

Goodbyes

I had lunch with a wonderful friend this week. We only met a few months ago, and now she's headed to the east coast of Canada for an undetermined period of time. Understandably, she is excited about the adventure that lies before her and I couldn't help but get caught up in the wonder of it all as we said goodbye.

I am getting used to goodbyes. With a pending move to our quaint little chalet up north, there will be many people, places, and things I will see less of.

Life is like that. We often find ourselves having to bid farewell, sometimes with relief, and other times with great sadness.

One of my more difficult goodbyes came when my brother passed away a few years ago. I was filled with the typical emotions of a mourning sister, wondering why on earth something like this would happen, and how much I didn't want him to be gone.

In truth, our lives are a series of cycles. There will be many beginnings and many ends. We will have cycles with our jobs, loved ones, relationships, homes and even friends. Some cycles will last a long time, and others just for a moment. Each serves a purpose in making us who we are.

When I first re-entered the corporate world after my kids marched off to elementary school, I found the perfect company to work for. Every aspect of my job there was fulfilling and a pleasure.

Then one day it just didn't seem to fit anymore. No matter how hard I tried, my office mojo was gone.

I found less and less pleasure with the projects I worked on. Nothing inspired me. The harder I tried to make things click, the more road blocks were set up in front of me.

One day I woke up. I realized the cycle of that job was finished, the lessons learned, and it was time for me to move on. Once I acknowledged that, everything for the next work-related cycle started falling into place.

The same can be said for those who are ending relationships. Sometimes you hold on for dear life, even though you sense or know something isn't quite right.

Regardless of the reason we stay holding on to the last threads, we all have signs thrown in our path the end is near, and it's time to make a change.

This is the lesson for today. The completion of a cycle is natural and must be allowed to occur. Holding on to something or someone past the proverbial due date only holds you back from something even better. Something that includes the next lessons of your life.

Even when you have no idea what the future holds. No idea who you will share time with, what you will do, or where you will end up, you need to let go, say goodbye and move forward, trusting that everything will one day make sense.

Much like my change of jobs. Once that cycle was complete I headed in an entirely different direction. It was filled with bliss, accomplishment and a true feeling of purpose.

But, not surprisingly, that cycle too eventually came to an end. This past summer the signs were thrown glaringly in my path so that I would once again acknowledge a change was required, the cycle was complete, and a new exciting chapter, whatever it was, was waiting.

So how do you know when a cycle is coming to an end?

If you are open and honest with yourself, you will feel it. You will see the signs that something is amuck. Your blissful feeling that 'all is well with the world' will be replaced with the beginnings of restlessness. As though there is something missing but you can't put your finger on it.

You may even start to feel irritated. The person, job or home you once loved and adored will suddenly seem to speak another language and as time goes on you'll find it more and more difficult to connect.

The longer you ignore the signs, the less and less you'll have in common, until you get to the point you wonder why you made that choice in the first place.

So, let it go. Even if you have absolutely no idea what will happen next, acknowledge that cycle, friendship, relationship, job, or home is over, and there is something new and even better waiting for you.

When I finally finished the cycle of grief after my brother died, a new and wonderful cycle began. I was so afraid that saying goodbye would mean I no longer had a connection with him, and once I truly let go and bid farewell, I discovered he was still with me, just in a different way.

Learning this lesson prepared me for the place I currently find myself in. A place where I am packing up my life from the last twenty two years, and heading off on a new adventure, in a new town.

It's an entirely new cycle of my life, one that may or may not include new people, new work, new friends and even new interests.

I am certain of a couple things. One, whether each of these new cycles lasts a day, a month, a year, or a lifetime, I know they are meant to be.

Two, I am certain the people, relationships, friends and interests that are meant to remain a part of my next stage, will stay in my life. And those who have completed their cycle with me will drift away, following their own path.

It is my dearest hope that all those who drift away know how much I love them and appreciate all they brought to my life.

Birth and death. The cycle of life. Goodbyes and hellos.

Everything begins and everything ends and we need to move forward in our lives with confidence that the lessons we learn from the cycles we are in serve a purpose in making us who we are meant to be.

Peace on the journey,
Louise

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