

SPIRIT, MIND & BODY

The Art of Being

It is no secret that our lives are busy. Just about everyone I know is running in five directions at the same time, including myself, and I find myself asking with more frequency these days, to what end? What is the end result of all this hustle? Where is the "golden nugget" in all of this striving?

As I speak with people in my work and throughout my daily life I notice, without fail, a veneer of anxiety (sometimes thin, sometimes very thick) that coats our emotional well being. It seems there is so much required of us just to survive, much less to set about achieving goals or manifesting our dreams. I believe somewhere in all of this striving there can be a misperception that being "busy" means being "purposeful". Yet being busy and being purposeful are two very different things.

Being busy often means filling your day with activities and obligations not always of your choosing or your liking. Being purposeful, or living with purpose, means that a personal evaluation has been made and you have chosen your path. Being busy and purposeful can and do collide but, when you are living with purpose, the busy part can be gratifying and less of a burden because you are directing your efforts toward a desired end. There is also the option of being purposefully busy, so as to avoid any deep connection with oneself at all.

At first glance it might sound complex, but becoming less busy (whether your "busyness" is desired or not) can be the key to an authentic and deeply joyful life. Striking a balance between "being" and "striving" may be a perfect step toward this end.

There is a fine line between striving and striving too much. It is important and rewarding to have dreams,

set goals and realize your own handiwork in creating a life. It is human nature to be curious about one's abilities. If I can run six miles easily, I wonder if I could run a marathon? Before you know it, it's a triathlon. And then who knows what's next? We like to know what we're made of, so we push the boundaries within our mental, physical and spiritual selves. We strive to become -- and in our striving, two things may happen simultaneously: we may find ourselves both expanding and closing down. That sounds contradictory, I know, but as we learn about our ability to commit, to overcome and to break through our previous limits and perceptions -- as we come to know ourselves better and make room for our striving self -- our "being" self slowly ceases to exist.

The "striving self" has a mission: "I want to get from point A to point B" or "I want to increase my income from \$2000 per month to \$20,000 per month" or "I want to have two houses, five cars, twelve televisions and six computers." Sound like anyone you know? The striving self is the worrying part of you. "Can

I be better? Will I make it or will I fail? Now that I have it all, will it be taken away?" The striving supports the dream, but it can also reduce your freedom to dream.

The "being self" has no mission but to be. As our world becomes more oriented toward striving, taking time to just "be" has shown up on many people's daily "to do" lists. Unfortunately, "being" isn't as easy as it sounds. There is an art to "being". It often requires time more than effort. The being self sits quietly and observes. It feels. It wonders. It creates. The being self is the imaginary part of you. It is the dreamer. It is unlimited and universal. It is the part of you that realizes the connection between all living things. It is where your favorite pet lives (in this "being" place) and hummingbirds and butterflies. It is also where kids reside. It is ultimate freedom and liberation from all that we are supposed to be and utter jubilation for all that we already are.

I have traveled to less-developed countries than our own and witnessed the fascination people have with anything Western or American. It

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always seems ironic to me that the people I marvel at for their simplicity and wisdom and graceful acceptance of their lot in life seem to admire me for my opportunity to amass material wealth. I almost feel as though I should warn them that material wealth comes at a price beyond the monetary.

I have recently returned from New Orleans where unfathomable devastation altered the lives of hundreds of thousands of people. Many local residents share the view that Katrina's assault was equally a blessing and a curse. When lives are so shaken as to become unrecognizable, it's easier to see what really matters. Priorities become clearer. Purpose is more easily found. Loss of this magnitude is horrific, but starting over having the opportunity to begin again -- can, in fact, be liberating.

This month I challenge

you not to set a goal, but to let go of one. (If you want to thank me, you can do so at pambell@desertmoonrising.com.) Pare down your list of things to do, places to go and people to see. Sit. Be quiet. Be still. Be with yourself. Watch nature as she begins to re-emerge. Count your blessings. Notice what matters most to you. Notice how much of your life is on purpose. Breathe. Just Be. Feel your anxiety start to melt away.

"What lies behind us and what lies before us are tiny matters compared to what lies within us."
---Ralph Waldo Emerson

Anyone interested in a "sneak preview" of our video documentary on New Orleans today should visit jimsjourneys.com.



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