

I REMEMBER THE DAY

"Not until we are lost do we begin to understand ourselves."

~Henry David Thoreau

I remember the day. It came to me while I walking through the airport looking for the bathroom. I remember when I knew, I remember when I started to allow the fear to manifest into form. I could feel my blood and pulse as it infected my weak veins. I could feel its heartbeat become stronger, and before I knew it, there was life. Fear was no longer an illusion, it was no longer a fleeting moment, fear had taken true form.

Fear had moved into my soul. It barged right in with its U-Haul and was taking over. I no longer had a choice. It was here and it was the boss. I am now an employee to this monster and its evil ways. It happened in the airport on a spring day with my sons at my side. My fingerprint and soul now both carried the brand mark of fear. It happened so quickly. In one day I had the time before and the time of the fear. It was the day of the defining moment.

I have a heartbeat now that isn't the same. It beats faster and I feel like I am always late, and I worry about the lateness before it happens. I worry about things all day long and how I am going to not be in trouble. How do I get this done? What should I do first? If I don't get this done then what am I going to say? I worry so much I feel like I am not getting anything done and then I worry about the worry of not getting anything done. Then I am worrying and hurrying and not getting anything done, much less getting it done right.

I was at the hotel and unloading all of the stuff. I am running with the stuff to and from the rent a car to the room. It is hot here in Mexico and I am sweating, but the worry of the not getting done is keeping me trudging along at a rapid pace. I look at my beautiful sons and how carefree they are and happy and this makes the hurry and worry not quite so scary. My husband is getting his swim suit on to go to the pool with my boys, they all seem happy. I did a good job with my worry and hurry. My husband suddenly turns around and says, "Hey lies, bring us the snorkels will you?"

"Yup, One second."

Omg I didn't see the snorkel bag. It is big and blue and has all of the stuff jammed inside. Where is the thing? He must have brought it in, I know we had it at the last place we were at. I dig through the piles of stuff and look and dig and hurry. I can't find it anywhere. I wonder if one of the kids brought it in. I need to go and ask, but what if I forgot the bag?

That would mess up everything for the three of them and they are waiting. My youngest son comes up and says he is thirsty. I gladly stop the frantic search and get him a soda out of the fridge that I just filled with food and drinks... I then ask him if he has seen the big blue water bag and he says no. Lance doesn't like to pack or unpack and is very good at magically disappearing when it is time for the pack and unpack time. He doesn't have a clue about the big bag. He is so cute with his sunburnt cheeks and his messy mop of snarls, I go and give him a big kiss on the top of his beautiful head.

I grab some more drinks and bring them out to my other son and husband. I ask where the big blue bag is, hoping it is just in some hiding spot that I don't realize. It is pointless to hope and I knew it was gone when I saw the look on my husband's face. This is my fault, I should keep things organized enough so that big blue bags don't turn up missing.

I send my oldest son into get his baby brother to try and spare him the ugly confrontation that is about to take place. These confrontations are what keep me

hurrying and worrying, and I don't want my kids to have to hurry and worry too. I know it must not be good for them.

"Are you kidding me Lisa? How could you forget to pack a thing like that? Do you have any idea how much those things cost over here? Not to mention I have no idea where to replace them. There goes the rest of the trip. What am I supposed to do with these kids without the snorkel gear? We might as well go home, this trip has cost me too much money already. Way to go Lisa."

My heart is now in my upset belly and I am trying to think of a way to fix this problem. I run and grab the keys and my purse and say that I will fix this.

I am driving into a little town in hopes of finding a dive shop. I saw some signs on the way in but I have terrible sense of direction and get lost constantly. I cannot get lost out here, I will never find my way back.

Now the hurry and worry is back once again and I feel dizzy. I am trying to keep track of where I am going so that I can avoid the bad things that happen when I get late and lost. I need to fix this. I pull over at the first shop that I see and ask the nice old woman in my panicked voice about the snorkel stuff. She speaks no English so I am playing charades trying to get her to understand. She suddenly busts out laughing at me as I am laying on the ground with my hands making a snorkel mask and my feet flipping on the floor.

Now, why don't I get to laugh at my funny self anymore? I wasn't trying to be funny when I snorkeled the convenience store on my belly. But, it is pretty funny. Not many people would go to these extreme measures to communicate in a country where no one speaks my language. I guess body language and charades is a form of communication because she made me a map of a place that has snorkel gear. I am so grateful. I handed her one of the funny foreign paper monies that is spent here as a tip for her gracious directions. She liked her tip

and had a big smile when she waved at me as I drove away. I like to make people happy, I wish all there was to it is to hand over some play money in a foreign land to bring smiles every day.

Her directions were good. I could actually follow them. She must have known that I am a visual person and I remember the buildings and the trees to help me keep directions straight. She had lots of drawings of buildings and bushes on her map, and I am grateful once again. I want to go give her more play money on my way back to my family.

I get into the store and find the items that I know we need. I buy 3 sets of snorkels and fins for the three of them, if I want to go I can wait until they get back. I need to save money. I didn't really see how much they were but just handed over the credit card to the leathered tan old white man who is running the register. He rings me up and I am off to make my boys happy. I am thinking about all of their smiling faces as I cruise the small town, and I can see everyone all happy about me because I saved the day. Oh boy I want to get there quick. I want to be the bringer of the happy, then I will have done a good job.

Things start to look different and I think I may have gotten lost. I am looking for the store where I was snorkeling earlier and I cannot find it anywhere. I am driving in the backs of people's yards and I almost ran over a chicken. That would have been bad, I could have made someone cry about their killed bird. The thought makes me shudder. I am looking for someone to ask how to get back to the condo and I am not having very good luck. I see a young girl walking along the side of the road and I stop to see if I can do the body communication for her to ask her where I need to go.

This girl is about 16 and has the most stunning yellow gold eyes that I have ever seen, they have little flecks of chocolate sprinkled in them. She also has one

huge black shiner on her left eye. It is fairly new because it hasn't started to turn yellow yet. It is all red and angry with black strikes going through it, ouch. She looks at me and tries to help me, but I could tell that it was not going to work. I gave her some play money for her time and thought that it may cheer her up. She snatched it out of my hand and shoved it down her shirt and ran off like the wind. The girl runs faster than anyone I have ever seen run, she is like a jaguar. She disappeared in no time. I sat in the car thinking about her and her hurt eye for a while after she left. I was trying to convince myself that someone didn't hurt that beautiful child on purpose, but I knew better. She is afraid. She has a reason to be afraid, unlike me. I have never had a black eye, and I am afraid. I would be terrified if I was one of them who get black eyes when they screw up. I only get yelled at, told of my flaws and the disappointment they cause, or completely ignored after I screw up.

I am screwing up right now because I have been gone a long time and I am lost again. I am worried about getting back to the angry and mad, and I know that the longer I am away the worse off things are going to be. I need to hurry up and be smart enough to find my way home. I feel panic rising in my chest and my ears are ringing. I am worrying and hurrying in my head and not moving the car where it needs to go. I stop and breathe for a few minutes and I start to feel light headed. If I faint I will be in so much trouble. I cannot faint on the side of the road in the middle of the lost nowhere land in Mexico, I could be here for days. The worry of the worry of fainting is turning fainting into a definite possibility. My mouth is dry and acid is rising up from my belly. Throwing up is definitely going to happen as I stumble out of the dirty rent a car and hold on for dear life to the side of the car as I barf the stinky yellow empty belly barf onto the dusty dirt road? I feel awful. I sit down with my back against the front tire and put my head between my legs so that I don't pass out. I saw this done on television once and it seemed to work for that particular sick crazy person.

I stayed in that position until the waves passed and my breathing began to become regular. I don't know how long it took, I only knew the other option would have been disastrous. I need water. I pick my head up and see an old

woman walking towards me. I hope she can help me get out of this mess and maybe she has a water bottle somewhere hidden in her purse. She approaches me with a motherly concerned face and I knew she was going to be nice and that she had no intention of robbing me. I never think about getting robbed, but the way things go for me some days I am sure that I put myself at risk for this.

I tend to trust everyone right away and I think that all people are good. I like to think this way even if it is not very smart. I think that if people can sense that you think they are good they will have to live up to that role. I think it makes people feel good when I trust them. I think it makes them happy and I like to make people happy. I have big jobs making people happy and it is not easy when they don't know how to be happy. I take the challenge seriously and I am always trying new approaches to making the happy come out of those that I am around. Sometimes they work and sometimes they don't.

The old woman is not that old close up. She is probably only 10 years older than I am and she has the most beautiful skin. It is olive and it glows as the sun reflects off of it. I know women who would pay a fortune for skin like that, I would if I ever felt like we had enough money to throw around on olive glowing skin. Her eyes are kind and she has perfectly groomed eyebrows. My eyebrows are a mess and all bushy, I wonder how she gets hers so perfect. I struggle with the plucking thing, I either take too much or way too little and it makes my eyes water when I do it. I don't like to pluck.

She sat right down next to me by the car in the dirt, and offered me some water. Oh, I am so happy about this water. It is She swiped the hair away from my face and said in broken English "oh my child, why u in dirt?" I couldn't help but chuckle, for the question she asked I have no idea how to answer. The statement is more like "why you in shit?", but dirt is close enough. I shook my head and shrugged my shoulders and said, "I really don't know."

She laughed this time and helped me up to my feet. I did my charade communication mixed with loud English to make it easier for her to understand. She got that I was lost and worried about being in trouble. She said to me 'Late is better than not, no hurt in the late, not is what hurts.'

This made perfect sense to me, but I know this does not make perfect sense to my husband who is waiting for dinner and mad about the big blue bag I forgot to put in the dirty rental car. I know that some people think thoughts like "why sweat the small stuff, this is no reason to get yourself all worked up." Those people are not me, they do not know that the harmony revolves around the small stuff, that if one thing goes haywire the entire balance is off and it hurts my sons. They don't know that if I try not to sweat small stuff, I will only have very very big stuff to sweat. If I can maintain some order that works so that the big stuff does not have to enter the realm of possibility I can keep more people happy longer. I can keep my sons happy.

This is too hard to explain to people so I never even bother. It is much too hard to explain with my charade communication loud English talk to this kind soul. This woman is making me feel human again. She walks me to her car which is across the street and down one block. I don't know why we are not in my dirty rental car, but I am not complaining. We get to the car and she pulls a map out of the glove box and hands it to me and asks me to point to where I need to go. She does not know that I only follow picture maps and I am beginning to worry once again. I look down at the map and I am so relieved I begin to cry. It is a picture map of all of the condo resorts in the area. I only have to pick out my place and she maybe can find a way for me to get back with my treasures of the day. I see where we are staying, I cannot pronounce it, but I know it is the one because of the shape of the pool and how the front porch on the building to the left has a sway in its roof. I love the picture maps, life would be so much easier if we all used these things.

She draws me a new map of the roads with pictures on it as well to guide me to the home I need to get to as quick as possible to maintain the order of the

universe. I am crying as I hand her the last of my play money and she has a big smile of gratitude on her face as well. We both made each other happy and she saved me, maybe my play money saved her right back. I love the idea of give and receive and speak and listen. I will dream of a day when life could be like this for my sons. I will see them with their perfect mates and they give a little and take a little and talk a little and listen a little. It is the recipe for perfection and abundance.

Driving along I am trying to keep my happy face on in spite of the bile that is once again beginning to rise in my throat. I can feel the atmosphere that I am about to embark upon in just a few short minutes. I don't want to do this, I don't want to worry, and I don't want to be in trouble again. I want to go back to being lost and giving away play money. I want to meet nice ladies who have skin that glows like sunshine, I want to help the girl with the hurting eye from some jerk, and I want to snorkel the convenience store again and hear laughter.

I pull in the dirt drive and bounce out of the car like nothing had happened and called out in my sing song like voice "Hey I'm back and I have brought surprises for everyone!" My sons come running out with their sunburnt cheeks and shoulders and want their surprises. I go to the trunk and pull out the brand new set of snorkels for all! I am working this hard to try and divert the fact that I have been gone all afternoon and it is time to eat and I have not cooked a thing. Maybe it will work.

My youngest said "MOMMY why do we need two snorkels?"

"Because the other ones are in the big blue bag that I forgot to pack from the last place we stayed." I said.

"Mom, the old man over there was at our hotel and he saw it on the curb. He is staying here too and he brought the big blue." Said my oldest.

"Well, isn't it your lucky day kids, now you have two sets of snorkels!" I say hoping it will help.

Just as I finished my last sentence to my kids my husband comes walking out of the door. I know that this one is going to be ugly, I can see it in his face. I try the same tactic on him as I used on my sons and gave him the enthusiastic pitch. It is not working and he only rolls his eyes glares at me as he walks away without saying a word. Steam is escaping his ears and I know he wants to tell me how stupid I am for running off all afternoon and he will never believe my tales of adventure in the unknown land. He is not yelling this time. This time there is an old man sitting across the way drinking beer and my husband heads over to the man and offers him another beer. My husband cannot look bad in front of strangers ever. He can't let them see that he hollers, pouts, throws things, and calls me names. This is why he doesn't hit me. If he hit me I would have a mark. If I had a mark others would see.

I am afraid. I don't have marks. I am the keeper of the happy.

"Fear is not your enemy it is an compass pointing to where you need to grow. So when you encounter a new fear in yourself celebrate it as an opportunity for growth."

