

:: Dana's Weekly Insight ::

10.27.08 – We're Not In Kansas Anymore



We've all heard it said before that "you can never go home again", because once you leave home you can't help but grow up.

As a kid I can remember looking forward to the welcoming embrace of home. I can recall relying on its consistent ability to reassure, to soothe and to restore, and yet I was convinced sometimes that I was missing out on something better somewhere else.

Growing up, home existed for me as both a monumental burden and as a respite from an unkind world. Always falling short of my private expectations, never coming close to satisfying the need that I had to feel like I was part of a bigger place, home would remain forever faithful and I, in return would spend night after night peering out of my bedroom window resentfully wishing that I could be somewhere far, far away and fantasizing that one day -

I would finally be able to leave.

I waved goodbye to my parents, reluctantly, and then I watched them peel off down the hot and dusty road that led back toward civilization. Buyer's remorse had already begun to set in.

I had patiently listened to his sales pitch and with an open mind, so it didn't take long for him to reel me in. The promise of fun, fresh air and sleeping outside in a tent was appealing to me but it was in fact my father's description of the roasted marshmallow sandwiches with Hershey bar pieces melting inside that ultimately convinced me that Camp Bethel Horizon was the opportunity that I couldn't afford to miss.

Suddenly I was looking forward to the adventure and I day dreamed about exactly what it would be like as I counted down the days. Little did I know however, that the day dream would almost immediately turn into a nightmare once the reality of being far away from home would sink in.

Recalling my father's sales pitch as I emerged running and offended from the menacing outhouse, convinced that the grasshoppers and wasps were hot on my trail, I realized that there were a few little details that he had conveniently failed to include and I felt as though I had been deliberately misled:

"What the hell has just happened here and who do I have to lobby to go home"!?

My endless begging and my persistent pleading continued to fall on deaf ears and I had to deal with the fact that there was not a phone call to my parents and not a conversation with any of the grown ups in charge that was going to result in my early release. I was destined to serve out my full sentence and so I would have to find the resolve to somehow make it through.

In hindsight, it wasn't that Camp Bethel Horizon was so bad, rather it was that I had failed to realize just how good that I had it - a warm bed, real food and a proper toilet without bugs, people who loved me and the luxury of just being able to be myself. Out there in the world and on my own for the first time, all I wanted was -

to go home.

They may say that you can never go home again because once you leave you can't help but to grow up. As a kid I figured that much out the hard way, but what I have also discovered as I have developed and as I have evolved, is that home is not merely a place that we can be separated from but rather it is a state of mind that we can choose to access from wherever we are.

Imagine.

I have struggled for most of my life to reconcile who I am and where I belong convinced sometimes that I am missing out on something better someplace else, but I have never been confused about the fact that where I come from is a constant source of strength.

And you?

Out there "on your own", in a world that can often feel so unkind, don't you wish sometimes that you could just go home again? When you are missing the familiar, while you are resisting the unknown, can't you appreciate now all the stuff that you used to resent?

It is so much more than where we live and where we leave, it is where we discover our best and worst selves. It's greater than where we try on, occasion, to return, it's where we can make fools of ourselves and where we can always be exactly as we are.

Home is where we belong!

And I believe that you can in fact go home again because home has never really been about the place where we reside. It is, more than anything else, that forever faithful place that resides within our willingness to remember that -

where we came from will continue to inform who we can become.

Dana

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