

In Search of Adventure

by Diane Herbert

It is a common and great temptation to think adventure is something that takes place in the future (this weekend, our next vacation, when we retire), involves a risky activity (safari hunt, hang gliding, etc.) or requires traveling, preferably some place exotic.

Eckhart Tolle in his book *The Power of Now* begs to differ and invites us instead to discover the wonder in the present moment. He challenges us to start noticing the world around us at every given minute by using our five senses. Not only is this a centering exercise, but it opens our eyes to things we would otherwise take for granted or tend to dismiss as the ordinary.

Being mindfully present requires one to be diligent to discover what otherwise goes unnoticed: the rays of sun cascading through the window onto the floor, the succulent peach plucked from a tree, the chirping of the birds on the windowsill, or the warm embrace of a summer breeze. This kind of adventure doesn't cost a dime but only the conscious effort to take notice. When one develops the art of noticing, life takes on a more friendly and playful note.

For some reason, discomfort seems to be a stronger emotion; it weighs in heavier. Pleasures tend to be fleeting while problems tend to permeate our mood and sense of well being. Discomfort seizes our attention more and mires our focus in negativity. It leaves more of an aftertaste, and if left unchecked, we can see the clouds more than the silver lining of life.

You can combat this innate tendency by keeping a daily list of joys. The practice of keeping a gratitude journal creates a mindset of blessedness. You not only



receive the pleasure of revisiting the abundance on a given day, but your journal will remind you of how much more good happens than bad. It is an intentional ritual of seeing the glass as full. Eventually we are habituated to see with new eyes and to notice the delight in everything.

Adventure is unexpectedly found in the most dreaded of tasks. When duty calls, one can ask a powerful question: How can I make this fun, easy, or simple? Turning on favorite music while scrubbing the kitchen floor or eating a favorite snack before calculating your taxes returns are not only strategies for avoiding procrastination but ways to bring a little magic to the most mundane tasks. Neurological research shows it lightens the brain, not only easing stress but increasing concen-

tration levels.

On a deeper level, adventure is a heartfelt desire to make the best of any situation. It's a choice to see that circumstance does not control us, but our reaction to it. It is the stubborn and courageous response that we will have the last word no matter what is dealt to us. A friend undergoing chemo for the fourth time planned a "wiggling out" party for her and her friends when she began to lose her hair. A gaggle of girlfriends carpoled to the nearest wig store—with cameras and champagne in tow—to celebrate the art of wig shopping and the invincibility of friendship. Only two rules applied: all had to try on wigs and be willing to laugh up a storm. They hooted and howled long after the store closed.

Adventurers aren't those who travel far lands to discover treasures. They are the wise souls who journey within to find the joy and magic of any situation. They seek to unearth the power and magic in themselves knowing it's not circumstance that determines happiness, but one's reaction to any situation. It's the woman who signs up for ballroom dancing on the heels of a divorce as she figures it's better to cha-cha and rumba her way through her

tears than to sit home lamenting her sorrows. It's the father in the last stages of disease who recalls his childhood love of swimming and orders a pool and deck as his last gift to his grandchildren.

Adventurers practice celebrating other's successes. They bid the green-eyed monster farewell and opt instead to take delight in the happiness of others. Consider sending congratulatory cards, throwing a party in honor of an achievement, or simply giving your full attention to someone else's story of joy. Clap for them, pat them on the back, tell them how proud you are of them, or how happy you are that good fortune found them.

An adventuresome life requires intentionality. It doesn't just happen. It emanates from the deep conviction that your life is a story worth telling; a novel worth living. Adventurers won't settle for mendacity but insist that the magic and magnificence of any moment can be found anywhere and anytime. ■

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