so that others may live. I must often yield to others whose needs are more crucial than mine. The world doesn’t exist just for me, and what I want.

There is great peace and freedom in coming to accept this an it allows us to relax and enjoy caring about other people and celebrating their importance too.

5. You are going to die.