

Semiannual Inspiration: The Lessons of 2011

Greetings from a warm summer in Philadelphia!

I will keep this message short, as many of you enjoy the final dog days of summer and begin thinking about back to school.

First, I'll begin with a personal update. Jon and I are now fully settled in Philadelphia. I am thriving as an instructional designer with Vanguard, and Jon is enjoying his work helping Conestoga Bank go paperless – it's a green job!

I am writing today to share the lessons I've learned in 2011, a difficult year of personal and professional transition. These three lessons have been hard won, and I will end the email with a challenge for the next semiannual message.

BRIAN'S KEY LESSONS FROM 2011

- 1. At the center of my being are joy and hope.** The Unitarian Universalists of Philadelphia helped me learn this lesson – the First Unitarian Church of Philadelphia was established in 1796. I found a new faith when I was not even looking for one! Who can't love a faith tradition that begins every service with the greeting, "Welcome home!" and a reminder that there is more joy, hope, and love in the world. To learn more about their progressive, liberal, inclusive approach to faith, please visit www.philauu.org.
- 2. As adults, we have a choice – be bitter or better.** This year required perseverance on both Jon's and my part. At many junctures, we had to choose between succumbing to frustration born from anxiety and depression and seeing the true reality around us – a loving partnership, secure jobs, and a rich support network of family, friends, and colleagues.
- 3. I am at my best living life in the ebb and flow.** I spent a lot of time this year worrying, much more than was necessary. As Jewel says in her song, "Worry is wasteful and useless in times like these".

BRIAN'S CHALLENGE FOR THE NEXT MESSAGE, DUE 12/1/2011

Now it's your turn – I am opening up my December semiannual message up to my readers. I encourage you to reply to me with your most important lesson learned in 2011, and I will highlight as many of them as I can in the next message, which will be sent at the end of December.

CONCLUSION

You always, always have friends in Philadelphia. Jon and I would love to see you if you pass through town.

I'll conclude with a repetition of one of the Unitarian Universalist principles closest to my heart – there is more love, joy, and hope in the world. After all, the world only spins forward.

Best wishes for a peaceful rest of the year,

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Have you invested in your community today?

The world only spins forward - the great work begins!

PS – You receive a semiannual inspiration message from me approximately 3-4 times per year. 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 dating back to June 2008 can be found at <http://brianfishbone.typepad.com/becoming-the-blog/semiannual-inspirational-messages.html>.