## <u>Your dark side is where your</u> <u>beauty lives</u>

I have written before about how powerful it can be to feel our so-called "negative" feelings. You know what I mean...there is a part of you that has probably felt rage, grief, loss or crippling self-doubt, also known as your dark side. These feelings are a part of the human experience - to be human means that we feel this way, some of the time. When we are struggling in life, trying to gain a foothold where it feels there is none, these feelings become more intense. The more intense they become, the harder they are to ignore, and the harder they are to ignore, the harder we try to ignore them by distracting ourselves with other things. Or we might break down, becoming overwhelmed by guilt that we aren't living the happy, positive life others may think we are. We might feel ashamed, that we act out in ways we know will only lead to more pain. Whatever it is that you feel during your dark times, know that it is this place that holds the rawest expression of your inner beauty.

What is beauty, after all? Is it shiny, perfect and flawless? If that were the case, then there would be far less of it in the world today, and certainly the natural world would not hold up to this standard. My definition of beauty is a transcendental quality of raw expression, that has the potential to connect us to something greater than ourselves. Isn't this what we all feel, when we are captivated by a compelling piece of art, or gaze upon the graceful form of a sculpted woman? Aren't we as equally moved by those things that stir deeper, more complex feelings, that reflect an artist's turmoil and pain? Any stimulus that so powerfully unleashes our emotional energy, whether negative or positive, allows us to access our own inner world that we are often so unaware of. Likely, the more out of balance your dark side is, the more you actively try to ignore it. It wants to be acknowledged, to be seen, to be loved for the role it plays in connecting you in emotion and experience to every other human being. It speaks to you of the beauty of life, which is like a double sided coin. With life there is always death. With pleasure, there is often pain. The day is always followed by night. By accepting your own dark side, and recognizing that *it is that which makes you beautiful*, you surrender to the experience of being alive.

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The next time you find yourself plummeting down a hole of despair, or paralyzed with fear or indecision, open yourself to fully embracing this place and seeing it as you would a work of art that deeply moves you. Not only is accepting your dark side a grounding practice, but it will exponentially increase the beauty you appreciate in everything, and everyone, around you.