



Go Your Own Way

Expressing Your Individuality Within the Family Group Dynamic

If there is one thing the upcoming holiday season can highlight, it is how aligned - or misaligned - we are with our family.

Aside from DNA, we share so many commonalities with our fellow family members: from childhood memories and shared history, to strong emotional bonds and ties, and yet we can feel so different. What if feeling different and wanting to 'go your own way' isn't a bad thing; what if it is a necessary stage of our growth?

Let's consider the function of family, particularly in our younger, formative years. In terms of chakra consciousness, our family foundation and sense of tribal connection is associated with the base chakra, also known as the root chakra. The central issue governing the base chakra is our physical survival, such as food, shelter and safety. As a vulnerable infant and young child, our literal survival is dependent upon belonging to a 'tribe' who cares for our needs and protects us from potential threats.

In a world of change and possible chaos, each family member acts as a reference point, and messing with those outlined roles is like messing with the coordinates on a map. However, the family structure and security that equalled safety as a child can feel like a straightjacket as an adult.

As we get older and experience the wider world around us, we start to question the unconscious programs that we unquestioningly adopted from our family that govern how we think, feel and behave. We may start to have thoughts, like *"These people no longer understand me."* or *"I just can't relate to my family's view of the world."* When we enter sacral chakra consciousness, we begin to experience growth impulses that urge us to challenge the group consensus in order to explore our own individuality. To do this, we need to break away from the family/tribe/group mentality to discover who we are, and how we want to be in the world.

This can take many forms, such as: leaving the family business to pursue your true passion; dating a partner your family dislikes; opting for a simple country lifestyle rather than a corporate city life; dropping out of uni to travel abroad; moving away from the family base to live interstate or overseas; renouncing the family faith and exploring other belief systems; or choosing to celebrate occasions in your own way, or perhaps not at all.

For many people, stepping away from the tribe hasn't been an easy process; feelings of guilt, sadness or anger can easily arise. This is especially true when family members resist the change they see in us, preferring to hold on to a past version of ourselves, perhaps feeling a sense of safety in the known.

Similarly, parents who wish to branch out in their later years often encounter strong opposition from adult children who would rather they maintain the well-established status quo.

People who have *not* broken away from the tribe consciousness to explore their own individuality, do not like to see others doing it. It threatens their sense of identity and casts doubt over their life choices. There's the subconscious thought of: *"Well, if I don't get to live the life I want, why should you?"*

Although it may seem melodramatic, it can appear to other family members that your actions are threatening the entire tribe. Likewise, stepping out of the tribe triggers your own primal instinct for survival: *"If I step out and fail, I'll stand out, and I'll be all alone."*

If you doubt the intensity of fear surrounding self-directed action, then take a moment now to reflect on the otherwise confident adults you know (people who are well into their 40s, 50s and 60s) who would prefer not to 'rock the boat' and would rather 'keep the peace' than be honest with their parents or family members.

The Universe can be mysterious, but the Universe can also be predictable, providing us with growth opportunities again (and again!) to speak our truth and act with integrity.

To create more awareness and greater choice in your life, ask yourself the following questions:

- How much of what I do is because I feel as though I have no other choice?
- What changes would I make and what action would I take if I didn't care what other people thought of me?
- How can I honestly, responsibly and lovingly communicate who I truly am and what I would truly like to do?

If we want people to accept our life choices, then it follows for us to accept theirs.

Wherever you find yourself this holiday season - seated around the family dinner table or happily sitting alone on the beach - take a moment to embrace and celebrate your inimitable individuality.

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