

Vulnerability and Darkness by Cathy Batson

I was thinking after Sunday's post-worship conversation that there was one thing I forgot to mention about darkness. It helps me connect with my vulnerability. I've learned, with Brené Brown's help, that connecting with one's vulnerability is not a weakness, as I once thought, but a strength.

Darkness—be it emotional, spiritual or literal—immediately crashes into my vulnerability like powerful, unrelenting waves against the shore. My attempts to run are futile, and I must surrender and welcome my vulnerability. I have to use my voice and ask for help when all I want to do is cry in silence. So I allow my tears to fall as my eyes grow weary of keeping them from spilling out into a world that discourages me from showing my vulnerabilities.



Several years ago I had a very abusive boss. I made multiple attempts to get along with her, sometimes to the point of people-pleasing and focusing more on her needs than my own—just to get through the day. I spent many sleepless nights worrying about the next day, and wondering what more was coming.

I remained silent for a while, too ashamed or confused to talk to anyone despite feeling powerless, and defeated. One night . . . one very long night . . . I begged God to show me what to do. The answer was quite simple: "Find your voice Cathy, it's okay to ask for help." I felt so vulnerable, so depleted, but, I reached for help the next morning. I was encouraged to work on freeing myself. It was as if I heard that for the first time. Prior to asking for help and embracing my vulnerability I felt trapped, alone.

When someone cries from their soul it is often described as "the ugly cry" but I say that crying from your soul is a freedom cry, a partnership with vulnerability. After all, crying is a display of vulnerability.

Vulnerability can make darkness less scary, even hopeful. I learn so much about myself as I move to a better place. But it takes feeling vulnerable enough to ask for help.

Vulnerability and Darkness—what a gift.