



RENOVATION OF THE SOUL

—Joy Carroll, Ed.D., Licensed Psychologist

The past few months have been a whirlwind of chaos, upheaval and drywall dust as the last phase of the Gamble House renovation brought its share of challenges. In an old house, the transformation of dreary, unusable space into something functional and appealing is always an arduous task.

The word “renovate” means to restore to life or restore to a former better state. Restoration is hard work, often requiring the tedious and difficult removal of deteriorated and unstable elements before repair can take place. Proper preparation and a sound foundation are crucial if the restoration is to last. Structural issues must be addressed or the finished product will be unsound, inviting future problems no matter how beautiful the exterior.

These principles easily serve as metaphors for personal restoration. Renovation of the soul demands much of us—forcing us to reach deep into our psyches, rebuilding weak inner structures and scraping away obsolete concepts and dysfunctional baggage that compromise the permanency of positive change.

By its very definition, renovation is impossible in the absence of change. Deep introspection and personal refurbishment is not easy, especially when painful demolition of the unworkable is required. Sometimes in the difficult process, our original plan for restoration must be completely redrafted. Yet it is through this work that we often find purpose and meaning, discovering untapped resources and unmined life strategies.

Renovation can evoke mixed emotions. As Sydney Harris put it, “Our dilemma is that we hate change and love it at the same time; what we really want is for things to remain the same but get better”. But nothing in life is constant except change—and although sometimes painful, change is perpetual evidence of life. And ultimately, the substantial investment that renovation of the soul requires will always yield an abundant return.