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All That You Need is Already There

I just talked with a friend of mine who has found her life purpose—not in a cerebral sense of knowing what she is meant to do, but in a bodily sense that exudes the energy of someone on a mission. She didn't know it, but she's been preparing for this moment all her life. Life's lessons, as hard to swallow or as earth-shaking as they may have been, have made her what she is today. It's funny that we prepare for our finest moments many years in advance. That's what the hero's journey and the dark night of the soul are all about. The hero is presented with an obstacle, goes through a lot of ickiness to turn things around, and comes back to a community to share gifts uncovered during her journey. What we are truly preparing for, we have no idea at the time. We only know that we are living our life.

I will be flying to San Francisco next month to take my certification exam for coaching. After completing a six-month program, this is the final piece of getting the CPCC credential—a written exam followed by two twelve-minute coaching sessions in front of examiners and video camera alike. Time to put up or shut up. The focus and worry for my classmates is on the oral exam—coaching live in front of experienced coaching instructors.

What I have discovered during the course of the program is that I have not just become a better coach, I have become a better person. I have learned to have more compassion for the human condition, to take a fierce stand for what's important, to be unabashedly genuine about my own fallibility and ignorance, to accept what is without judgment. Thomas Leonard, a prime mover in creating the coaching discipline, said shortly before his untimely death, "*Great coaching is not really about coaching skills, competencies or even proficiencies. It's about being a great person. Great people make great coaches*". (Thanks to Coachville and Dave Buck for this wonderful quote.)

And so my "studying" for the exam takes the form of being the better person that I am. I know everything I need to know for the exam. I only need to be, to show up fully. The preparation for the exam moment, under the scrutiny of strangers with clipboards, started a long time ago, even before I began coaching training. It started when I realized that compassion was essential to being a whole person. It started when I journaled during a personal development workshop many years ago and discovered that it was important for me to speak about what I see. And yes, it started when I forgave my dead father for his volatile temper and the long shadow that it cast on the entire household as I was growing up. All of these things have made me the person that I am today.

When we realize we are good to go, just as we are, stepping forward becomes more than possible. It becomes how we live. No more preparation is needed to join the game of life. You come with what you have. To the bone, to the core, no more is needed. Trust me on this one.

Epilogue: I passed my certification exam in May 2004. It was a joyous experience that began with becoming present to all that was in the moment and ended with a celebration of how far my life's journey had taken me.

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