

Oprah's Insight

I have never been more afraid than when I went to trial in Texas for allegedly defaming the beef industry. Lawyers, advisers, and security specialists all had told me that the “climate” was against me and that I would be walking into a dangerous situation---physically and otherwise.

I went anyway. Although I was scared, I believed I had done nothing wrong and had faith that I would be able to prove it. I also trusted that even if I proved nothing, I would be better off standing up for what I believed.

I trusted that everything happens for a reason, even when we're not wise enough to see it or when it's not readily apparent. So whenever trouble comes my way, I ask, “What is this here to teach me? What am I not seeing?” I trust the answer will come.

Six months before the trial, I asked and asked, but no answer came. Even while packing up the producers and crew to travel south to cattle country---a journey *nobody* wanted to take with me---I still had not made sense of it all. *This can't just be about burgers*, I thought. *What is really going on here? What am I not getting?*

The answer came to me two weeks into the almost six-week trial, while I was sitting on the witness stand. The prosecuting attorney had in effect told the jury that I was a manipulative, malicious liar who had conspired against his clients to attack their business and livelihood. The cross-examiner was flailing his arms, pointing his fingers, and spewing saliva. My attorney made a motion asking the judge to stop him from “yelling and pointing his finger at my client.”

Overruled.

So the prosecutor continued. He seemed to be getting louder and louder.

The louder he yelled, the calmer I became. I got very still inside and said to myself, “That is not who I am.” In that moment, the answer I had been waiting for revealed itself. I realized that whether you're on trial or going through a trial--difficulty, pain, illness, heartache---the trial stands outside of you, flailing, ranting and raging, trying to tell you who you are.

All trials force the question, Who are you, really? And you must trust yourself to answer. **It's up to each of us to get very still and say, "This is who I am." No one else defines your life. Only you do.**

With that insight, the trial was over for me. It no longer mattered what the verdict was, whether we proved our case to the jury or not. As far as I was concerned, I had already won.

I stepped down from the witness stand, relieved and happy. I even told my executive producer, who had yet to testify, "You're going to love it up there. You get to see who you really are."

I trust in the ebb and flow of the universe.

I trust that life is bigger than what I can see. I trust that there is a divine order beyond my control.

And I trust that no matter what happens, I will be all right. – Oprah Winfrey

See also: http://www.madcowboy.com/01_BookOP.000.html