

This is a Wonderful Day

*This is a wonderful day.
I've never seen this one before.*

- Maya Angelou

How do we keep the freshness of our spirits and love of life when it sometimes seems we're caught in the sameness of every day?

How do we stay in wonder?

For me, my photography practice and every day walks are my window into the mystery and beauty of life these days - no matter what is happening in my outer or inner world.

Some days I bounce out the door, looking forward to the beauty I know I'll see. Other days I go only because I know that I'll feel better by the time I return to the house, but still grouchy thinking that I'm tired of seeing the same old thing.

Each time, however, I'm entranced by something new. I have to laugh at myself thinking the walk would be boring. Or there's nothing new to shoot, I've taken that picture before. Or, in the darkest of days: *Who cares.*

I care. I care about the essence of life, love, and beauty.

I care about the wind on my face, the sun that warms me, and even - sometimes when I've felt so trapped and alone "staying safe," - I care about the gray rainy day that I insist on walking out in, even if for a brief fifteen minutes.

Today I walked in the glorious sunshine, the same daily walk I take along my road bordering the Hudson River. Not expecting something new, just happy to be out and breathing clear, fresh air.

I brought my camera, as usual, ready for inspiration, but not requiring myself to shoot. Listening to an interview with Brother David Steindl-Rast, a favorite monk, sharing his wise and warm perspectives on gratitude, spirituality, the essence of life, I felt my body gradually getting into the rhythm of walking, breathing, relaxing, *being*.

I took pleasure in the sound of his voice and uplifting thoughts as I looked and felt my surroundings, appreciating the budding forsythia, the tiny flowering fruit trees my neighbors have planted, a handsome house that is newly built.

I started to notice - absorb - *resonate* with my joy of being here and now; grateful for the beautiful things that continue to happen in my life. (I call them "small miracles everywhere.")

I walked and waved to the few cars that passed; the drivers waved back. I waved to a couple having a video chat on their porch; smiling, they waved back.

I waved to a cat sitting on the steps of a house I'd love to live in - and no, the cat did not smile or wave back. Instead, he ran next door to his own home; startled and probably wondering who this crazy woman was, walking, walking, waving to all.

But I'm fine, Mr. Cat.

I practice living in the moment, allowing pleasure. I recognize Grace.

I photographed new things I hadn't noticed before. I made some images I've shot previously but this time from a different perspective, in a different light, with a new eye. I captured new stories to tell, experiences to share.

I forgot about anything I'd been worried about, and settled into the "now," the wonder of being.

The sun was setting and all became quiet. A red fox suddenly appeared from the marsh and dashed across the road in front of me. He ran through a yard, and into the woods in a flash.

A small white dog perked up and made a beeline towards the trees.
He stopped. He sat. He waited.

After a time, the dog lost interest and trotted back to his house. The night bird sounds began.

The fox came out of the woods, crossed back over the road and vanished into the reeds.

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