

DAYS OF SPECIAL MEANING

One girl's take on parenthood, faith, dreams, adventures, love, and the journey of self-discovery taken to figure it all out.



JUNE 23, 2017 BY JENNY ROMAN

In Reconsideration of Regret.

I find myself fantasizing about time travel a lot.

I only time travel backwards. I never really try to see into the future and imagine where life is five, 10, 25 years from now. No, it's the going backwards that gets me. It's reliving that conversation. That morning in bed. That moment when I lost my shit and said those words. The night I chose not to call and instead waited for the phone to ring on my end, which it never did. The summer I decided not to go away to college. Or when I agreed to move far, far away to pursue a life with my love at the time, even when everything in my gut screamed, "Don't do it."

Do you do that? Do you sit in the quiet of your room at night and think of those moments, or do you accept that everything that has occurred in your life happened the way it was supposed to? And if it wasn't for that exact order of people ahead of you in line at Starbucks, smiles, words, motions, stoplights, storm clouds, then every other moment that transpired thereafter was impossible? If so, oh how I envy you...

My actions, or possibly inaction, at the end of my last relationship have haunted me. Something I toy with even on the good days, which outnumber the bad significantly. I see a sunset from my deck and think, "what would it be like if he was here to experience this sight with me?" Or I look at a date on a calendar and think, "a year ago, we were..." Now that the number of days we've been apart are far, far greater than the number of days we were together, the regret has diminished somewhat, but still remains at times a passenger in my car or something that stares back at me in the mirror. That was the case until I learned something about regret I never considered before... and I want you to learn it too.

Picture a moment you don't like to picture because you weren't your best self and the outcome is something you wish you could change. A moment that sticks out in your memory as a significant... "If only I had... I wish that I would have..." For me, I picture a night that inevitably changed the course of that relationship. Where I crumpled under the weight of self-doubt and believed I wasn't good enough to be with the person I had fallen in love with – someone who meant so much to me and I was so afraid of losing. I convinced myself that regardless of how much he said he loved and cared about me, I wasn't worthy and didn't deserve him as a partner.

Now stop.

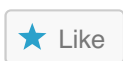
Picture who you were in that moment. Picture your capability to understand what was going on with you, paired with everything at that time you believed about yourself to be true. Did you believe you were worthy? Did you believe you deserved love? Did you believe you were able to act any differently?

In the time since the end of that relationship, I have poured hours of therapy, pages of journals and books, weeks of yoga classes, thousands of frequent flyer miles, and countless conversations with friends into myself. Into growing and changing and learning exactly what it means to be a lover of myself and my life. This is exactly why this exercise works for me and can also work for you if you've put effort into making the same kind of changes to better your life and improve how you view yourself. If you have, now ask yourself the same questions, but ask them of you today. Do you believe you are worthy? Do you believe you deserve love? Do you believe you are able to act differently? If the answers to the first set of questions are no and the answers to the second set of questions are yes, then I invite you to reconsider your regret. Look at that moment in your life with a fresh set of eyes, seeing and realizing that at that former time, when something happened you so, so wish had never happened or had happened another way, the truth is simple – you were not capable in that moment of doing anything differently. This is not to punish you. This is not to dig the knife in deeper

or make you feel worse about what you did at the time. This is a gentle, kind, but completely accurate, way of reminding yourself that who you are today is not who you once were. And perhaps, just perhaps, that moment happened only because you were meant for something far greater, which may have never arrived for you had that moment that has caused sleepless nights and aches in your chest not occurred. If this concept is still hard to grasp, imagine yourself as a small child – or imagine a small child you know and love. Imagine they’ve done something “wrong” and over time have learned new ways of living and being so as to not repeat past behaviors that may have harmed themselves or others. Would you want them wallowing in what they did before, when they did not know any better? Would you encourage that suffering? Or would you praise them for the ways they’ve grown and changed and become better versions of themselves?

The next time you are laying in bed, drowning in your suffering and regret, may the you of today whisper to the you of yesterday... “My dear heart... you just weren’t ready... you have more to learn... you have more to do. You didn’t know how to make a different choice. And given the chance again, you will do it differently.”

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