



Lessons from the Butterfly

*a miraculous transformation
inspires greater consciousness*

By Jamie Jacobs

Ever notice people who seem to have the world by the tail, then lose it all, or stumble publicly, and still find their way to great heights once again? I think we can all relate to hitting a low point in our lives where we feel we've lost significant parts of our former lives – our jobs, our homes, our material possessions, even people and pets we love. Times like these often open the door to the creation of our best selves *and* our best lives.

Consider the butterfly and its metamorphosis. The journey of the butterfly begins as a caterpillar, seemingly content to explore its limited world, much like we do as children - naïve and innocent.

The process of metamorphosis involves the caterpillar entering a cocoon, where it experiences transformation, and emerges as something completely different. Deepak Chopra describes this miraculous process in his book, *The Book of Secrets* as two hormones that “make sure the cells moving from larva to butterfly know where they are going and how to change. Some cells are told to die; others digest themselves, while still others turn into eyes, antenna and wings. This implies a fragile and miraculous rhythm that must remain in precise balance between creation and destruction. Therefore, a cosmic rhythm has been intimately connected to the birth of butterflies for millions of years.”

The butterfly goes through dramatic physical changes on a molecular level during its time in the cocoon. For me, this process symbolizes the times when we go through intense emotional and spiritual growth. At some point in our lives, we will experience a life-changing event that forever alters how we see the world. The cocoon represents that isolated place where we find ourselves when we experience a devastating loss, and for a long time can feel we're in a dark and confusing place.

In this period of darkness, time may seem

like an eternity. We can experience pain, fear, depression, hopelessness and feelings of being 'stuck'. Or it may seem like a warm and safe place, where we can acknowledge, reflect and experience our feelings, understand our authentic selves better and evolve to a place of allowing and acceptance. Friedrich Nietzsche



said “that which does not destroy us makes us stronger”. In this process of spiritual growth, we create space for a different life experience to unfold. One that can be even greater!

The butterfly's time in a cocoon is extremely important. To hurry its change process along would result in catastrophe - it would *never* be able to fly. Similarly, we also need to allow our own healing and growth to take place in *its* proper time, not necessarily ours. Patience is an important by-product of this process and the time it takes to get through it has a remarkable way of revealing great and lasting lessons and truths.

The beautiful part of this story is that at some point, although we don't know *when* or

often *what* the next part of our journey will be, we emerge from our cocoon with beautiful wings and fly! Faith that we'll survive this time of testing is another great lesson to be learned. Yes, our lives will have changed completely. There will be portions of our former lives, parts that no longer serve us, that we *must* leave behind. We will miss and honor them, but to hang on to it all is simply too heavy a burden and will prevent our moving forward.

The good news? We'll never be as naïve and innocent as we once were. If we are open to change, our senses can be heightened. We can see, hear, taste, smell, feel and notice what is in our life as our appreciation and gratitude intensifies. Feelings of peace and serenity replace stress and impatience. Our vantage point is higher, our ego smaller and our perspective greater. We feel a heightened connection to others and the world around us as we take flight towards a greater consciousness and purpose in life. And, we now enjoy a deeper understanding of who we are, minus the material possessions, facades and misplaced allegiances to those things that do not truly define us.

When I see a butterfly winging its way on my path, I stop and smile; this pause gives me an overwhelming sense of peace and hope. It's my personal sign that everything will work out, no matter what is happening in my life or in the world around me.

Just as the butterfly is *my* symbol of joy and hope, it reminds me that we all have the ability to emerge through periods of uncertainty and loss with beauty, grace and a greater purpose. We can choose to experience an enhanced quality of life with a deeper perspective, which in the process can inspire us to bring smiles, joy and hope to others around us! ✨

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