

## Good Days and Bad Days

We've all had one of those days. The alarm doesn't go off, the traffic is a nightmare, and at every turn there seems to be something else knocking us off our feet.

If we're lucky those moments last just that, a moment. Sometimes though, when life throws nasty stuff in our direction, they seem to last hours, days, even weeks.

A friend of mine was recently diagnosed with terminal cancer. She has roughly three years to live, give or take. We had coffee a couple weeks ago and quite frankly, I thought she looked stunning in spite of it all.

We talked a little about her treatments. We laughed a little about the retirement-aged volunteer drivers that take her back and forth to the hospital every day. We even chatted about the next steps in her life.

As difficult as it must be for a person in that situation to continue to move forward, she didn't complain. I admired her for that. Truthfully, I was inspired. If anyone would have ownership to having a bad day, it would be someone living with full knowledge that death is tapping impatiently on their shoulder.

I am an optimistic, glass-half-full kind of gal. I was in good spirits that day, as usual, and had no problem seeing the beauty in everything, including my friend with the limited life expectancy.

One day earlier this week I wasn't so optimistic or inspired. I had one of those days where every turn was met with a slap, a punch or a deep chasm to cross. I trudged forth, head down, shoulders rolled, teeth clenched, all in an attempt to keep that six-letter enemy called 'stress' at bay.

It was a rare day for me, where a smile or kind gesture went unnoticed, and I had absolutely no idea whether the sun was shining or rain was pouring from a darkened sky.

Misery begets misery. I headed into town to renew my vehicle license even though my intuition told me not to. With all the stress of the day, I could feel the pull to take some time for myself, regroup and re-energize. Instead I ignored my vibes and went off, attempting to cross a couple things off my massive to-do list.

That day my eldest son asked me for a favour regarding his driver's license. I am not, and have never been the coddler-type of mother. My kids are all independent and mature beyond their years and the odd time they ask for a favour, I don't mind helping out.

With brown muck already filling my head space, and ignoring my vibes completely, I went to the vehicle license office. While renewing mine, I asked the clerk about my son's concern.

Her reply was unexpected. She threw his license back in my direction, rolled her eyes and sneered, 'He has to do this himself. Mommy can't do everything for him!'

There was a seven second delay and then things went downhill. With steam pouring from my ears, and eyes narrowed to a killing glare, I chewed her up and spit her out before storming out of the building. I left her in a bewildered state with no idea what hit her! People waiting in line pressed their backs up against the wall in terror as I stormed by.

Sure, I won the fight, but it was not one of my prouder moments.

This brings me to the lessons for today. One, we need to follow our intuition (vibes, hunches, gut feelings) at all times. I have written about that in a previous article (Trust Your Vibes – April 3, 2009) and this is a good reminder that following our vibes is essential and does take work, even for masters of the game.

Two, we all need a 'happy place.' Whether that is an actual place or an activity, we need something where we can let the stresses of the moment wash away, allowing us to re-group, re-energize and feel peaceful once again.

The happy place has to be easily accessible. No sense having your summer home 10,000 miles away being your 'place' as that just means you'll live your year with stress, waiting and hoping for a release when vacation time finally comes around.

I have two happy places – my bikes and the bush.

Being in nature instantly clears my mind and removes any negative attachments people or circumstances may have to me. Stress leaves me almost instantly and I find peace and calm. It is here that I make the best decisions for forward movement in life, business, and family, as they come from a place of clarity and contentment.

Sometimes I prefer to be racing through the trails on my mountain bike, adrenalin flowing, heart pumping, moving with the rhythms of the forest. Other times I like running, hiking or winter snowshoeing, noticing every detail in the ever changing stories nature tells.

Still other times I simply ride my road bike around the small country roads in my area. Sometimes I ride hard. Sometimes easy. Either way, I arrive back home tired, calm and loving life.

When scheduling is hectic, weather conditions atrocious and there are far too many demands on my time, I will sit with nature books or cycling magazines in my lap and allow my mind to drift into that imaginative space where anything is possible. In a matter of minutes, the weight of the world lifts and I am peaceful and calm.

For some of you a happy place may be curling up in front of a fire with a book. Meditating. Or sinking into a hot bath with candles and incense. Others will prefer physical activity like swimming, golf or working out at the gym.

Regardless of what it is that you choose to do, it is essential that you find something your schedule and pocketbook will allow on a daily basis. Finding more than one happy place works even better.

Visiting your happy place needs to be the most important part of your daily activities. It is, after all, the place you will go to make every major decision in your life as decisions made here will come from a place of peace and calm deep within your soul.

When you visit your happy place on a daily basis, your good days grow, your bad days lessen and the times between are fulfilling. Even when the problems of the moment seem insurmountable, life will go on. The sun will still rise in the morning and set in the evening. Water in the river will flow and you too will walk past this moment in time and find peace on the road of life.

Enjoy the journey,  
Louise

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