

~~Let me tell you my~~ Here is the story of my experience ~~with~~ trying to remove a tree stump from my backyard. ~~Before I~~ Let me start, just know it was ~~by~~ mentioning this was my first time ~~to~~ dealing with ~~this~~ with such a situation.

A few _____ ago, ~~In the backyard, we had a Crepe Myrtle tree that needed to be removed. w~~ We decided to do some backyard renovations. ~~In order to make room for a patio extension, we had to remove a Crepe Myrtle tree that was smack dab in the middle of the area where we had to pour concrete. and as a part of the plan, we would be extending the patio and we needed to pour concrete in the same place that tree was.~~

I told my wife with a confident tone to not worry about hiring someone to remove the tree and that me, the man of the house, the defender, the mighty protector, ~~would~~ will take care of ~~that tree~~ it. I purchased a chain saw, and one morning I walked up to the tree, ~~revving the chainsaw, like all lumberjacks do, with the sound of the chainsaw and let the roaring sound filling echo in~~ the air. I wore a sleeveless shirt and made sure I ~~was~~ am sweating ~~ing~~ a little bit so I can ~~just enough to~~ maximize the dramatic effect. I used the chainsaw and cut the tree down. I felt great. It was a moment where my man card was glowing and vibrating. Okay, enough of that scene. The tree was cut. I told myself the hard part ~~is~~ was over, and ~~now~~ all I ~~had~~ have to do ~~was~~ is remove the stump.

I dug ~~a little~~ around the stump ~~a little~~, and, for some reason, the more I dug around it, the bigger ~~it~~ the tree stump got. It was weird. I ~~thought~~ imagined this stump ~~was to be~~ a little bigger than the ~~slender Crepe Myrtle trunk~~ but not that much bigger. ~~b~~ But that did not seem ~~to be~~ the case. It was like the roots were so much bigger ~~than the tree itself~~. I kept digging the dirt around the tree, and it hit me that the root system ~~is~~ was probably as big as the tree itself and much deeper than I ~~initially~~ thought. ~~This revelation was~~ I was ~~shocking~~ ed and ~~With a deep sigh and an overwhelming feeling of defeat, I~~ sat down next to the stump, wondering how in the world I ~~can~~ could complete this task ~~to~~ this. ~~Deep down, I knew that this fight between the tree stump and I would end one way and one way only, yet I still~~ I tried to push the stump with my foot, kicked it a couple of times, ~~and~~ used my perceived strong arms to attempt ~~and to~~ shake it, ~~But... and~~ nothing. ~~I couldn't move it.~~ The stump was so ~~deeply~~ deep rooted in the ground with lots of branches that varied in size. ~~I couldn't move it.~~ I walked back inside the house feeling ~~conquered~~ so defeated.

The next day ~~was a fresh start. I came to the task at hand with a clear head and a new approach. So,~~ I sat down next to the stump and ~~started using~~ used an electric saw to cut the branches one by one. I figured ~~this would be the first step, to the first step is to start cutting all the surrounding root branches feeding into the stump one by one. That way I can~~ starve it, ~~and so~~ little by little, it ~~would~~ lose its strength. It took me hours, and after ~~3-three~~ days ~~worth~~ of work, I started to see a small dent ~~in~~ into cutting down the root branches away from the center. I was surprised with the degree of complexity and intertwining of the branches and how big and spread ~~out~~ they ~~are~~ were under the ground. Who would have known all this ~~was~~ existed underground?!! ~~I surely didn't.~~ I realized in order to disconnect all the intertwined branches, ~~I;~~ I ~~would~~ will have to take the time to cut them one branch at a time. **At the end of the third day, and for some reason, I decided it made sense in my head to start pulling the stump, thinking I could** ~~can~~ pull it out, but **again it did not move.** I was shocked ~~and,~~ frustrated, and ~~I even~~ said some words I stopped using ~~since~~ I was in high school. I tried to figure out ~~what was~~ what's holding it to the ground. Then I realized there were so many other branches and roots that were straight under the stump. I lost hope and walked back inside the house, questioning my life decisions.

A couple of weeks went by, and finally, I ~~was ready to tackle~~ approached that stump that seemed to be made of concrete, ~~and by~~ just looking at it, it looked different. It changed. It look ~~ed~~ ill. It looked weak. ~~It's hard to put into words~~ I can't really describe it ~~what exactly was different~~, but it gave me the vibe ~~of it was~~ dying and fading away. I ~~didn't~~ hadn't done anything to it ~~for~~ in a couple of weeks, so I was surprised ~~to~~ at the organic transformation. ~~Excited at the potential of walking away as a winner,~~ I start shaking that dying stump. ~~I~~ and thought I could remove it, but I still couldn't. ~~It was then that I gave up;~~ I finally ~~caved~~ and called a ~~professional~~ company, ~~and~~ they came out and used chainsaws, shovels, and garden hoes to take care of that stump. They removed all the branches around it and made it look like there was no tree there and only a hole to fill with dirt, then ~~pour~~ concrete ~~poured~~ over it.

Time went by, and one day I woke up early and made my coffee, then went outside and stood over the area where the tree was (now ~~it is~~ concrete) and started reflecting ~~on~~ what that experience could have taught me about life. I have realized some important life lessons from removing a stump; ~~I;~~ I will share them with you:

This experience brought up the importance and consequences of being integrated into a healthy community. So, I want you to start transforming the story with its details from that perspective ~~and that's how the for the~~ next part of the chapter ~~will do~~. In this story, you and I will be the tree, ~~and imagine we are~~ a full-grown Crepe Myrtle tree. What people see is everything but the root system. People will see what's above the ground like your trunk, and the bigger and stronger it is, the more compliments you will receive. Your branches and beautiful flowers can be seen at a distance. People come close to you and sometimes stand under your branches, leaves, and flowers to enjoy the shade and scenery. While you are enjoying what everyone can see above the ground, you have a root system underground, a foundation that enabled you to ~~look like this above the ground and your strength as become that~~ a 15-foot tree, and your strength solely ~~comesing~~ from the degree of complexity and connectivity of your root system ~~is~~.

Your root system is composed of your family, community, friends, and other sources or outlets that ~~comprehensively collectively allowed provide~~ you ~~to be strong strength~~. Imagine if there are outside forces that ~~desire intend~~ to weaken ~~you~~ and destroy you. They know if they come straight to your stem, they won't be able to remove you from the ground ~~and it doesn't no~~ matter how many storms, wind, shaking, kicking, and punching your stump ~~would gets~~. Nothing will defeat you if you have a strong root system.

But wait, does everyone have a strong root system? Can I purchase one? ~~Or can I make a complete is it possible to make a radical~~ life transformation and get a brand ~~new~~ root system to withstand all this? The answer is no. Well, yes and no. You can ~~decide make the decision~~ to align your life around healthy family members, community, friends, and outlets (like healthy habits), but ~~time is the most expensive catalyst the most expensive catalyst that~~ you can't buy ~~is time~~. Only time spent will allow you to build that strong system. It takes time. It takes effort. It takes determination and consistency. You will have to ~~constantly always~~ test your environment to ~~ensure make sure~~ it is healthy and nurture it to grow. It all happens underground, so ~~manya lot of~~ people give up because the unhealthy outlets sometimes seem so vibrant and lucrative. Believe me when I say the time invested in spent investing improving in your mental, emotional, spiritual, and physical health will be worth it pay off because all those branches start to intertwine and continue to flow produce healthy substances to feed my your stump. ~~Add to that~~ By incorporating healthy people (family, friends, and so on...) ~~you're into~~ your root ~~system~~, you will create will become more a more robust, more complex root system that is and harder to break. Now your stump is getting powerful very strong and, looks healthy and vibrant. This was is such a good, encouraging, and motivating paragraph. Isn't it?! Alright, let me add some drama in the next ~~section paragraph~~.

WARNING - Sarcasm might be included ~~in on~~ the next section. Reader discretion is advised.

Sometimes I meet people that remind me of the weather ~~ed ing~~ stump, ~~and they are suffering~~ in pain. On the ~~outside surface~~, they might seem to have good things going for them, like such as a good job, money, a nice house, and ~~a lot of they seem to be around so many~~ family members and friends around them all the time. Have you met someone like this? Or are YOU the weathering stump, and you don't know why? Okay, let's talk more and see if there is hope for you or not.

~~Do you R~~remember how the healthy stump ~~went from being healthy to become turned into~~ a weathered ~~ing~~ dying one? ~~It all started Well, it didn't not directly by~~ attacking the stump ~~directly to begin with~~. Instead, it started by gradually cutting off the branches, one ~~branch at a time by one~~. ~~In At~~ the beginning, the stump doesn't care if you cut branches slowly. It is strong and ~~feeds has been feeding~~ off the branches for so long; it, it has some internal storage. This is how unhealthy and toxic people or habits ~~start entering are introduced in~~ your life. ~~At the beginning first~~, you don't think ~~so much about it, it and there is no real you don't really suffer any~~ damage because you definitely are in control over of those toxic outlets ... or are you?

As time go by passes, more and more healthy branches are being cut off, but who cares? You are strong, right? You can withstand anything. ~~These And it is happening underground so in reality no one can see these~~ Unhealthy Toxic Outlets (I'll start calling them UTOs) are happening underground, so no one can really see them. You are enjoying the gratification of those who compliment you on your red and beautiful roses and nice, healthy trunk above ground ~~and the nice compliments on your big trunk~~. You are taking all this in, and who cares about the stump and any UTOs. ~~Did Have~~ you ever heard the story of the Boiling Frog, or others call it the Boiling Frog Syndrome? If yes, continue with me, and if not, STOP and Google it. I can't teach you everything... smh.

Now the tsunami hits, and you suddenly realize you are sick, anxious, sad, depressed, unhappy, ungrateful, and that glow about you is not there anymore. Maybe the outside, what appears above ~~the~~ ground, is the same, but your root system is infested with UTOs. It has been happening for so long, but you are looking for a switch you can flip to get back to the "Before-UTO" version of yourself. Yeah, it doesn't work this way. I wish it did. You are not looking for a switch, because a switch does not exist. Stay with me, and I will tell you what you ~~will~~ need. But before we move forward, I need you to stop, and do this.

I need you to access your preconscious state ~~to~~ you can take the time to search if you have any UTOs. Here is what you need to do. Find your favorite music playlist where you easily disconnect from your conscious state (I have several like a Bryan Adams' playlist on Pandora), make yourself a drink (coffee, wine, water, alcohol, or a cocktail), find a spot (backyard, home office, toilet, bed, or even in the shower), and finally give yourself some time to get into that state of mind. Start asking yourself questions about how you used to feel and what changed and discern your emotions at certain life moments.

Did it work? Did you find your UTOs? Or maybe you thought of someone that has a weathering and dying stump? Or a loved one that is deep into UTOs? Are you going to share this article with them? Quickly dDo it now, really quick and let's keep going. I promise it will get better.

Congratulations on performing your self-discovery session on finding your UTOs! Now after you spent the time to perform a self-discovery session to all your UTOs, congratulations! Now, it is time to start working on the detox process. Did you notice that? I used the word "process." Yeah, it is not a switch, my friend, but a dial. A dial is a process of dialing down something and dialing up something else. A process. Not a switch ... oh, and it takes time. A switch is an instant action with an on and off switchfunction. Usually, those changes are unsustainable, and they won't last. Here is why I chose a dial. My idea is to turn the dial down to UTOs while turning it up on healthy outlets. That way, you take the pressure off yourself, so if you ~~fell~~ fall back ~~to~~ on a UTO in the process, it is not a sign of failure because you assumed the switch was "off" and wasted time asking why it happened and risk giving up. With a dial, you know you might fall back, but it is a part of the process, and you need to continue to turn up that dial on healthy outlets and as low as possible to UTOs. Then give it time and spread some essential seasonings on it like: dDesire, dDiscipline, and cConsistency.

It is not going to be easy. You will have to make tough decisions and end relationships you don't want to end. I am about to drop a cliché on you right now. Ready? It is not going to be easy, but it is going to be worth it. People will criticize you for changing, and you will have to make life changes that makes you look like an outlier to your UTOs. Well, my friend, choose ROI over EGO. Your future ROI (Return on Investment) is much more beneficial to you than your current EGO.

I have enjoyed going through this journey with you, and I hope you have found this beneficial to you or ~~to~~ someone you love. Before we go separate away-ways back to reality, make sure and to subscribe so I can connect with you and notify you with-of future content. Bye for now!