

Life Notes

A monthly publication from Life Song Coaching

Volume 1 Article 5

August 2006

Summer Contrasts

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It's hot. It's humid. Summer activities cram our schedules: softball games, reunions, picnics, community festivals, haying, gardening, and more. We rush around fitting all these activities into a mere three months because spring comes late and fall encroaches before we're ready. Then winter comes: that long cold, white, barren, freeze-your-booty, stay at home, hibernating season when different chores and different activities take over.

In northern Minnesota, contrast provides an incredible gift: opportunities to stop the rat race and take a breath. Lakes and waterways beckon us to swim, canoe, fish and soak in the refreshing calm of their liquid beauty. Forests offer places to retreat and seek nature's quiet, calming connection. There is nothing finer than sitting in the dappled shade of a stand of birches watching clear blue water sparkle as a breeze blows against hot skin. There is nothing so halting to our busy-ness as shooting lightening and crashing booms of a thunderstorm blowing in.

My coaching colleagues and I talked recently about this unique characteristic of northern Minnesota culture. Seasoned northern Minnesotans don't seem to take life as seriously in the summer as our metro neighbors to the south. Maybe we know a secret!?!? It probably really isn't a secret, but there is wisdom in knowing what we value and recognizing the importance of giving what we value priority in our lives. Our bodies and our hearts know how short Minnesota summers are. We know innately, that if we don't take advantage of the few short months of good weather to replenish our "fun and alive tanks" it will be 9-12 months before we have another chance!

I encourage my coaching clients to recognize their values---those innate, born-with beliefs that are at one's core. Values are the deep knowing of what we need to have present in our lives. My clients learn that when we live by our values, "honoring our values in what we do and say," we experience joy, fun, deep satisfaction and positive potential. When we fail to listen

to our values and don't let them guide us, we feel dissonant. When our values are violated, we know anger or frustration and struggle to find success.

The wisdom I share this month is twofold. First it's about taking advantage of our wonderful Minnesota gifts---take time to experience the beauty, recreation and calm they offer. Busy lives don't get enough calm, don't have enough fun. Claim what you need! Soak it in! Enjoy it!

Secondly, recognize that just as you know the "secret" of Minnesota summer, you also know *secrets* that are unique and powerful in guiding you. Identify your values and prioritize your time and efforts to live out what is truly important to you. Values are different for each of us, as unique as our individual DNA. I know a woman who recently left a successful job in banking. The bank offered her more money and a prestigious title to stay with them. She chose to leave because neither money nor title allowed her to give priority to what she values more--- time with her children. The bank president doesn't have children or a strong value around family. He values money and prestige. Neither person is right or wrong. They have different values and different ways to gauge success. Think about your values....what's most important to you? How can you make space and time to bring that fully to your life?

It's nice chatting with you. I'll be back next month, but if you'd like to learn more about life coaching or discovering a more compelling life, visit my website at www.lifesongcoaching.com. or give me a call at 218-327-2691. We'll make a plan!



Life Notes is a monthly submission to the Floodwood, MN, **Northern Independent**, and a newsletter to Life Song Coaching clients & potential clients. Contact Bonnie Henriksen, CPCC, at the above web address to request future copies of *Life Notes*.