



Find That Quiet Place— Go There Often.

Pamela Berger, LMT

The complexities of life can sometimes be very confusing. Seems occasionally we all get a divine *kick in the butt*, that proverbial *cosmic two-by-four*, to help us see things more clearly. Sometimes we just need little reminders of what we already know. It's easy to forget. We each have our own unique challenges. There's actually a name for this. It's called *Life*. It's a curriculum—*orchestrated opportunities* which ultimately invite and motivate us to become more conscious. If we're paying attention, we get little glimpses of the bigger picture and begin to see that (on one level) it's all perfect, maybe especially when it doesn't feel that way. We might even discover that virtually everything is a choice (whether conscious or otherwise). The idea being to make conscious choices as much as possible. Suffering is optional. (In fact, it's almost always about either attachment or resistance). At worst, you can always remember that *This Too Shall Pass*.

The greater the challenge, the greater the opportunity. It's all for learning. *Mistakes* are exactly what allow us to learn. Much like my tiny 16-year-old dog who went blind and deaf years ago, and finds her way through the house as a process. She gently bounces off various familiar obstacles along her path, looking much like a pinball machine. Yet, those *obstacles* are the very things that help her find her way!

We all grow from our challenges. They are gifts and blessings, as we let them be. They act as the catalysts which make life more enlivening. The trick is always about how to feel good about ourselves. The older I get, the simpler I am. In my world, simple is good. Hopefully, I've learned a few things through my own process of trial and error:

Never be in a hurry, but learn fast if you have to. Don't forget to BREATHE! Enjoy the simple things. Be grateful. Embrace *what is*. Find that quiet place

inside. Go there often. Listen with your heart. Be honest, first with yourself. Always try to do the right thing. Integrity and right intent is everything.

Be where you are when you're there; let the rest go. Focus on what you want. Pay attention. Always allow for all possibilities, especially miracles. Be willing. Let yourself NOT know. The unknown is what makes life an adventure! Enjoy differences; appreciate contrast.

Be willing to make mistakes. There are no wrong choices; you can always choose again. Sometimes the highest choice is to let go of the goal! It's all for learning. Be gentle with yourself. Forgive yourself again and again. Allow others to make their own mistakes. Hold them capable. Support them in their choices and love them no matter what. Face fears; take action (however small). *Smile. Laugh! Sing! Dance! Play!* Don't take it all so seriously! Lighten up! Have fun. Usually it's the little things in life that really count. Let yourself be inspired. Thinking is over-rated. We don't have to figure it all out. We just have to show up. Become a good observer. Ask good questions! Be specific.

Be clear about your intentions. Honor your feelings; learn to move through them and out the other side. Trust the process. Allow yourself to *Feel Free!* Take good care of yourself; get good exercise, rest, and eat right. Do what works. Develop good habits. If it doesn't happen, that's okay. Be flexible. Remember balance. Keep making better choices.

Get out in nature! A little bit of sunshine goes a long way! Make quiet spaces. Be true to yourself. Take responsibility. Practice discipline. Cultivate understanding through compassion. Keep an open heart. Trust your choices. Reach out. Make a difference. Speak your truth. We each affect the whole with our perceptions. Look for and see the best in everyone, including yourself. Feel good about yourself by helping empower others. We change our world by changing our perceptions of it. Be willing to see things differently. Giving is receiving.

(continued on next page)

Less Stress

Find a comfortable place to sit—in a chair or on a floor cushion is fine. You can lie down if you like, but many people fall asleep when they lie down. Sit straight, and either cross your legs or, if you're in a chair, put your feet flat on the floor. Rest your hands on your thighs, palms up or down. Set a timer for ten or twenty minutes. Close your eyes and take three long, deep breaths, letting your body relax more with each exhalation. Then focus all your attention at the tip of your nose and begin to follow the in and out of your breath. For increased focus, track the pause at the end of each inhale and exhale: inhale, pause, exhale, pause. Until you have practiced meditation regularly, you will probably find it hard to stay focused—thoughts will distract you from following your breath. As soon as you notice you are thinking, gently bring your attention back to your breath. Keep doing this until the timer beeps.

Remember that the regular practice of meditation has a cumulative, positive, effect. If you commit yourself to meditating daily, you can expect to feel more centered, peaceful, calm, and much better able to deal with the external stressors that inevitably will come your way. Be patient with yourself, give it a couple of months, and I predict that you will feel a whole lot better, no matter what the external circumstances are. ■

—Good luck, Jeff!



Quiet Place

Turn problems into opportunities to demonstrate mastery. Timing is everything. Take chances. Explore the unknown. Embrace it all. Live what you know. Teach by example. Do your part. Be you—it's the best gift you can give yourself and the world. Make it count! Enjoy the adventure. Be happy. And remember, everything is a choice. CHOOSE PEACE. "My peace depends on nothing, and everything depends on my peace!" ■

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Do you have a relationship question?

E-mail Connie, conniem@mcn.net, or Call 406-582-7450 & Ask!

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Connie Myslik-McFadden, MSS, LCSW, is a psychotherapist in Bozeman with 25 years of experience working with individuals, couples and groups. She leads workshops, retreats and teaches Dream work and Pathwork. Connie devoted 9 years to Jungian analysis, training, and supervision, after graduating from the Bryn Mawr School of Social Work. She went on to graduate from the Barbara Brennan School of Healing, and Society of Souls, a kabbalistic school of healing. She is the author of "Gathering the Soul, a True Story of Spiritual

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