

How Can I Get Off This Not-So-Merry-Go-Round?

**A Vision Quest Tale
by
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Our next episode is about a very sad young woman. Her life has been difficult up to this stage of her existence. She actually didn't know why she bothered with it, and she was convinced that it wasn't worth it for her life to go on.

I couldn't convince her to write this story in her own voice, so we can't do it in the first-person narrative. I will provide the words and hopefully the emotions to let you know how Briana handled her personal Vision Quest.

At 26, Briana could still be considered a young woman in her prime, but following the way she felt, it seemed that she was already used up. She wanted out of a life that she deemed too hard for her to endure anymore.

She didn't really believe she was overly dramatic, but she was just plain exhausted and fed up with being trampled over every time she tried to get up after someone or something had knocked her down. If she looked into a mirror, which she truly hated to do, she looked at a woman that others said was attractive, but she never saw herself that way. But her looks were not the primary complaint she had. It was how people treated her that was so hard to tolerate.

This attitude had been with her since she entered her teen years. She had lost both of her parents in a terrible automobile accident. They had loved her very much and had devoted their lives to making sure that she knew that. Ever since she lost them, there had been no one else that seemed to care very much about her. Also, Briana was compelled to compare herself with other girls and always came away feeling inadequate. She also seemed less than healthy most of the time, which added to the attitude that life was not worth living. She was constantly afflicted with one malady after another, and while in the midst of one of those illnesses, she turned others off and came across as too needy. People were then more likely to make her situation worse rather than better by avoiding her rather than wanting to help her.

It was on a very grey and cold Sunday afternoon after Briana had left church services that she decided to take a long walk through the park on her way home. She attended a church that day, hoping that it could offer her some solace and resolution to the way she felt most of the time. So far, it hadn't helped. Today the sermon was about having faith in a power that would reward a person who had believed, and then that power would provide for a happy life. But it was obvious that she was beyond such an influence, even though she desperately wanted such a resolution.

Shortly after she reached the center of the park, Briana found a secluded bench so she could sit down and contemplate her life. There were very few people walking by in this remote section of the park, and those that did seem to sense the sadness coming from this girl sitting on the bench and avoided her because of the

intensely sad aura she projected. Dealing with your own problems was bad enough for most people, and they would rather not have to interact with someone that appeared to be dealing with a considerable degree of unhappiness.

Briana could see that those few strangers that she saw were avoiding her, and that added to the overall rejection she had felt since she got up this morning, and then she started to silently weep.

She gave in to her sorrow, and the weeping turned into full-fledged crying with her head down into her folded arms. And just at that moment, a young girl walked up to the bench and tugged on Briana's shirt cuff.

Briana lifted her head and saw the biggest and brightest pair of blue eyes that she had ever seen. The girl, who couldn't have been more than eight years old, had her little fingers tightly holding onto the cuff of Briana's shirt.

The girl continued looking directly into Briana's eyes and said, "Don't cry anymore. It makes me feel very sad."

"I can't help it." Briana said. "I just feel awful."

The girl then sat beside Briana and said, "I'm asking you again to please not cry. You are too pretty to be weeping. It makes other people feel so very bad to see you crying."

Briana did stop sobbing then and looked at this young girl directly in her blue eyes and said, "You are too young to understand how I feel. I don't see myself as pretty in any way, and I don't have the impression that anyone cares how I feel or whether I am crying or not."

"Well, you are wrong, Briana. I care, and perhaps you are looking at yourself in the wrong way."

"Wait a moment! How do you know my name? I've never met you or seen you before this."

"I'm smarter than I look, and I am also a fast learner. I have a nice little trick in knowing what a person's name is before I am introduced to them. It gets a new friend to pay attention to me a little faster. People have a bad habit of discounting a little girl like me when it comes to discussing difficult subjects."

"That answer doesn't explain how you know my name Gaia or even make sense. It also doesn't explain why you care about my being depressed about life in general."

"See, Briana, you called me by name. How did you know what it was?"

"You must have told me what it was, and I remembered it. How else could I know it?"

"No, I didn't tell you. The problem is that you don't recall how you did it."

"I am confused and beginning to worry that I have lost my mind. I am sitting here talking to a little girl who says I told her my name and further telling me that I just don't remember that I did it."

"But you have stopped crying, haven't you? The way I see it, that's a big improvement, Briana. You are a little further on your way out of that horrible dark hole called a depression than you were in before we met. Don't you agree with me?"

"A little, I guess, but I think that is because this is such a new and unexpected thing to happen to me. It just helped me to get my mind off of my problems."

"Oh, that's wonderful! You have just given me a great idea. If we can just focus away from bad thoughts, we can conjure up a good thought. That's a very smart idea, Briana."

"I think that was your idea, Gaia. Wasn't it? You are trying to play tricks with my mind by making me think it was my idea. Right?"

"Wrong. No tricks here! We are just trading a thought for a thought, which a conversation is supposed to do. We toss ideas back and forth during such talks, and hopefully, we can catch as many of those ideas as possible. And then a conclusion to those ideas is conceived by one of us, and that is exactly what just happened here. You concluded that you could simply decide to focus on some good things rather than those bad things, and the outcome would then be considerably improved. It sure seems to me that the conclusion you stated was yours and not mine."

"Maybe, but I'm still not sure and I'm still a bit confused, Gaia."

"Well, let's take a little walk, Briana. There is a very special place here in the park that I want you to see."

Briana nodded her acceptance and raised herself off the bench. Gaia grabbed her by the hand, and they started walking away from the sitting area and towards a very dense place with foliage. Gaia started skipping as they walked along, and Briana, still holding her hand, looked quizzically at the little girl and couldn't help but smile."

Soon they arrived at a beautiful glade full of lush green plantings with many contrasting green tones. There were also gigantic clusters of flowering bushes that added spots of brilliant decoration, and they were hosting lots of butterflies, bumblebees, and many nectar-hungry hummingbirds. In the center of this glade was a good-sized pond with deep clear blue water filled by even more water cascading into the pond through a raised spillway created by moss-covered boulders. Briana had spent a lot of time in this park but had never seen this place. She turned to Gaia and asked her.

"Why have I never seen this part of the park and in particular this pond? I would never have forgotten it."

Gaia squeezed Briana's hand and answered her. "This is my secret garden, and no one has ever seen it except while they are here with me. You are my special guest here. I'm glad you like it."

"I don't just like it Gaia, I love it, and it makes me happy. I haven't felt like this for as long as I can remember. But how is this your secret garden? Many people visiting this park must have come here and seen it, just as we are doing."

"The Universe is a vast and magical place, Briana, and you are traveling within it in an entirely different way than you are used to. When we began walking away on the pathway from where we were sitting, we made an instant and seamless transference from the park's environment into a place where there are no obstructions. We can create an environment with our consciousness that will suit our needs and desires. This is a place that I have created to share with you, and you seem to like it as much as I do."

"It has a great feeling to it, Gaia. I have seen places just as beautiful but none that seem to have this much life and magic within it. It seems as though anything would be possible if I knew how to make it so."

"Your feelings are correct Briana. And with my guidance, you can bring many other things to life here. What are some of your favorite things to think about, Briana?"

"I love little creatures like baby bunnies and miniature mice. I also love colorful Japanese fish such as koi." Immediately upon Briana thinking and talking about some of her favorite things, she watched in wonder as little fuzzy bunnies and tiny cute mice came hopping out of the shrubs and onto the grass at her feet. Beautiful koi fish swam up to the water's edge as if to greet her. She was absolutely delighted that her desires were being granted. She glanced over to Gaia and smiled. She told her that this fantastic place reminded her of Easter dreams when she was much younger. Then suddenly, soft down-covered baby chicks appeared among the other tiny animals and were peeping up a storm. Milk chocolate bunnies could be seen laying inside and around the wicker baskets of colored Easter eggs that were set about atop the soft impossibly green grass."

Briana clapped her hands together to show that she was overjoyed at the scene playing out before her. "Oh, Gaia! Thank you so much for bringing me here and showing me all of these wonderful things. But why are you doing this? You are just a little girl, and you don't owe me anything."

"I owe you whatever I can offer you, Briana. It is a blessing to make another soul happy and fulfilled, and I am actually not only a little girl. It just made sense to meet you as one, and it would be most unlikely that you would have wandered off into the forest with a strange adult man or woman. Little girls are trusted much more." And when she finished saying that, Gaia started to vibrate and then transformed into a beautiful female form with solid consistency. Her brilliant hair was composed of silken strands of silvery blue, and she wore a beautiful aqua-hued silken dress that draped itself perfectly over her body. She had sparkling emerald eyes and a radiant smile. She was shoeless, and her toes wriggled in the soft emerald-colored grass.

The now-adult Gaia walked over to Briana and asked her. "I'm thrilled that you are not crying anymore. You are so attractive when you are smiling and enjoying life." She took Briana into her arms and gave her a big hug.

Briana responded to Gaia. "But you are not like the other people that I have in my life. You treat me as though you really care about me. You went out of your way to bring me here into your secret garden, and you created many of my favorite things here for me to experience. Nobody else has done that for me since I lost my parents."

"Perhaps you have also discovered something else while you were here in this garden, and that is the fact that you cannot expect to always find your happiness coming to you from the actions of other people. I had asked you what made you happy, and with a little help from me, you created those bunnies, koi fish, baby chicks, and other things that would make you remember those things from your youth. In doing that, you also gave me considerable pleasure. Remember that you are the one who has to initiate the first steps to make yourself and other people happy. And it's always a wonderful first step to take. Try to do something for others that will benefit them, and you will benefit even more because of that action. There's an old saying that you cannot sprinkle perfume on others without getting some of it on yourself."

"It seems to me that what you are saying is that I am the one who was causing others to reject me because I didn't care about them. Is that true, Gaia?"

"It is true. It appears that your parents had established a standard of life for you that was based on the love they had for you, and then they left you before you could wean yourself off of that abundance of love and caring. You had convinced yourself that all of the love you required would be coming from them and others, and that is only partially true. The reality is that you have to give love to get love. A one-sided love affair of any nature is not a stable one, and you had found that out the hard way, Briana. It is now time for you to correct that."

Briana was silent for a moment but then said. "Then this whole incident was planned, Gaia. You knew who I was and what I needed when you saw me sitting on that bench."

"Maybe! Then Gaia thought a few seconds, smiled broadly, and then continued, "Actually, of course, I knew who you were, Briana. You have friends and family that are no longer in this realm, but they were concerned that you weren't doing very well and knew that you needed some guidance. They asked me to intervene, and lucky you, here I am."

"I agree, Gaia. I am very lucky to have met you. But what must I do from here on? Is it going to be as simple as offering love to others? There has to be some other things I must do."

"Of course there is. Life isn't that simple, my friend. It's supposed to be difficult and challenging and even tragic on occasions, but there should be a lot of joy involved in living as well. It is up to you to balance everything out. You saw what wrong thinking had done to your life after you lost your parents. If something else goes wrong in your life, look for something that will counter and mitigate that problem, be it physical, mental or spiritual. Don't ever accept misery as normal, and my advice is to initiate the search for a solution from a position of extending love in every case. That means extending love for others as well as focusing love inwards for yourself. Got it?"

"Got it! Thank you so much, Gaia. I can't believe that a simple meeting today in this beautiful garden helped me so much. It certainly proved the points you were just making. Will I ever meet you again?"

"Perhaps! But you can't use me or anyone else as your cure-all for solving problems during your life. I will be available if you truly need me. Still, it is essential to your personal evolution to work out your difficulties within this life experience you are currently involved in. Only then can you succeed and prosper during this life experience. You certainly know that you could never sustain a career based on someone else actually taking your final tests and you just taking the credit for them. There are certain things you have to do on your own, and living your own life is one of them."

"I understand, Gaia. I also feel that I can make it on my own from here on out."

"I know you can. Let's start your new journey by going back to the bench where we met. I'll be watching over you from here on out, Briana. Make me proud!"

With that, the two women walked out of the garden and headed down the pathways towards the bench. Briana had Gaia's hand in hers and felt a slight squeeze and glanced over to see Gaia dissolving into a silver-blue mist. The last glimpse was of a beautiful smile, and then she was gone.

Briana had reached the bench and sat down on it to ponder what had just happened. As she looked up, a couple of strollers passed in front of her. Briana smiled as they said hello to her. Then more people came by, and Briana looked up at them and offered them a "Good Afternoon" and received one back. She thought to herself, this isn't so hard, and smiled.

Her new life had begun!