

Semiannual Inspiration: Love Yourself Where You Are

Greetings!

Where are you now?

In a job you love, or perhaps not? With friends and family, or in an unfamiliar place? In a happy chapter of your life, or in a difficult period?

In this message, I'd like to share the most important lesson I have learned in Korea this year. And yes, this is my final message from the Far East. I return to the US in late October, and Jon and I will be based in Philadelphia again beginning in December or January. I look forward to reconnecting with many of you in person!

And now for the lesson:

Love yourself where you are, and love others where they are.

Let's take the lesson into two parts.

LOVE YOURSELF WHERE YOU ARE

This year was challenging and full of learning, but it was also personally grueling. I struggled on and off with sadness. Yes, this was an outstanding opportunity to teach in a foreign country and travel throughout Asia, but it was hard to be away from my support network and home country.

In addition, as a result of talking with some trusted friends, I discovered that my high expectations of myself and my future were triggering depression. I learned that I could live a happier, more relaxed life by letting go of those high expectations. Does this mean I have abandoned goal setting and planning for the future? No. Rather, it means I have learned to savor the present. To love myself where I am, even if I am sad.

Now, you might want to ask, "How does he do that?" For me, it's a three-step process.

- When I feel depressed, I remind myself that even the most positive person is sad sometimes.
- I then say to myself, "I love you just the way you are."
- Finally, I do something that brings me immediate joy, such as watching an episode of 30 Rock (full of laughs – Tina Fey is a rock star!) or indulging in a mini glazed chocolate donut from the popular Korean bakery chain called Paris Baguette.

No matter what happens to you, remember that your self-worth is innate and not shaped by your past, present, or future actions. We are unique and special just the way we are, wherever we are.

I'll conclude this first part of the lesson with an insight my friend Debbie recently shared with me:

"My mom once told me that you can't wait for the storm to be over. You have to learn to dance in the rain."

Question for You: What can you do to love yourself where you are?

LOVE OTHERS WHERE THEY ARE

You can also apply this lesson to the other people in your life – you can love them wherever they are. So often, we wish we could change one or two things about our parents, siblings, spouses, partners, friends, and colleagues. Although family, friends, and colleagues need us to help them change, they more often need us to love them where they are.

So, you might be thinking, “How can I do this?” Here are some suggestions.

- Compliment those close to you about where they are now. Tell them that you admire their work, appreciate their cooking skills, or value their friendship.
- Be a best supporting actor in their lives, even when you disagree with their choices. Years ago, I believed a friend was making a mistake by taking her boyfriend back (as did everyone else in her life), but I told her I trusted her judgment and would always be by her side. She confided in me months later that I was the only one who had supported her and how much she appreciated that.
- Stop yearning for others to be different than they are now. Love them for their strengths AND their weaknesses.

Remember that their self-worth is also innate and not shaped by their past, present, or future actions. They too are unique and special just the way they are, wherever they are.

Question for You: What can you do to love others where they are?

CONCLUSION

As always, please remember that no matter where you are, I care about you. I am only an email, LinkedIn message, or blog post away; so, please reach out if you need to. However, please be aware that I'll have limited access to email while I am in China in September and October.

I'll write again in December or January once we're settled in Philadelphia.

I wish you all the best, wherever you are.

Regards from Seoul,

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The world only spins forward – the great work begins!*

PS – If you would like to forward my message to others, please feel free to do so. If they would like to be added to the distribution list, please have them email me at BFish@aol.com. And if you ever decide you'd like to be removed from the list, please email me at BFish@aol.com.

PPS – Previous semiannual inspirational messages can be found at <http://brianfishbone.typepad.com/becoming-the-blog/semiannual-inspirational-messages.html>.