

Looking Both Ways

Here is the prompt that popped up in my 5-year journal today:

“Write a phrase to describe your year so far.”

Being a person of the written word, I was hoping that some neat turn of phrase might bubble to the surface. Maybe something profound or appropriately witty or, even better, both. Something that would neatly sum up all of the many memorable events that have marked the calendar these past six months . . . experiences that stand as fence posts upon which I have strung the minutes, hours, and days.

It has been a year of many blessings and a year of loss. I believe that there is much that I have appreciated as a result of the many blessings and also much that I have learned as a result of the loss.

My Top 9 Fence Posts

1. ***Long and Short:*** I have learned that life is not always as short as others write about it being . . . that life can also be long -- and sometimes even too long -- especially so when it is marked by sadness and sorrow.
2. ***Beginnings and Endings:*** Realizing a dream is not an endpoint unto itself . . . it is just the beginning of newly-found dissatisfactions that grow a new dream.
3. ***The expense of poverty:*** Observing, living, and understanding the truth behind James Baldwin's words: "Anyone who has ever struggled with poverty knows how extremely expensive it is to be poor." Not fun. Just saying.
4. ***Simplicity and Complexity:*** Teasing apart the complexity of a simple life and the simplicity of a complex life and recognizing the differences and knowing that they are both the same at different times.
5. ***Grieving and Celebrating:*** Feeling the exact same at the same time. On certain days, the co-existence of these two puzzles me. On other days, the co-existence makes perfect sense. It is possible to feel what are thought to be two contradictory emotions at the same time. Like there is this *mélange* of real and

true emotions that thickens up like a stew and threatens to burn the bottom of the pot if I don't keep my awareness active . . .

6. **Thoughts, Feelings, and Things:** [a continuation of #5] . . . Which leads me to wonder about the practice of intentional living . . . and how feelings become thoughts and then how thoughts become things . . . and how I now know why my life feels so conflicted at times [see #5]. Or wait a second. Do I have this backward? Do our thoughts become feelings which become things? Or do the things in life dictate how we think and how we feel [See #3]? Dr. Wayne Dyer once said, "What I think doesn't become things; who I am is what becomes things."
7. **Confusion and Clarity:** [See #5.] Thank you, Dr. Dyer. Advice to self: Be who you are. Give it your best shot.
8. **Moving and Standing Still:** The fact that I have moved three times in the last year does not mean that I still don't experience feelings of stuck-ness.
9. **Success and Failure:** Many have written and spoke on this subject of success and failure in life. We are bombarded with ideas and quick fixes about how to jump start our motivation, our drive, and our success. We also read of the power in turning failure into success. But I keep wondering? Where is the measuring stick that tells me that I have arrived at a place of *success*? I do believe that there is an internal sense of reward that tells us we have just driven in another fence post of Accomplishment through the hardpan of our memory's land bank . . . but then what? Is feeling "successful" enough? Is it a myth? Just wondering. See #2 and #4.
10. **Giving up and Persevering and Granting a Degree of Self-Permission:** I know that lists like this shouldn't end with 9 items (the norm being "The Top 3" or multiples of 5) but I can't think of anything else right now. I give myself permission to stop at #9. [See #9]

So, how about you? What phrase best describes your year so far?

Write your phrase below:

What phrase did I write in my 5-year journal?

Looking Both Ways

It's the first thing that came to mind and now, after re-reading my list of Top 9 Fence Posts, it makes sense. Looking Both Ways implies some sense of caution, like what our parents tell us before crossing a street: Look both ways!

Answering this prompt has given me time to pause and to reflect. To exercise some counter-intuitive caution . . . not with where I am now heading but with where I have been. More advice to self: Don't let where I have *been* determine where I am *going* next.

The 2nd half of this year is just across the road. I have looked both ways, and I feel ready for the uncharted territory over yonder. Maybe I'll leave my work gloves, shovel, and fence posts on this side of the road and let my tracks leave a trail. Thinking of this metaphor makes me wonder what I want my Phrase to be for the 2nd half of the year . . .

What phrase would you like to symbolize your second half of the year?

Write your phrase below:

You are an interesting person. Take some quiet time to discover who you are!

Life is a lively event that keeps us doing all sorts of thinking.

Think Good Thoughts!

And write your new phrase for the second half of the year with
your Higher Self as author.