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Miss Eymer

There are times in my life when it feels like life is passing too quickly in front of me. Yesterday was one of those times. My son's 5th grade teacher had asked the parents for baby, toddler, and family pictures for each child. She used the pictures to create an end of the year gift for the kids—a video collage of photos from the school year combined with the pictures that the parents provided. She invited the parents to view the video at the same time that she was presenting it to the kids.

As I entered the room, I realized that it had been awhile since I had attended one of my son's school events. As I looked around the room, I recognized the faces of my son's few close friends—his cohorts in crime at an age when kids realize the fun of playing pranks on each other. The video started and as each child's baby photo came up, there was a mixture of wondering, laughter, and knowing—sometimes because of a particular facial feature, but often because of an overall look or feel to the photo. We went through photo after photo—babies and toddlers of years gone by. And now these teenagers-in-training, sitting in clumps by gender, were alive, sitting in front of me on the floor.

I realized how many bonds were being made visible. Bonds between family members, bonds between friends, bonds strengthened as a community growing up together.

The video showed moments in time when the bonds were being formed—a class trip to the mountains to learn about nature and just how 6 kids in one cabin could get any sleep over 3 days, time on the playground, class projects making masks. What would this video reveal of the future? Suddenly, I wanted to be a part of these moments in a more meaningful way, more than just reading about an upcoming event in the teacher's note home or signing a permission slip. Had I really missed a whole year of my son's life at school?

We create our own moments for filing away in that category of "memorable and meaningful". It was up to me to make sense of what was there in front of me. But all I could do was let the tears well up in my eyes as I saw the family photos and school pictures. It was a collage of memories that had no meaning for me, but meaning for other people in the room. And I desperately wanted to have the sense of meaning, of having been there, of having been a part of these smiles.

My son's teacher gave me another opportunity to make meaning in the moment. She had made paper pennants for each of the kids, with a saying or phrase that pointed to a unique strength or gift, a saying that connected with that kid's own personality or experience during the school year. As she told the story behind each unique pennant and called up each child to receive it, I understood what the year had been like for my son and his classmates. I understood a bit about each child and who they were, and who they were destined to be. And I began to make meaning of the lives that were in front of me. Coherence has this wonderful gift of making meaning out of what were pieces and fragments before. Thank you, Miss Eymer, for giving the school year back to me.

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www.blog.carolrossandassociates.com, and podcasts, www.liveactioncoaching.com and www.leadingwithawholenewmind.com. Carol is an executive coach, organization development consultant, and writer. A former Bell Labs engineer, her clients are intelligent, analytical professionals who are ready to be more creative and energized in their work and life. While her degrees in engineering from Northwestern University have served her well, it's been her life and work experiences that have moved her to do her best work. She is certified by The Coaches Training Institute and credentialed by the International Coach Federation.