

Spider Webs and Your Mind

Enjoying The Little Things...On The Mountain by Joan Courtney

Spider webs have a special significance for me. As they glisten in the sun, the beads of dew sparkling in the light like asymmetrical diamonds on a necklace, they carry a message. Their thin structure belies their strength. Even though they are spun from thin strands of silk, they can support the weight of the dew and create a trap for nourishment in their nets. This concept brings to mind a symbol of the weaver, the spider herself.

She is a reminder that I have the ability to weave my life into a strong, useful, lovely work of art. I also have the reminder that what I do is temporary. The spider's web will last for a specific time, then it is gone. And what I create in my life will be the same. It will be as good as I can make it for that time and then it dissipates.

Among Native American traditions, creativity is the hallmark of spider medicine. The spider's eight legs represent the four winds of change and the four directions of the medicine wheel. Her body is the shape of an infinity symbol, representing infinite possibilities. Just like the myth of the Fates in Greek mythology who weave the tapestry of life, spiders are reputed to weave the creative forces that develop the patterns of our lives.

The spider web also reminds me not to get stuck. Just as the hapless fly gets caught in the beauty of those strands, my mind can also get stuck in patterns. While some are positive, others are no longer useful to me. Some are quite harmful. Our brains are wired to catch the negative far more quickly and persistently than the positive.

Let's wander into physiology for a moment. The amygdala is that part of your brain designed to trap the negative (trauma, accidents, hurts, anger, tragedy) from your experiences, replaying them over and over again. Ever had an endlessly repeating song in your mind? That's the function of the amygdala. Its purpose is to warn you if something like that negative happening is coming your way again.

But what to do if the warning is unnecessary? How to break that train of thought? One way is to sing over it. Pick your favorite song and override the insistent jingle. I did this the other day when out for a hike. Negative chatter kept me company, for no good reason I could see. Much to Mac Duff's dismay, I began to sing Oscar and Hammerstein's "Oh, What A Beautiful Morning" from Oklahoma! The negative nattering was gone.

Another concept came from Heart Math Institute in Boulder Creek, Ca. Slowly take a breath in through your heart. Then breathe back out. As you do this, focus on your breathing. If you choose, you can make your breath a color. Or you can make it sparkle. Simply breathing in and out in this manner will slow down your mind.

If a spider has wandered into your life, bringing her web energy on a walk or in the corner of a garage, she may have several messages. Perhaps it's time to open the doors to more creativity in your life. Or maybe it's time to sweep the hurtful cobwebs from the corners of your mind. Remember: the spider web is strong. And you can be too. Live unstuck.

I hope I have opened the door to enjoying the little things, both here on the Mountain and in your life. Be looking for future articles in [Get Your Mountain On AZ!](#)