

Miss Obligations

I'm so sorry I'm late. It seems like I'm always behind schedule. Late for tea, late for lunch... constantly running and trying to keep up. With whom, I'll never know. Or maybe I'm just late to discover that I don't really care for your conventions and sense of timing. I'm wondering when it is that I decided that you know better than I do. When I laid down my own ideas about the world, and life, and adopted yours? I'm tired of playing by your rules. They only serve to make me feel inadequate, fearful and completely shut down. Even when I do everything you say you still punish me. It all sucks the life out of me. I know you think I'm a little "out of touch" for thinking that I could possibly make anything of myself without following your rigid and inspiration sucking guidance, but I'm starting to think that might be the only way I can survive. For if I continue doing what you would have me do I'll surely die. Or live as if I were dead. No way, no thank you, that life's not for me.

In fact, I don't think I'm late at all. I am right on time. Right on time for telling you to shove your conventions. Right on time for realizing that I am the only one who truly knows which path is the appropriate path for me. Or what timing is right for me for that matter! Right on time for leaving that un-nurturing marriage, choosing my health over my job, and telling the world: "I don't actually know what I'm going to do, but I'm sure as hell not going to do that anymore." I am right on time for showing up and voicing my opinion. Right on time for deciding I'm not willing to subject myself to certain things anymore. I may be a decade or a lifetime late in your opinion, but from what I can tell, I am right on time.

We can spend our whole lives feeling as if we are late to arrive at a particular point, a specific benchmark in life, or a deeper understanding of our experience. We feel that where we want to be is always just over that next hurdle; we will finally reach it once we rise to the next challenge. That is called scarcity thinking. It tells us that what we do is not good enough, how we engage with life is not good enough, and who we are is not good enough. Yuck! That sounds awful! And it is. Believe me, I've spent most of my life there. That is what happens if you evaluate what it's like to walk in your shoes by someone else's rubric. You feel like a failure. Inadequate, unsuccessful and oppressed. So you have to have the courage to design your own rubric. And if you are anything like me it will be more a problem of subtraction than addition. When you have been following someone else's plan for so long it's almost impossible to know what yours would look like. If you had one. So it's a process of elimination: I don't want to work myself to death at a job that makes me shrivel up inside, I don't want to have so much debt that I'm unwilling to walk away from said job, I don't want to live off coffee and fast food. You get the idea. Once you start to clear a little space by subtracting a lot of things, you will slowly come to find there is some room (inside you) to add things: I really want to have time to go for a walk every day, I want to sleep through the night without sleep aids, I want to be able to eat healthy food that is grown organically. And this is how you slowly start to build your own rubric. Your own personal design for how you want to walk in your own shoes. And maybe whether or not you want to wear shoes at all. Maybe you really need to feel the earth beneath your feet. Maybe those leather shoes and asphalt streets don't work for you at all!

Sorry I'm late? No, actually, this idea you are feeding me, the one that tells me I should be able to get everything done, well and on time, when under-rested, underfed and overworked is overrated and toxic. And, my subscription to your plan has expired!

Tawa Ranés
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