

Not Waiting For Life To Get "Better"

Oriah's Spring 2011 Newsletter

This morning the sun is blazing forth, trumpeting "Live!" in a clear blue sky. The buds on the trees are unfurling un-weathered green into the world. Spring: undeterred and irresistible life, newness from the decayed ruins of the old, fresh starts, and impossible hope.

It has been a year of legal arrangements and new adjustments since my marriage ended in April of 2010. And just as I approached the final collection of a few belongings from the former matrimonial home, sure that I would then be able to focus fully on new writing, my parents (both of whom have Alzheimer's- my father in an advanced state, my mother recently diagnosed in the early stages) need my on-going assistance with new living arrangements.

Because that's life- a series of continuous and unpredictable changes that demand our attention, disrupt plans and require flexibility. My desire for tidy, uninterrupted time and space for writing is understandable, but not to be. So, I'm writing anyway- in bits and pieces, in between meetings with doctors and social workers, after daily conversations with my mother (who, at 76, is living alone for the first time in her life,) in the early morning quiet and during the noon-day rush at roadside diners.

Because if we postpone the soul's agenda until life clears away all the distractions and concerns, if we wait until things have reached some kind of imagined inner or outer ideal state of expansive uninterrupted calm, well. . . we'll still be waiting as we slip from this world into what lies beyond.

At the end of radio shows many interviewers ask, "Is there one last thing- a central message- you'd like to leave with our listeners?"

I've done enough interviews you'd think I would have some snappy, articulate answer prepared, a concise and profound or witty comment ready for the moment. But no matter how many times it comes, I never seem prepared. Maybe it's because I don't think of myself as having "A Message." As Wavy Gravy said, I'm just another bozo on the bus, albeit one that likes to reflect on and write about the journey.

So lately, at the end of interviews, with only moments remaining, this is the response that arises from the request to offer one last essential thing:

"Life is messy. Accept this. It's okay to have a plan, just don't focus on it. Things aren't likely to go according to plan. Focus on what you need to do next, right now. Pay attention to what has real value for you at the level of your body-heart-self- the people, places, activities and practises that help you feel truly alive, that support your ability to be present and kind. If there's something calling to you, turn toward it and start walking. It may not lead where you think it will, but make a place in all of the wonderful chaos of life to listen deeply to the voice at the center of your being and pay attention to

what it tells you. Life is short and messy. Don't postpone living until life gets neater or easier or less frantic or more enlightened. There's a "catch" to the popular admonishment to "live in the Now." It's that the only way to be in the Now is to be Here, in the life and the body you have, and in the world we share, right now (not with the body or the world we hope to someday have or imagine we used to have.) This is it. And it will change. Choose life in all the small ways you can, every day."

On some level, it all sounds so obvious, and I realize I am saying what I need to hear over and over.

So, I am writing- mostly about what it really means to love the life and world and being that I am/you are right now. And I find I can't approach this loving and care-taking, as I once did, from a place of principled and disciplined practises (as much as I value the practises I have and continue to use.) This new loving of self and life is. . . messier in the ways that organic things are messy- different aspects growing at different speeds, circuitous routes of growth following the instinctual need for light and warmth, some parts blossoming as others decay and feed the roots with what has died.

I'm still doing one-on-one counselling sessions on the phone (if you'd like an outline of how this works please email me at mail@oriah.org) and I'm posting regularly on both the Oriah Mountain Dreamer Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/Oriah.Mountain.Dreamer> (you do not need an account to see the page) and on Wednesdays on the weekly blog at <http://oriahsinvitation.blogspot.com>

Whether you are enjoying the cycle of new life in the spring of the northern hemisphere or the transition of autumn in the southern, may be you be blessed with the fullness of living- the life you have given and are co-creating with us all. Blessings, Oriah

(If you would like to be on the mailing list to receive the newsletter three or four times a year please email me at mail@oriah.org)