

In-Between Time

For the Ashland Daily Tidings

By Karen Jeffery

I ran into a young friend yesterday and asked what he was up to this summer? Work? College classes? Taking some time off? It got me thinking about MY summer off, before my last year at SOU, and how precious all that time was. How joy-filled. How creative. I wandered grey shorelines at the coast, practiced deep breathing in redwood forests, escaped to solitude in a log cabin in the Caribou Wilderness, took long, quiet walks all around Ashland. It was a magical time. I re-set habits, defragged my mind, discovered new and beautiful patterns.

All our breaks - the breaks between terms, the weekends between weeks, the daunting hours waiting, the space between seasons, the place of daydreams, the moments between thoughts, breaths - all those unprogrammed times are calling us.

Like the transformation of a caterpillar to a butterfly, we do not know what these times may bring, what is before 'ah-ha' or beyond death. So much happens in the inbetween-ness. So much that is important. These times can let the soul through, put us in touch with our higher self, our inner child, a richly satisfying void. They encourage inspiration and clarity. They give us a peek at our unlimited potential, creativity, intention. They nourish us for the other times.

Deepak Chopra reminds us that to pause is to STOP:

Stop

Take three deep breaths

Observe what is happening in the body/mind

Proceed with loving-kindness and compassion

This Rx helps move our pauses into daylight. This 'be here now' prescription shifts us to NOW, the present - the place where life happens and magic lives.

I once took a whole month off. I had sold two companies and relocated to a small Pacific island, where I greeted the day walking the crescent beach that fronted my home, as mango clouds dotted the horizon and kokotou sailed over palm trees and ironwoods. I kayaked, floating in a lagoon that was aqua to the reef, where it transformed to indigo. I lived in those delicious, breathless moments for weeks. After years of workaholism, time off was healing balm. My meditation was a deep listening - to the conversation between wind and trees, to the sound of ideas, the syncopation of heartbeat and breath, silence.

But a woman does not live by mangos and moonlight, and before long I was back to brokering boutique resorts and private islands, fisheries, wineries, and international investments throughout the South Pacific. Today I'm on the back burner in my mind, stuck in a kind of not knowing, a space between what I was and what I am becoming.

My push has always propelled me...until now. Now I live by my wits and imaginings, by vegetables and adventures, by words. By clear intentions. I live in the inbetweenness -- between jobs, between diagnoses, between dawns and star-gazing and the magic between friends. Oh, that magic - the beautiful radiance between souls, spirit speaking to spirit as joy dances in the space between us, weaving us whole.

Pauses - whether short or long, moments or weeks - refresh. Reboot. Retool. Re-imagine. They allow us to examine (with love) what is going on, to look at what it takes to move on. Sometimes it takes a trip to Portugal or an apricot/walnut baguette from the French bakery in my little Oregon town. Or a foreign film, a text from my son, a morning walk to campus. We live on moments in nature, quiet morning coffees, silence with friends. We live on journeys and passions and the simple pleasures of common joys, and days sunlit with happiness. And sometimes, if lucky, on mangoes and moonlight.