

## MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING

April 26, 2013

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[Before I launch into this blog about doing nothing, timeout for a photo of Emma from the Bay Area where she is for another week. I also have a photo of Emma in the giant redwood forest, but I can't post it because it is too dark and she is so tiny in it, so this nice clear shot will have to do.]

Now back to my doing nothing. That's right, doing nothing or as little as possible. Dr. Dolittle here, busy learning to do less all the time, and that takes work.

Things I ought to do, should do, must do, and of course what I have to do. They haunt me every day, and I'm always looking for a time when I actually feel like doing them. And with me that can be a long time.

Doing something just because I "can" (or have to) no longer cuts it. There is no joy in that for me. I find myself waiting for a moment when I naturally feel like doing something, or better yet, I check the present queue of this moment to see what is currently surfacing and then do that. I go with the flow.

This makes planning my days difficult, but also more interesting, just waiting around to see what I will do next. I am learning to, as much as possible, not force things anymore. Just because I have to do it (have it on my "to do" list) is often not the best reason to do it. Or, if I force myself to do things, they seldom come out well. I have to have heart when I do things, if I can afford it.

With chores like picking up the dog yard, I might have to wait a very long time until I naturally felt like doing that, so some things I just have to do, ready or not. So I do them, like we all do.

But more and more of the time I am learning to check to see what I feel like doing, or not even what "I" feel like doing, but what is fresh and spontaneous in my mind that instant. It's like spinning thread (not that I have ever spun any), but drawing a thread out of the ether into something, and doing that spontaneously, has real merit. I get the best quality of me when I do that.

I am kind of being humorous here, but in reality I am very serious about winging it in the moment, waiting for things to be right. Shakespeare said "Ripeness is all," and I believe that, but it involves discipline, the discipline to do nothing, to wait. I am, by nature, somewhat impatient.

If I am doing something and I become aware that I have drifted off the edge of wanting to do it, I stop doing it, set it aside (with no prejudice), and pick up on something else, another thread of my life, or I just do nothing. Now, doing nothing, that takes some practice!

And the same goes for disappointments, running out of steam or inspiration, as well as finding myself up a blind alley. I used to kind of panic a bit when I ran out of future for a particular vein I was mining.

It is hard, but I am learning to just let it go, and so I rewrite my future all day long. Nothing is certain anymore. Everything is possible and projects of great moment and perceived importance

are set aside as soon as I reach a point of no return with them, as in: nothing coming back or the simple loss of interest.

Whether this is a good long-term strategy I can't say. It is, by definition, interesting, but also a little bit fractured. Like most of us, I have dozens or hundreds of threads of interest. Who knows just where they will lead. It used to be that if I was invested in a project, I had some obligation to see it through, come hell or high water. It is called perseverance.

I still persevere, but now I am more persevering in doing things that are lit up, alive, and allow me to exercise some creativity. I like the space or aura of the creative me better than that of my being a slave to my projects, but there is a risk factor.

The risk is that I may not go where I imagined I was heading or I may not be who I thought I was or even once was. I hate reinventing myself just to save face with myself, and am learning to let parts of my self-image just die if need be. No use in keeping up appearances for appearances sake. For whom?

An about-face used to embarrass me, but who's watching? I don't even care what my own self thinks half the time. I just like the feeling of going with the flow, doing what comes to mind and is fresh. And I find creativity in the moment's appearance, as in: much more freedom and space. This spontaneous moment now is so spacious, at least relatively, compared to the baked-in staleness of the past or the uncertainty of my expectations of the future.

"Living for (or in) the moment" is not a new concept, right? I remember the "Be here now!" of Baba Ram Das, and others. Is that what I am learning here? If so, it is not other-worldly or "spiritual" in any way that I know. Rather, it is practical and freeing. My fear (I guess) is that it is too eclectic, too much a tasting of here and a sipping of there. Or is this new approach just multi-tasking personified? Not a doing of nothing, but a doing of everything, a thread at a time, but all threads being serviced as a need spontaneously arises.

Anyway, do you get the idea? Am I a lone wolf or am I in good company? You tell me.

