



When Life Gets Messy and Won't Behave: The Positive Use of Ambiguity and Uncertainty

By Penney Peirce

On a scale of 1-10, how addicted are you to certainty? How much are you validated by being stylish, or even eccentric? How uncomfortable are you when you don't know immediately how people feel or what the outcome will be? Everywhere your mind must have a certain result or a clear definition of who you are or how things work, you are blocked from receiving higher intelligence and genius creativity. Too much definition is a contraction that stops the flow of you becoming all you can be.

On the other hand, how unconscious are you about clutter and disorder? How much do you tolerate distraction? How much do you avoid making

decisions? What sort of results do you get when you don't commit to something all the way? When you accept and live in a messy, disordered world, you are also blocked from receiving the highest quality creations and results. Too much fuzziness stops the flow of you becoming all you can be.

THERE IS A POSITIVE SIDE TO NEGATIVE EXTREMES.

To open intuition and receive the highest source of guidance and the best results, we need to move through life with a loose grip, with trust that the flow will bring what we need next. We must notice the ideas that have weight and power as well





as just-rightness and juice. Sometimes we don't see the whole picture because it is still forming as we go along. It's important to be able to wait as situations ripen, watching carefully for the entire picture to come into focus: "It's a dog! No, wait—it's a boy! No, the boy is riding a tricycle with a dog on his lap! No, the boy and dog are riding a tricycle on a tree-lined street!"

It's just as important to be able to focus and concentrate, to penetrate into ideas to find deeper meaning, to choose what's most real. Go ahead and commit to something! There are always opportunities to change direction. But start. If you tolerate too much disorder, uncertainty, distraction, and messiness, you may have trouble finding the clarity you need. It's true that the mind often becomes like the environment you're surrounded by.

OUT OF CONTROL AND IN THE FLOW!

I once took an extended driving trip to Colorado and New Mexico. On the way, I experienced an unexpected blizzard in June at Vail Pass, blowing snow sideways across the freeway and closing the road for a time—and me in my thin summer clothes! Then, as I dropped down into Denver, the clutch on my car failed, and it was a harrowing ride down the mountain. Clutchless in Colorado, and having surprise expensive repairs to my car, I contemplated these experiences of being out of control.

I reminded myself that "I am in the flow" and "Life is taking care of me—even though I can't see how right now." I let go and *decided* the trip could go whichever way it wanted and I'd benefit, no matter what. It was then, as I was able to re-engage my gears consciously, that my "flow" accelerated; I moved into a two-week phase of having synchomesh activities and appointments on "Indian time" in Santa Fe. My datebook was a scrawl of crossed out appointments, new appointments with directions to out-of-the-way places, arrows pointing to new times, and phone numbers without names. And yet, it all worked.

Off the trail but on the path.

—Gary Snyder (Buddhist, Poet)

Those weeks were chaotic when looked at with my mind's usual penchant for structure and neatness, and magical when seen through the eyes of trust. I had serendipitous path-crossings at bakeries with people I needed to meet, received data I needed from unlikely sources, and allowed myself to be shaped into the forms needed by those I engaged with. A visit to the flea market found me standing next to a country western superstar; a talk I was to give turned into a different talk at the last minute, visiting an interesting house allowed me to meet a golden eagle, and events gathered like nonverbal messages to reveal new direction. I'm convinced that letting the "messiness" happen allowed a more creative interconnection between events and omens. Odd things were given permission to appear that I might not have normally seen.

AMBIGUITY AND MESSINESS CAN BE FERTILE STATES.

A friend wrote to me, speaking of his interest in the power of uncertainty and ambiguity and how he thought people who seek locked-down answers miss so much of life. This got me thinking, and I wrote back, "Ambiguity and uncertainty are a big part of intuitive openness—though there's a fine-line balance between honoring this kind of 'disorder' while loving natural order and beauty. Sometimes we are impatient for results and don't pay attention long enough for enough variables to reveal themselves so solutions can be whole and complete. Also, we get ego strokes for rapid problem-solving and being definite and certain. There is some odd, perhaps distorted sense of self that comes from 'handling' things competently, as if 'I am the only one in charge.'"

"Maybe when we focus on finding answers and materializing results, we aren't trusting the natural process of life that materializes reality harmoniously so everyone receives what they need in each moment. Ambiguity and messiness are so often the fertile states that precede renewed self-express-

sion. They interrupt the fixations of the mind so new insights can be noticed.”

UNCERTAINTY AND BOREDOM ARE A NATURAL PART OF THE CREATION CYCLE.

Near the end of a creation cycle when the final form has materialized, boredom often occurs as the most efficient way to disengage from the old creative process. As attention drifts, opens, and inhabits the old form less and less, the results you just achieved begin to dissolve like a dream in the morning. Life seems to enter a time of chaos where there are either too many directions or none. Really, this is what enables intuition to occur—it’s the open space that’s necessary for imagination to enter and do its playful creative work.

We don’t like this part of the cycle much, as it feels somehow deathlike. How different from the beginning of a new creative cycle when curiosity, motive, and one direction appear clearly, passionately! In the early part of creativity, we can see and have order in the finite world. *When certainty and definition are appropriate, an idea has taken hold of YOU, not the other way around, and IT provides the motive force.* It’s time to commit, plan, and take action.

At the end of a cycle, however, we must greatly expand our notion of order to include infinite possibilities and complexity. *When uncertainty and ambiguity are appropriate, something bigger is seeding itself into your awareness, and it’s often SO big, it takes time to download completely.* Then it’s time to remain open and receptive.

Ambiguity is something I really respond to. I like the complexity of it.

—Robert Redford

So let’s be aware of some subtleties: the difference between the healthy dissolution and resulting creative ambiguity that come when a form has outworn its usefulness vs. the unhealthy chronic disorder and clutter we often put up with in our minds and homes that blocks us from seeing our next true move. And how about the difference between taking authentic, focused new action vs. the hyperactivity we often use to avoid the Void?

If you’re irritated or depressed, you may be avoiding boredom. By facing and entering boredom, you’ll discover uncertainty and ambiguity. And by facing and entering uncertainty, you’ll discover what’s possible. You will also find Presence—your true consciousness—sitting quietly at the center of uncertainty, happily BEING with all possibility. Join it. Sit there with it for an undetermined amount of time. While you wait, appreciate and simply radiate. Let yourself be filled.

Soon the magic will occur, as the undying spirit of Who You Are rises again, without reason or logic, on a wave of potential. When it’s time to act, your body will act almost without the mind’s permission. Then, instead of being moved by the fear of chaos, failure, or loss, your sole desire will be to create and experience beauty.



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