

“Dreams”

Reflection by Rev. Rebecca Bryan

August 21, 2022

When you're young, time seems eternal, doesn't it?

Do you remember being in high school or perhaps college, or remember being a young parent? Do you remember when dreams were all you knew to think about, and nothing seemed impossible?

Or perhaps you were told not to dream too big and so buried what your heart called you to do in this world, or least you tried to bury it.

How do we befriend what life brought us? How do we make peace with the decisions made for us as well as those we made ourselves?

When I was the ripe age of 24, a nun told me that I was naïve and that someday I would realize what was reasonable and what was fanciful. I was working in a Youth Service Bureau with parents, many of them involved with the state. I wanted to save the world, especially children, and ensure them that they were seen. I'm sure my work did matter and helped some families, and some of the children live on in my heart to this day.

And child abuse continues. I did not save the world.

It was not for nothing though that I gave all that I had to that work. It means something to care, and outcomes are not the only measure of success.

Our dreams matter, whether they are or are not realized exactly as we imagine they will be. Our dreams tell us much about who we are and what matters to us.

Naivety can be beautiful and may be a necessity for hope to live on in this world. Someone has to act as the ploughshare and believe this time can be different.

I've learned and am learning not to regret any of my dreams, but to honor and learn from them all, including those that went awry, those that happened differently from what I had hoped, and those that never happened at all.

What does it take to realize such a relationship with ourselves? First and foremost, it takes self-compassion. Do you believe that you have done the best you could do in this lifetime? Do

you recognize that everyone makes mistakes and most of us make big mistakes?

What if our dreams are not to be measured, but treasured? What if they are a map of our soul?

Time is not eternal, my friends. Well, time may be, but our time on earth is not. We will all come to the end of our days but can hope to arrive there with a combination of dreams realized and dreams still to be realized. I invite you all to befriend your dreams, to ask yourselves what your dreams are telling you about who you are and what matters most to you. Then ask yourself if there are other ways to manifest what matters. Join your dreams as partners. They are some of the most important companions we can have.

There Is No Going Back

– Wendell Berry

No, no, there is no going back.
Less and less you are
that possibility you were.
More and more you have become
those lives and deaths
that have belonged to you.
You have become a sort of grave
containing much that was
and is no more in time, beloved
then, now, and always.
And so you have become a sort of tree
standing over a grave.
Now more than ever you can be
generous toward each day
that comes, young, to disappear
forever, and yet remain
unaging in the mind.
Every day you have less reason
not to give yourself away.

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We Look with Uncertainty

– Anne Hillman

We look with uncertainty
beyond the old choices for
clear-cut answers
to a softer, more permeable aliveness
which is every moment
at the brink of death;
for something new is being born in us
if we but let it.
We stand at a new doorway,
awaiting that which comes...
daring to be human creatures,
vulnerable to the beauty of existence.
Learning to love.