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SPIRIT, MIND & BODY

Picking Up Where You Left Off

by Pam Bell

Is there something you started and didn't finish? A project perhaps? A great invention? An idea waiting to blossom? Something you really cared about and enjoyed doing but for some reason, life got in the way? If so, this article is for you!

Life is busy....yes? Life is also unpredictable. Often, and for reasons beyond our control, we are headed in one direction and life turns us around and sends us in another, one we hadn't planned on and sometimes, one we never even could have imagined! Life is not static. Life is not here to meet our expectations. Life, and the conditions herein, are tied to so many infinite unpredictables it is mind-blowing if you really look closely. Yet, for most of us, life goes on day after day pretty much the same and we grow to expect this, and to rely on it, and to like it until one day....it doesn't.

Imagine this scenario (it won't be hard): we are wandering along on our happy little path, one we think we have mastered, and make stops at all our favorite places like clock work...to get our coffee, our mid-day snack, to meet our friends for yoga, then a cocktail or two, then home for dinner and bed and looking so forward to finishing that art piece, or that novel we are writing, or that garden we are planting....fill in the blank.... on our next day off. We ponder the possibilities all day long in our car, at our desk, we invent and reinvent just how it's going to look, and feel, to be done. To have completed something that was deeply meaningful to us. Something that was our own creation, our own invention,

our pride and joy, and just how deeply satisfied we will be once it's finished. Or maybe instead, we notice just how wonderful it is to be in this process of engagement, in this place of deep intrigue, so much so that we are not concerned with the end result at all. But still, it steals your attention...when you have attention to steal, that is.

But then your day off comes and something comes up at work, or a family member needs a helping hand, or a friend needs a shoulder, or you promised the kids you'd take them to the beach....which you forgot until they boisterously reminded you. It's ok.... you'll get to your project another day....tomorrow maybe? Or next weekend for sure! This goes on for a while, you know the conversation better than I, the negotiation between giving yourself the time and giving it to others. "But they need me," you say, or "My hands were tied, there was no getting out of that!" And your project waits, and it waits....it is a very patient project. It only needs feeding when you have the food to give it. It is the PERFECT pet! And sometimes, on occasion, you do get to feed it. You have an evening off, unscheduled and unplanned, and you sit and you make nice with your neglected project and you become close friends once again. You are inspired and your project has new life, a new brush stroke..."Yes, yes, that's the direction I want to go. We are on a roll now," you say.

And as with many artful things, inner creations that come from way down deep, there are relationship issues to navigate as well. One day

in love, the next, agitation. It's just not cooperating like you want it to...stupid project! You know what you want to communicate but the fluidity doesn't come. You envision it in your mind but what comes out on paper is not the same....it is not rich enough, deep enough,"if I only had the words, the right color, if only I was better at this!" Stupid project.... who needs it? Yet, just like with some relationships, you can't walk away. You know if you just stick it out, there is something really worth having here. Something you will miss out on if you throw in the towel now. It continues to enchant you, to court you, and you renew your commitment. You know there are real possibilities in this project so you decide to dedicate yourself to it more regularly. You make it a real priority, even over friends needs, and you are really determined this time. And then something happens - all kinds of things can happen,

take your pick - someone gets really sick, maybe you? Or hurt, maybe you? But something happens that is in fact beyond your control and the lines of your priorities are drawn for you. Where and how you spend your time are now crystal clear and your project gets put on the back burner....again. Suddenly and almost over night it is not even a part of your mental computation. It is utterly forgotten.

Until the time comes however, when you remember. You have your energy back, your strength, and your time is once again your own. You begin to dust around the corners of your life and lo and behold.... there lies your faithful friend. You know, the very patient and now faded version of your original idea? But all is not lost. It just needs a little dusting, maybe a wet cloth, a little freshening up. Sit down with a cup of tea, get reacquainted and see if the intrigue is still with

you. See if there is still an energy between you. Is there something that is waiting to be discovered? A voice waiting to get out? A story perhaps now richened by the depth of your recent experiences? "Don't give up on me" your project say's. I am not an accident. There is life in me that needs your expression. Your unique view, your wry sense of humor. This story can only be told by you. It is the only way it will ever make any sense!"

And you know these words are true. You can feel it in your bones. It breathes life into the dark recesses of your imagination and suddenly, once again with permission, you feel alive!

And so, you begin again. Or at least you should if you ever expect things to make any sense.

Please note: This is my final article for the Petaluma Post after 12+ years. Think I'll go dig that swimming pool I've been dreaming about. :-)

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