

“it is always important to know when something has reached its end. Closing circles, shutting doors, finishing chapters, it doesn’t matter what we call it; what matters is to leave in the past those moments in life that are over.”

— Paulo Coelho -The Zahir

I used to fear endings, to the point where I would think about endings long before they would happen. Endings brought up some type of dread in my body and produced a visceral sadness that would come over me long before the actual ending would happen. Examples of this began in childhood. Things like the ending of a summer job lifeguarding, ending of seeing my cousins from Pa who would visit for 2 weeks every year, my brother leaving for the Navy, my alcoholic father leaving our family forever to move with his new girlfriend. Graduation from high school and leaving that safe nest.

Then came the bigger endings. My grandfather dying, watching my beloved grandmother age, witnessing nature begin to cry out in pain, watching my children grow and move into their own lives and out of the house, retiring from a vocation that provided me with passion and purpose , the sudden deaths of several people I was very close with, living in a body that is aging and asking me to honor that reality, and now the ending of a 35 year marriage and relationship as I believed it to be.

Today I sit here writing this in the dark, just before the rising of the light that will bring in this new day, and recognize that the fear I once held has softened. The story I held around endings has changed and the acceptance I have allowed has come through surrender. This experience of being betrayed has shifted me. NOTHING in life has taken me to my knees like this. NOTHING. I have spent the last 15 months slowly beginning the rise out of the ashes of an ending that is like the fires that destroy much of the earth on a regular basis. I look toward the examples that nature points me to and wonder what is the message I am to understand.

Years ago there were wildfires east of where I live that destroyed much of the pine barrens along Sunrise Highway. I remember driving by and looking at the charred and blackened forest and having a sense of sadness and also a deep sense of knowing that even though this looked to my eyes like a bad thing that mother earth knew what to do to heal. Today, years later the lush forest is back and the remembrance of the barren earth is but a memory.

Aging and my meditation practice has most definitely been the biggest factors in allowing me to see that the reality of this life is to accept that all things are changing in every moment. When I try to hold onto ANYTHING and keep it still, this not only causes me to suffer but also holds me back from allowing a natural curiosity to come up. The fear and uncertainty that come with the not knowing what happens next inhibits the childlike excitement that WILL occur if I just let go,

just as it did when I would wake on those early mornings of Christmas Day filled with wonder, excitement and delight.

The difference - when I was a child- I trusted. My body, heart and mind were unabashedly connected to the source of love and care that I do believe hold me and all of us always. I have to choose to let the challenges of a life bring me closer to that source and not wall off my heart and resist the parts of life that my story tells me are not going according to the script I wrote.

So today when I am asked how I feel about transitions and endings and all things that point to change, I can honestly say with an acceptance that I have never felt like I do now, that I hold a space of appreciation for what has been, a reverence for the way this experience and the humans involved in the experience have shaped me, and loved me and left indelible fingerprints on my heart. At the same time I have a true trust that what is to come next will be the necessary next right thing for my souls growth.

The uncertainty of not knowing actually brings a slight sensation that points to excitement that I feel in my belly. The emptying so I open to the possibility of receiving more. Life and the experience that I have been given have shown me that creation has always been filling the basket of my life with things that are better and better even if my mind tells me the opposite.

It is like a never ending Christmas morning, but only when I allow the transitions, and say the good byes, with grace and surrender, that the sadness does not drag me below the surface for too long, and I can look forward to the the next right thing for my life. What was once fear and control and a trying desperately to hold on and stop life, has been replaced with trust that is surrender TO life. In each moment that I have the courage to do this I always feel held in the arms of love. I believe that if this can be true for me that it is true for all of us.