

Acceptance

Enjoying the Little Things...On the Mountain

by Joan Courtney

One of my ongoing goals is finding and expanding inner peace. And I have found that discovering that peace within is a wonderful but difficult process. It is so very easy to look for it outside, totally overlooking the quiet place within. Some days are better than others, with the best days coming when I live in the moment. I want to share some of my tried-and-true thought patterns for getting to that balance, that peace.

Simplify. If I allow it, my life can be full of bumps and potholes. Persistently simplifying my life helps me to avoid the potholes and smooth out the bumps. When deciding to simplify my life, inner peace begins to fill the cracks and crevices. How to do this?

- **Prioritize my to-do list.** If the day is jam packed with “I’ve got to do this” or “My list is endless,” my mind goes into overdrive. By sorting through what is most important and letting the rest go, I can slow the inner frenzy.
- **Set personal limits.** If I find myself worrying about a project or a situation, I set a limit on how long I will fuss about it. When the inner timer goes off, I either elect to make a decision, set up a series of smaller steps toward achievement or table it for future thought. I also work on grounding myself with nature, feeling the earth beneath my feet and hearing the whirr of a hummingbird. Even looking at the trees and sky through the office window can help to anchor me to the earth. This gives me inner peace as I am gaining control over my thoughts and emotions.
- **Promote tranquility.** Keeping things simple helps me to avoid the ping pong of those turbulent thoughts. Finding time to enjoy the wisps of clouds on the mountainside or that tiny bright yellow flower gives me a strong connection to nature.

Accept. By being in the moment, I foster acceptance. I am coming to the conclusion that the world is not always as I perceive it; that the more I resist, the more complex and challenging it appears. When I choose to accept what is, I stop feeding into resistance, opening space for what could be. Then, the problem is not made more powerful and sticky in my mind with my galloping thoughts. Much of its power is gone and I feel a stillness inside.

- **Accepting doesn’t mean giving up.** It merely allows me the flexibility of having other options, different strategies that would open new doors.
- **Acceptance gives clarity.** By clearing whatever is going on, I am able to make better decisions. Or, probably even tougher, I can let the situation go.

- **Accepting the essence of life.** When I truly stop and sense all that is going on around me, I get in touch with the squirrels chasing each other up and down the Ponderosa pines or hear the ducks and geese calling to each other. I can feel life's rhythms.

Doing what I enjoy. When I make the decision to enjoy what I'm doing, whether it's cleaning the house or writing an article, I feel as if a weight has been lifted off of me. A natural peace arises and the way toward that inner quiet is cleared. I am aligned with my outer world, avoiding the potholes of "I've gotta do this" or "I am overwhelmed." These dissonant thoughts create an inner tension, just one more obstacle to overcome.

- **Be curious.** Life goes by so very quickly. There's not enough time to be stuck in a pattern that is not useful. And there's so much to see, so much to discover. Again, I'm finding that my perceptions color what my life is like. Doing something new, be it archery or canoeing, frees new areas of my mind for new connections. Being open to more and different makes a huge difference.
- **Be adventurous.** It came as a surprise to me that in being open to new adventures, I was cultivating inner peace. Exploring life has given me opportunities I never even considered before, opening doors to new paths and an appreciation of different people and friendships.
- **Pencil yourself in.** By setting time aside for the things I hold important makes me a better person. An early morning walk, a run at the park, rock-hounding: all of these can loosen the ties of what is. I am the one who created my hectic to-do list. Why not pencil myself in too? The result is an inner stillness, a tranquility I had been searching for and found within.

These simple guidelines have helped me pursue my goal of inner peace. It also encourages my ability to enjoy the beauty of the Mountain. It provides a way for me to get in touch with myself, to be able to sleep at night. To truly enjoy life. I suspect they will work for you as well. You too can enjoy all that is.

I hope I have opened the door to enjoying the little things here on the Mountain and in your life, for I do love the seasons of nature and life itself. Be looking for future articles in Get Your Mountain On AZ!