

The Power of Pause

Transitions: The Gifts of Change
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**“The most beautiful thing we can experience is the mysterious. It is the source of all true art and all science. He to whom this emotion is a stranger, who can no longer pause to wonder and stand rapt in awe, is as good as dead; his eyes are closed.”--
Albert Einstein.**

Suspended between writing projects again and confronting the continued financial uncertainty of these challenging economic times, I am practicing what I preach these days: accepting the unknown.

A few small projects for which I am passionate about have dribbled in, but they barely cover my heating bill. Still, I am grateful, for every time I get to write about subjects that benefit others, or help others articulate their skills and talents through the written word, I am in joy. I am blessed to love what I do for a living, and that I've also been trusted by many others to guide them in finding their life purpose and passions.

Professional accomplishments aside, I am human. Writers and coaches experience economic downturns, too. The truth is transitions test the best of us, sometimes bringing us to our knees where we question every choice we ever made. Yet, angst often precedes a rebirth, resulting in a letting go of one way of being that has inhibited us before.

Like many solo breadwinners who are temporarily without paid work or other means of financial back-up, I've had my moments fretting about how I'll pay the mortgage or the tax bill in the next week, or wondering when I'll hear back from my two pending proposals. I've tossed and turned through some sleepless nights praying for a miracle. I've cursed silently about not having a spouse to lean on or any extended family to lend a hand, and I've scared myself into deep feelings of abandonment, feeling that I'm on an island without any reserves.

After spiraling through my fear, and applying every coaching technique I know to shift to a greater sense of well-being, I have come to embrace one of the three most powerful words I know in transition: PAUSE (the other two are pace and participate).

Following up every job lead, networking for new opportunities, exploring other streams of income including fun, part-time work have all been part of my action plan. Now, I am choosing to find the gifts in this pause of life, the time between projects. My clients have often told me that my teaching them to pause – whether negotiating a new contract or allowing in a new relationship—has been one of their greatest gains from working with me. From my personal and professional experience, it is in those moments of pause where we get to change our life stories from what we might have done in the past to how we can now do it differently to better serve our new dreams or goals.

Becoming my own client, I am choosing this pause to accept the stop signs before me as a temporary reprieve from being “out there” as I have much of my life, always a competent go-getter. I’m giving myself full days to rest and recover from a bad cold, versus simply trying to sneak in a half hour nap before the kids return home from school. I’ve taken the time to have a 30-minute conversation with my neighbor rather than quickly chat about house maintenance issues. I listened to my jeweler talk of his adventures in buying a diamond mine and collaborating on a new patent for cutting exquisite gem stones as he fixed my daughter’s bracelet. I spent an entire afternoon lingering with a cup of tea, listening to mellow music as I watched the cows graze my backyard.

Well aware of my financial responsibilities going forward, I know the riches gained from this recent pause and other time-off periods during my life aren’t found in a check book. They’re in my soul now. Going slow and being aware of all around me, particularly nature and the people who cross my path, is part of me. Receiving support and guidance instead of falsely believing I have to do it all myself is another new lesson for me, which I expect some other entrepreneurs who thrive on being independent may also be learning during these transitional times.

By briefly stopping and releasing my ego and will to the unknown (which is a lifelong process), I am becoming better acquainted with the mysteries of life. I don’t have all the answers, even though I’ve had the drive to make things happen before and done the work necessary to lay the foundation for a solid, steady business. My soul is now practicing the art of letting go and trusting new opportunities for supporting my family are being paved for me even though I don’t know the road. I am quietly listening for hints, observing others who are passionate about their work, gently sharing my current dilemma with caring people, staying open to suggestions, and spending time in solitude praying and meditating.

In this time of transition, I’m finally learning to patiently see what is brought to me--and in the waiting, enjoying the present moment, breath by breath, cherishing every second of this gift of life, whether it delivers pain or bliss, knowing the contrasts make the joys of the journey all the more meaningful. Now, that’s surrender.

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