

The End of Waiting  
May 2014

I knew of a woman who, in the last week of her life -- with the end clearly near -- would repeatedly rouse herself from sleep to say to everyone around her, "There is no reason to wait even one more minute."

For me, this was one of those sacred moments when wisdom and clarity suddenly break through. This can happen to any of us, I'm grateful to say, but sometimes those who are soon to leave this world are especially graced in this way. Her words have reverberated in my memory for several years now.

How often waiting steals our lives.

What are you waiting for? Usually people ask that rhetorical question in a tone of impatience and judgment without any actual curiosity. Its usual effect is only to bring up defensiveness. But I am asking the question seriously - of you, of myself, of all of us: What are we waiting for?

Here are three things I think our life energy is often drained and our effectiveness diluted by waiting for:

**We are waiting to feel good enough, smart enough, accomplished enough.**

For years after I felt the call to ministry, I told myself that when I was 75 I would go to Harvard Divinity School. My story to myself was that, by then, I would finally have the wisdom and depth to deserve to be a minister. But the day I finally picked up a brochure from Starr King and sat in a cafe with tears of longing rolling down my cheeks, I knew it was time to give up waiting to be good enough and let my longing carry me forward. Let your longing carry you forward.

**We are waiting for assurance of success.**

Life is not a math set with predetermined right answers we can be assured of if only we do all the homework. We can never know all the threads that are woven into any given circumstance. We don't even know what outcome would, in the long run, best serve the highest good of all involved. We think we know, but we don't. All we can do is the footwork of taking each step as best as we can see with what we know at the time. Outcomes are up to God. Release attachment to outcomes and just do the work.

**We are waiting for it to be easier.**

A favorite cartoon of mine shows a man on a meditation cushion with a thought bubble over his head: "Oh God, I am now entirely ready to be changed... as long as it doesn't involve any discomfort, embarrassment or fear."

Today I made a phone call I have been putting off for five years. It wasn't nearly as bad as I had imagined, but I was able to make it because I had released having to know how my long-overdue reaching out would be received. A line from a movie comes to mind: all it takes is 20 seconds of courage - the 20 seconds when you act.

What are you waiting for?

Blessings on Your Ministry -  
Rev. Cat Cox, M.A.T., M. Div.  
UUSCM Good Officer  
The Path of Joy:  
Resolving the Tension Between Your Soul and Your Life

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