



May 2022

2022-3

On a Muggy Day at the End of April, 2022

The air is heavy with the promise of much needed rain. Our youngest daughter sits with her father at the table next to the pool as her dogs sniff out new scents and run the yard freely. My thoughts go back to a year ago when a 3-day trip turned into 3 weeks. And I think about all the years since this young woman was born and what choices we all made in order for this particular day to occur in this particular way.

The term, "legacy" entered my life about 4 years ago. I never thought about how legacy pertained to me; why would I? However, I have learned that it is something I am creating every day of my life. Today's reality is based on all the choices I made in the past, including yesterday. The good news is that going forward; there is the opportunity to choose more intentionally. With forethought, I can ask the question, "Will this choice be a blessing, or will it be a curse?" For me, it takes a lot of Grace to be at the crossroads of ego and discerning "the next right thing." What will the outcome be and what will happen next? Perhaps part of the Grace is knowing the answer is beyond my control. We all get to choose what we set in motion. That choice will be part of the legacy we leave behind once we are gone.

At this point in time, aided by the introspection of the pandemic shut down, my priorities have shifted. Also, this phase of life has introduced the notion/reality of diminishment. Some things I used to value have tarnished a bit, not in themselves necessarily, but in my perception of their importance to me.

Because of willingly accepting (or the inevitability of) no longer having what we used to take for granted, life feels lighter and more expansive. No matter what chaos/tragedy/upheaval is happening in the world, life just keeps happening. Even the perceived dilemmas in my life don't interrupt the unfolding of existence in time/space. There is no getting around the day in and day out workings of living in this world. In the past, the situations that arose were all just part of the package, issues to attend too in the most efficient and expedient way I knew possible. Not so today. The question for me now is, "How am I to be present to the other's needs without dragging along my agenda? How can I just be, with no judgment or expectation of an outcome?" Granted, I have more time available to give today since life isn't packed with as many obligations and responsibilities.

One of the aspects of aging is letting go, of what I think defines me. I don't have to "do" anything to have a purpose. The surprising thing that has happened is now many possibilities arise that invite me simply to be. No problem solving, no cleaning up a mess. The work given means arriving to witness and

to listen. There seems to be no job description. No real requirements. Just show up and let life unfold. I liken it to being a container that holds whatever needs to be held.

Perhaps those of you reading this have already discerned what I am saying. I have been told it takes me a very long time to process and really “get it.” However, when the connection is made, it is mine for life. (Alas, in reality, even that statement isn’t in concrete!)

At this stage of the game, I try to recall those pivotal moments and people who have helped me walk this circuitous path. It is impossible, of course, because life is chocked full of pithy moments. These moments are precious and have deeply informed me, and the lessons continue to feed me. I believe we are asked to live as fully as we can, always open to the presence of the Divine. Life is not static. It appears we are constantly given the invitation to empty out to make space for the MORE. As I recently read, “You are who you are in the process of becoming **this moment**, so choose wisely.” It matters!

Back to the two talking and enjoying one another’s company by the pool. I could write a book about the personal choices that have led to this moment. But it has taken a lifetime to get to this point so there is no simple statement to be made. However, for my part in this, I am eternally grateful as I bask in the love I see before me.

The following poem caught my eye, as it pretty well sums up what I am thinking today.

A poem by Mario de Andrade

*I counted my years and found that I have less time to live from here on than I have lived up to now.
I feel like that child who won a packet of sweets: he ate the first with pleasure, but when he realized
there were few left, he began to enjoy them intensely.*

*I no longer have time for endless meetings where statutes, rules, procedures and internal regulations are
discussed, knowing that nothing will be achieved.
I no longer have time to support the absurd people who, despite their chronological age, haven’t grown
up.
My time is too short: I want the essence; my soul is in a hurry.
I don’t have many sweets in the package anymore.*

*I want to live next to human people, very human, who know how to laugh at their mistakes and who are
not inflated by their triumphs and who take on their responsibilities.
Thus, human dignity is defended and we move towards truth and honesty: it is the essential that makes
life worth living.
I want to surround myself with people who know how to touch hearts, people who have been taught by
the hard blows of life to grow with gentle touches of the soul.
Yes, I’m in a hurry, I am in a hurry to live with the intensity that only maturity can give.
I don’t intend to waste any of the leftover sweets.*

*I am sure they will be delicious, much more than what I have eaten so far.
My goal is to reach the end satisfied and at peace with my loved ones and my conscience.
We have two lives and the second begins when you realize you only have one.*

~~ Abbot Karen Poidevin