

Women's Group Thursday, June 24th

How does "Returning to Normal" look to you, How are you feeling about it?
What do you want to create for yourself in these new times?

Resource readings: Terry Hershey, *Sabbath Moment Daily* - A place for sanctuary

Here's what I know: during this shift, as "normal" life is reframed... I want to tend to my heart. Which means that there is a place I will choose to visit from time to time; a place called Enough.

You know, that place where the heart slows, where gratitude spills, where we can touch the root of inner wisdom (a taproot some call the soul), where we are not afraid or adversarial, where we do not need to shy away from sorrow or disappointment, where grace is alive.

Sanctuary: a time and a place that allows us—gives us permission—to pause. To look inside and to embrace what is here, what is alive and well. To embrace our enoughness. Think of this "sanctuary" space as a dose of grace bestowing gifts upon us... stillness, gladness, calm, mystery, delight, discovery, learning and peace.

This resonates because it is in our DNA to be renewed, nourished, replenished and spiritually hydrated.

It's not easy for us to take grace as a starting point. When it comes to personal or spiritual growth, we often spend our energy chasing or anticipating. But sanctuary begins when we stop and embrace what is already here.

I've written books about sanctuary, so I know the script. But like so much of life, our focus is following the rules (script), and we forget to embrace the gift.

There's a great story about very young school children (you know, troubled by distraction), being "taught" or trained to concentrate. "Okay," the teacher says. "We're going to learn to concentrate. For ten minutes, I want you to focus on concentration." Here's the fun part. When asked after the ten minutes, what they concentrated on, they said, to a person, "on concentrating."

I'm smiling (because they were proud and did what they were told). And I remember my favorite Robert Capon quote, "We live life like ill-taught piano students. So inculcated with the flub that will get us in dutch, we don't hear the music, we only play the right notes."

Pierre Teilhard de Chardin reminds us, "One could say that the whole of life lies in seeing." Yes. Smack dab in the middle. Embracing the gift (hearing the music), lets us see, living sacramentally.

This morning, outside I stood
And saw a little red-winged bird
Shining like a burning bush
Singing like a scripture verse
It made me want to bow my head
I remember when church let out
How things have changed since then
Everything is holy now
It used to be a world half-there
Heaven's second rate hand-me-down
But I walk it with a reverent air
Cause everything is holy now

~Peter Mayer

Quote for your day...

So today I start my days with what I call "holy time." It's my quiet time within myself, with God, and sometimes with the family dog. I get up way earlier than I ever did before so that I can ease into my day. I go slow. I resist the phone. I resist jumping in... I work hard to schedule less these days. I try to refrain from judging myself, comparing myself, or berating myself. Today I work strategically. I work with intention. I know why I'm doing what I'm doing (and to be honest: I'm still doing too much, but I'm taking things one day at a time). I'm leaving room for the unexpected. I'm leaving room to be astonished (thank you to Mary Oliver for teaching me that). I'm leaving space to breathe, to rest, to notice, and to be available... This is a new time in my life, the life of those I love, and in our country. I want to go slow. I want to notice.

~Maria Shriver

Here's our Prayer Blessing...

We bathe your palms
In the showers of wine,
In the crook of the kindling,
In the seven elements,
In the sap of the tree,
In the milk of honey,
We place nine pure, choice gifts
In your clear beloved face:
The gift of form,
The gift of voice,
The gift of fortune,
The gift of goodness,
The gift of eminence,
The gift of charity,
The gift of integrity,
The gift of true nobility,
The gift of apt speech.

~(Traditional Gaelic Blessing)