

Invitations

“Destiny’s interventions can sometimes be read as an invitation for us to address and even surmount our biggest fears.”

– Elizabeth Gilbert

Sometimes, invitations can challenge our fears. Right now, I have received an invitation that has been developing over nine months in bits and pieces. For some time, I did my best to politely attend to the gentle requests as they arrived but refused to see the big picture they were forming. Instead, I choose to direct my focus to what appeared to be more important tasks. This summer, however, the gentle nudging is over and there is a tangible pull in a direction quite unexpected and to be honest, a little bit scary.

Have you ever received an invitation that you tried to ignore? I am sure you have. Like most things in life, invitations arrive with a variety of qualities. Some are tangible, printed on embellished papers, and some are spoken. Some demand attention, while others are subtle, arriving as hints, glimpses and whispers in your dreams. Invitations may arrive for a joyous celebration or to begin a friendship. Perhaps you have received an invitation to forgive someone from your past, or to take on a new responsibility at work.

It takes a lifetime to learn to receive each invitation with gratitude, then discern the right response. There was a time I thought every invitation was a gift from the universe and I was compelled to accept. I’m thankful to be beyond that stage. Now I know invitations arrive to help us clarify who we are, how we will spend our finite energy and what purpose in life will we fulfill. And in that, sometimes our answer is a resounding “yes” and other times a “no, thank you”.

Back to my series of invitations. What is it that I find a bit frightening? I am six months out from my 60th birthday and have lovingly created the home I longed for in the sweet, slow pace of San Marcos, Texas. I can not begin to express how much I love this home, and even more, the fact that all of my children are nearby. I treasure our monthly family meals together and opportunities to meet my girls for lunch or pedicures on the days I ride to Austin with Joachim. What a gift. I recognize it because of the years we were a continent apart – or times when we were near but I was not emotionally present to reap the benefits of my dear family.

Why now, when I have created such a cozy nest for myself, am I being called in a powerful way to work in another continent? And not just the west of Europe, which is a second home to me, but now Eastern Europe too? I had accepted over the past years a life between Texas and Western Europe. Yet now, here comes this invitation stretching well beyond my comfort level, appearing of its own accord. It's no longer willing to wait quietly in line – it wants my attention here and now.

I have come to know that all invitations are an offering. How they are answered is for me to discern. And thankfully, I have learned over the last decade to open the door to each request and let it sit a bit. Leaning in to see what it will serve, and whether this is a wise investment of my energy. It's quite a bit like checking the weather. That is, checking by stepping outside rather than checking your phone app. How does it feel? Will I need a jacket to be more comfortable? Or is it too hot or too cold, and I should just stay home?

And then there is the issue of travel. Although traveling is exciting, it can also be draining. If I must travel to share this message, there is clearly a limit, as I am not getting younger. Every time I share a plane with a struggling senior, I whisper a silent prayer that by the time I reach that age, those who need what I have to share will come to me!

You know, there is a famous homeopath, George Vithoulkas, who over time created a thriving school on his home island in Greece. Now that's a model I could aspire to. But then, where would that be? In the French Pyrenees? In A village in Baden-Württemberg, Germany? Along the banks of the San Marcos River in Texas? Or perhaps the Carpathians?

Today, it seems too soon to tell. I sense more traveling is required before the answer arrives. This time feels like one of those days when you step outside and the air and sky are far too changeable to predict. While I love the potential of days like that, I am not so sure that I love the situation I am in.

Having just traipsed across Eastern Europe, it is clear the message I delivered is being well received. I am sharing a natural path for restoring immunity and reclaiming power over your own health. People here are not only ready to listen – they are ready to take action. What I am sharing doesn't feel new. It is reminding them of how healing used to be perceived. So the importance of this journey is clear. What is not clear is how I can address my need for home – and more importantly, can I have my cozy nest AND travel farther than I may feel comfortable? My search for a home, a refuge and a place to retreat began early in my life, and the fear of getting too far from mine is hard to ignore.

So, what's a girl to do? Well, I'll tell you what I am going to do next. I am going to take a week off from teaching, clients and overthinking. I am going to enjoy time with my husband, who has just arrived, with the gorgeous backdrop of the Midi-Pyrenees. Today the Tour de France literally whizzes by our back yard, and next week the local jazz festival sets up one street over. I certainly plan to work in some hikes in the forest, a few swims in the river and cooking delicious meals together with local produce from the markets. As always, I'll shift gears as answers begin to appear, and perhaps a path will form that allows me to share what I know, wherever

that leads me, while maintaining a deep connection with my family and home. It doesn't have to be an either-or – but I may need some occasional reminding.