

"The Joy of Growth Processes"

by Bob

I started doing my "work" when I was 18 because I was not a very functional human being. I've done different kinds of work: counseling, reading, one on one friendships with OSA (opposite sex attracted) men which were utterly life changing, and attended Exodus ministries for all these years. But I found a whole different level of growth when I discovered deeper emotional and experiential work: I only discovered experiential process work, such as Journey Into Manhood (JIM), and the need for communities of brothers in the journey out of homosexuality about two years ago, around my 49th birthday.

That opened up for me a whole new vista. The last 2+ years have been the best in my life. I've been a bit of a weekend junkie, attending as many of the experiential weekends as I could and in turn bonding with so many good men who shared numerous aspects of my own life story. So, I'm sure that is part of why these last two years have been so good!! After a decade plus of hating processes, I realized the question "when am I going to be healed" is answered in its own sweet time. I now embrace process work and see a commitment to growth as a lifelong thing I'll be doing until the day I die.

I agree with some others that change in deep emotional areas can be pretty slow. At this point, I have little (if any) attraction to women and am not pursuing such a relationship. With women, I'm presently more in the place of learning how to be more comfortable giving to and receiving from the feminine (I had a lot of abuse from my Mom, issues which need to be overcome.) Experiential process work is the key to the breakthroughs I've had in connecting with women. However, on the other side of the spectrum, it is rare for me to eroticize men these days. But I love the non-sexual healthy connections I now enjoy with men (most of whom are OSA men). And, as I've been staffing some (non-JiM) weekends and doing more mentoring of younger men, I find it ironic how much I have to offer other men. I experience a lot of joy in my connections with and service to these other men.

I'm also ferocious about trying to keep my needs met, a big part of that is staying connected instead of getting stuck in isolation. As a single man, I am sometimes alone more than I'd choose to be. Surprisingly, however, my healing journey has enabled me to realize how often I'm really content even in that. Sometimes there will be a down day. The reality is that by understanding and meeting my needs, I've never been in a better place than I am now in my life. Doing the work is worth the effort and the "way out" is by going through the processes. Freedom and joy are possible on the other side. That's been my experience. There's a lot of life after 50. I am excited about where I am now at.....though maybe I'll be crying in my beer next

week. However, so far it certainly seems like these coming years are poised to be the best years of my life.