

Embracing Our History



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I think we all have this tendency — especially when we begin to feel that we are making progress in our own personal evolution — to want to leave everything that has come before completely behind.

It's tempting for us to talk about the person we used to be, the religion we were brought up in or the relationships we were a part of in ways that seem to demonize the past, making us want to run away from it as fast as we can and never look back.

No one gets out of life without being hurt or hurting someone else, without making mistakes or choices that we wish we wouldn't have made. When I talk about looking at our history, I do not mean ruminating in shame or trauma.

What I do mean is that our history — whether it's our personal life or our collective life as a country or a species — has incredible value, and if we fall into the trap of turning a blind eye to it rather than integrating the lessons that have come from it, we are much more likely to repeat the behaviors of our past. We just do so in a more "evolved" or complex way.

This is why we seem to find ourselves in a brand new, shiny relationship, but after the honeymoon period, we find the same issues arising once again. It's why we find our country still dealing with issues of racism 50 years after the great Civil Rights Movement.

A vital part of our spiritual journey is developing a relationship with our past. Our history is part of who we are, and it will teach us things about who we are becoming.

We must have the courage to shed light on our history and not instantly demonize it in a way that prevents us from truly choosing a path that is informed by our past without being defined by it. In doing so, we can take part in an evolution that sees and feels our past with gentleness rather than harshness, with humility rather than fear.

There is always a deeper story that is seeking to make itself known. It is the story that God is seeking to tell, and our history will help us to find it. ☘