



Purposeful Wanderings

A Monthly Newsletter for Clients and Friends of **The Road Not Taken**

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Life in the Fast Lane

“A tree with strong roots can withstand the most violent storm, but the tree can’t grow roots just as the storm appears on the horizon.” – The Dalai Lama

It seems we’re always in such a rush – rushing *to* work, rushing *at* work, rushing *from* work, rushing to get errands and chores done, even rushing to create “quality time” in the midst of all the rushing. I often wonder, “Where are we *going*, anyway?” And because we rarely have an honest answer, this follow-up: “If we actually *got* to the place we’re rushing, what would we do the day *after* we arrived?” Mostly we haven’t a clue. Yet we’re still rushing to “get there,” unaware.

This idea rolls around in my head often, including reflection on my own journey. (For over 30 years, I was “rushing to nowhere.” I ate well but I was starving.) It’s likely no coincidence, then, that this topic came up three times this month, twice with clients and once with my older son. The distinction all made was the same – putting the race itself aside for a moment, life experience is far more positive when you’re “going somewhere” than when you’re “going nowhere.”

But what came from the *depth* of these conversations was fascinating. In order to know where you’re going, you need a very clear sense of your inner truth - i.e., what matters to *you*, and then choose to live from that truth. To do that, you have to look inward, which scares many people. A conclusion was this: perhaps rushing is a compensation strategy for the fear of self-reflection ... as if rushing through life somehow offers hope for peace and happiness. Evidence says no.

Two of the conversations then went to a far bigger place. Basically, the idea was, “Hey, there’s no ‘there’ there. All of us end up at the same place. So peace and happiness must be about the *way we live* the journey, not where it leads. And it seems the best way to *live the journey* is to *love the journey*. Doing what we love most, we experience joy every day. Yes, there will still be challenges, yet the energy of your love will cause you to see them with curiosity, not dread.”

It’s time to question, and likely give up, the old, unconscious belief that going faster will get us there sooner, because 1) there’s no destination anyway, and 2) it’s the experience of living that brings us what we long for most. By racing all the time, we miss both of these. Here’s a specific example from clients years ago. Driven to get her college degree, she toiled her way through four years of study. Her experience of the *process*: stress. Her experience of the *outcome*: relief. Another client, by contrast, was driven to be a life-long learner. Her experience of the *process*: joy (of learning). Her experience of the *outcome*: three degrees, “easy by-products” of the process of love. Same school, same program.

Exercise: As Phil Cousineau consistently suggests in The Art of Pilgrimage, “Uncover what you long for and discover who you are.” You feel the energy of your inner essence many times a day, pointing to your truth, asking you to listen. It may be the smile on your face when something about life inspires. It may be the twinge you feel (and likely ignore) when you know something you’re in the middle of “just isn’t right.” You discover your truth by *noticing* – just what the little voices in your head tell you *not* to do! They think it’s scary to look inside, and they let you know. The problem, for *you*, is that you tend to listen to the *voices* and not your *truth*. If you believe it’s time to change that, here’s an exercise to help. The practice: Sit silently for 10-15 minutes each day; just listen. That’s it. Your truth is a *pattern* deep inside you. With practice, you will hear it speak. You will learn to recognize its voice as you would that of a friend in a noisy room. With continued practice, you come to trust, then honor, your truth over all the useless unconscious chatter.

Life lessons from nature: Lao Tzu once said, “Nature does not hurry, yet everything is accomplished.” Turtles move more slowly than hummingbirds, yet there’s no competition. Some trees take hundreds of years to mature, yet there’s no race to be *done*. Rivers take millions of years to carve a canyon; yet the river isn’t angry, and rocks don’t fight back.

Book of the month: *The Great Work of Your Life, A Guide for the Journey to Your True Calling*, by Stephen Cope. Through stories of those who’ve “been there” – Gandhi, Jane Goodall, Thoreau, Keats, Frost, Harriet Tubman ... figures we know – Cope opens pathways to self-discovery that lead us to our true work in the world. Perhaps we know them precisely *because* they found and followed their true nature. Insight, practicality, depth, and an invitation to self-reflection. ... And if you’re on Cape Cod, you’ll find this book at the Market Street Bookshop in Mashpee Commons; 508-539-6985.