

The Trance of Scarcity: Hey! Stop Holding Your Breath and Start Living Your Life

Victoria Castle

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Although she can now glibly refer to that time in her life as “Victoria’s Adventures in Hell,” the year in which the author endured a divorce, the death of her father, a major health crisis, relocation to a new city, and extended unemployment ended up being the best thing that ever happened to her. When the “adventure” was over, Castle emerged with a new philosophy of life that, she claims, can do nothing less than change the world.

Pinpointing a negative outlook invading virtually every strata of society, Castle terms this omnipresent malaise the “Trance of Scarcity,” which is capable of holding institutions as well as individuals, Congress as well as communities, in its thrall.

To understand the “Trance of Scarcity,” it is helpful to think of the concept of a self-fulfilling prophecy run amok. Under the Trance, all thoughts and actions are restricted by a crippling lack of confidence and an unshakable belief that nothing is ever enough—a person can’t be good enough, have time enough, earn money enough, fill-in-the-blanks enough to achieve one’s goals.

But if Scarcity is the “disease,” then it stands to reason that Abundance is its antidote, and Castle envisions an ideal state that a person must enter in order to break the oppressive mindsets that limit happiness and success. She calls it the “Cycle of Abundance,” and advises that the key to admission is awareness. “When we recognize what creates our experience,” she writes, “we can change it. We can then respect, even revere, our human psychobiology, rather than ignoring it or trying to wish our way to a better life.”

Achieving abundant self-enlightenment, however, takes time and practice. One must not only accept philosophically this altered ideal; one must also assimilate it at a material level. Chapter by chapter, Castle identifies patterns of self-defeating behavior, and then offers a series of mental and physical activities designed to develop the skill sets necessary to turn negative attitudes into positive attributes. Almost relentlessly upbeat, Castle’s unflagging “can-do” optimism does serve to effectively illustrate the tenets of her program.

As a Certified Master Somatic coach (from the Greek *soma*, the philosophy that views body, mind, and spirit as a unified whole), Castle’s career has spanned twenty years in which, as an educator, facilitator, organizational consultant, and executive coach, she has counseled individuals, nonprofit organizations, and businesses both large and small in ways to break free from the Trance and embrace Abundance. But it is her own success story that lends this guide to personal growth its greatest air of credibility. She has, after all, been to Hell and back.

CAROL HAGGAS (August 18, 2009)

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