



Wellbeing Insight

Gratitude is all that is left to feel.

“Don’t let the beauty of life escape you...Marvel at the fact that any of this exists —that you exist”
Ryan Holiday, Stillness is the Key.

Emerging from a cold winter with the first tentative rays of spring shining through, this particular quote resonates with me. It is also the essence of one of my personal manifesto statements: *I have retrained myself to perceive the treasures of what is present and to notice the beauty around me.* Notice that I have chosen ‘retrained’ which alludes to the fact that this sentiment was not always high in my awareness. I have spent times in my life, far away from an awareness of the beauty of life which is around me.

As I have propelled my way through my life, pausing to be present in mind and spirit as well as in body, has not always taken place. The propulsion about *doing*, has taken precedence over *being*. To stop, and for a moment, to be still and notice the beauty of where I was—not necessarily literal beauty—has seemed far out of my reach. I must do, should do, have to, were constant imperatives I lay upon myself. The concept of being, as enough in itself, was beyond my understanding.

We complain about the ravages of time, yet a great deal of the growing older experience has much to recommend it. In the context of which I am writing, allowing myself to be, is a personal acquisition of which I have become aware, most particularly as I have matured and aged. Of course, this passage of time, spent in willingly undertaking the role of wife and mother, has eased as my children have stepped into their adulthood and my spouse and I have regained independence. This natural occurrence has allowed for the opportunity to pause of which I speak, but it is more than that.

As I have continued into my encore years beyond the arc of my teaching career, I have consciously re-examined my life. The wellbeing work I have been doing, and the reflection as a result, has meant I actively choose, rather than passively fall into, more of what actually happens in my day. So, taking a pause, looking around, noticing the beauty is something I do more of. It may be the beauty of nature, but it might also be a child, a smile, even a busy street that humankind has constructed to assist us navigate the daily geography of our lives.

A consequence of this noticing is the marvelling of which Holiday speaks. Marvelling, feeling awe, is the reward for noticing. This must be so because ego takes no part in it. The moment we look outward and notice, is the moment we escape our ego and embrace the wonder of all that exists, including the wonder of ourselves.

Gratitude then is all that is left to feel.