

Creative Survival

June 21st, 2002 by [Jo-Anne Corbeil](#) Espritedu Publications © Jo-Anne Corbeil

I have been inspired lately by my own story, my story to struggle to make it in the world. What inspires me is that I have built my current life (like all of us) upon the foundation of my early years, in my case, of growing up with learning disabilities that were generated by emotional blocks. These disabilities, which were not recognised until my early teens years, left me feeling great shame that I was stupid. This state of emotional atrophy was paralysing because it would not allow me to move into the full potential of my abilities and intelligence. In retrospect however, I see that my spirit was moving forward nonetheless.

My spirit first guided me into taking a non-conventional route and not finishing high school. I took time off to absorb life experiences and to work. Like a tailor slowly basting stitch after stitch to transform cloth into clothing, my spirit was guiding me into taking a series of steps that would later come together into a solid body of experience for my work today as a therapist.

I eventually returned to school, my intuition leading me to community college to study infant and child development. My work as an early childhood educator continuously informs my present work. With Sandra Campbell, I then co-founded Viva Associates, which was the first Canadian research firm to look at the effects of media violence on children through research with children in workshop settings.

I then felt drawn towards different types of body healing studies including massage therapy, Touch for Health, and Esoteric Healing. At this stage the door opened for me to work through my emotional blocks. I did this through in-depth psychotherapy and eventually spent 5 years in a psychoanalytical academic study group and in a supervision group. I became the President of the Board of Directors of the Women's Referral and Education Centre. Recently, when I applied for some university courses, I discovered that my combined education and experience had brought me to within one credit of a Master's degree.

It turns out that all of these choices and experiences counted and have worked together to inform my work, make me who I am and who I am becoming. My passion for my own continual self-directed learning has never been more ardent.

Instead of institutions, I have used intuitions along the way to realise my abilities and my ambitions. There is nothing traditional about me or the way I have gone about attaining what I desired in this life. What I love about this way of thinking is that it turns totally upside down the traditional hierarchical and patriarchal way of being in the world and of moving through the world. I feel inside myself a tremendous push like when pushing in childbirth to teach others this way of being and looking at the world. I envision thousands of people starting to live through what I term "creative survival".

There has to be a place in the world for people who have struggled like me to give birth to their own abilities and intelligence. There are really countless ways to handle any moment in life. If you are willing to feel your beginnings and your own story you can do what you want with your life. I can see now that many people need this kind of inspiration. They need hope that even though they have had difficult beginnings and have felt emotional blocks and shame, they too can achieve their dreams.

At 51 years of age, I feel ready to teach and inspire using my own story of struggles and successes. I feel myself expanding more and more with a mission to make Espritedu, our pioneering school, one that will embrace all students, those who have followed a conventional route in life and those who, like me, have taken a non-conventional path. The communication of each person's unique process will bring about a creative cross-cultural education.