

A SEASONAL MUSE

As noted in the past, at Cornerstone we get to take our birthday off. Last year at this time I wrote about my trip to Mackworth Island and how good it was to go solo, to walk and sit by the sea, to slow down for a short period and simply just be. I decided this may be a good annual event and was undeterred when heading back this June despite the gray and gusty rain-sprinkled day. A person can sit and think in all types of weather!

I reflected on the sermon our minister had recently preached the title of which was Anger. My own general stasis is that of happy; I smile a lot which makes strangers on the street respond in kind. I have practiced forgiveness over the years such that in human relations I am quick to step in another's shoes in order to understand their perspective which in turn most generally mitigates any opportunity to feel anger. On this day, with the vast expanse of Casco Bay my theatre and seagulls and songbirds my symphony – not to mention playing hooky in the middle of the week! – it occurred to me how truly this is a charmed life I live, replete with love, health, joy and freedom.

The next morning Vinnie read a Wall Street Journal article aloud while I made our breakfast; it explored the shenanigans insurance companies employ to improve their risk ratings, hence misleading unwitting consumers who might buy their products. The strategy, which is not new, involves creating “re-insurance” companies who absorb some of an insurer's risk in exchange for a benefit, but in this case it appears the primary company is retaining the benefit but ridding itself of the risk – impossible! When an insurer fails to meet its obligations, there is government (i.e. taxpayer) support for a portion of any claims. This is reminiscent of the not-too-distant mortgage debacle/bank failure, some of the cause of which relates to the inappropriate transfer of risk and also involved taxpayer bailout. While not prone to the use of profanity, I madly shouted “those Bleepity-bleep bastards!” Hmmmm, I guess I can get angry.

The root of this sort of anger is about *control* and *how little we have of it* when it comes to entities huge as corporations. Our tiny voices are barely audible as we rage against the unfairness – a mouse squeak silenced by the stampede of creative accounting. We can boycott companies and send vile statements viral via Facebook or some other internet communication, but in most cases we're so entangled in the web of consumption that total escape is unrealistic (think heat for our homes vs. environmental damage from oil spills and fracking, iPads vs. questionable labor practices, food on the table vs. inhumane treatment of animals). So we do the best we can and then must simply let go—or face despair!

As some of you know, every year I head to Cape Cod to spend time with several women friends. We usually create a structure around our visit that encourages personal and/or spiritual growth through conversation or written exercises. We got lazy this time around and agreed to have
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“To properly enjoy an August day in Northern New England, there needs to be a body of water nearby, preferable in a shady spot. My favorite is a stream just deep enough for floating on your back and staring at the tree boughs overhead. A lake will do if a stream isn't available. Either way, stay in the water until goose bumps threaten to overtake your skin.” ~ as written by Craig Idlebrook in July's Northern New England Journey



SUMMER MUSE *CONT.* . . .

a “structure-less theme” (!) of “letting go.” So we arrived with no plan and no expectations and left having experienced deep respite.

Summer is the perfect time to minimize plans and expectations, to let spontaneity and surprises rule. We encourage you to eschew calendar commitments and embrace the season. Oh happy, happy summer!
~Susan

“Summer afternoon—summer afternoon; to me those have always been the two most beautiful words in the English language” ~Henry James

Create the summer you imagined by asking yourself these 4 questions:

1. What would you like to have happen this season? Make a list and prioritize.
2. What do you need to do in order to support these priorities?
3. Can you—is this realistic?
4. Will you—how committed are you?

Now go for it!

Consider meditation to help make your summer more relaxing (and then perhaps continue on into the following seasons). There is much research of late that indicates the many health benefits to be had from creating a habit of mindfulness meditation. The left-sided anterior brain activity increases which is an area associated with positive emotions. This relieves stress and anxiety, lowers blood pressure, improves the heart rate and boosts the immune system. And it doesn't cost a penny!

We recently discovered there are many free guided meditations available on line; type “guided meditation” in the search box. Grab a pillow and press “play”.

Summer reading list:

The Greek Way - Edith Hamilton
Chakras for Beginners - David Pond
State of Wonder - Ann Patchett
The Unlikely Pilgrimage of Harold Fry - Rachel Joyce
Deep Water - Patricia Highsmith



Jill Boynton

4TH OF JULY REDUX

The legal separation of the 13 colonies from Britain actually took place on July 2nd (1776) when the Continental Congress approved a “resolution of independence”. It was on July 4th that Congress ultimately voted to approve the Declaration of Independence, which had been written to explain the earlier resolution and was presented by the Committee of Five—Jefferson, Franklin, Adams, Sherman and Livingston—with Jefferson having created the first draft.

John Adams wrote in a much famed letter to his wife, Abigail, that this historic day “will be celebrated by succeeding Generations as the great anniversary Festival. It ought to be commemorated, as the Day of Deliverance . . . solemnized with Pomp and Parade, with Shews, Games, Sports, Guns, Bells, Bonfires and Illuminations from one End of this Continent to the other from this Time forward forever more”



CORNERSTONE HAPPENINGS

Please have a look at our new website that recently had a makeover—www.cornerstoneplanning.com. Next on the list are new photos.

Jill and 2 colleagues presented a 3 hour workshop on the collaborative divorce process to a group of NH attorneys in April and to the NH Conflict Resolution Association in May. Son Max is home for the summer having completed his first year at Ohio State; she also looks forward to a visit from older son Sam who remains in the Los Angeles area after graduating in 2011 (oh those California dreams!)

Susan was a panelist at the Shareholders Service Group conference in San Diego and spoke about best practices in running a financial planning firm. She and Vinnie made a vacation of it, exploring the West Coast for the first time.

Raylene's daughter, Brooke, graduated from Nescom in May with a BA in Communications. Son Reeve completed his first year at USM. Raylene will be off on Mondays throughout the summer and looks forward to long weekends in St. Albans.

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