

Last week I went for a hike. About halfway through, I sat down by the Creekside to better enjoy the beauty all around me.



And I was struck by the awareness of how deeply fatigued I felt.

Upon reflection, I realized my body has been giving me signals for months now that there is too much going on. Changes in my sleep, hair, mood, and digestion could have been clues – if I had been paying attention!

*\*But\** I had a lot going on in daily life and a lot of stressors to “deal” with, so I pushed through the messages of my body with the mantra “when I get to this next point, I can take a break”. Over time, the impact of not listening has been catching up with me and in this moment of stillness I was able to pay attention.

What I noticed is that I haven’t been feeling like myself lately. And I miss that person! So, I made a commitment to myself to slow down and take more time for myself. I got specific about what that means in some ways and left it wide open in others.

I realized what I have been devoting myself to is “being busy”. This was not a conscious choice. I have been taught by our culture and individuals in it that being busy creates worthiness and value within me, and I’ve been fiercely dedicated to high performance and demonstrating huge capacity for decades. I’ve been untangling and releasing those stories for years now (and help my patients to do the same) but that doesn’t mean I don’t still get caught in the trap from time to time. (The ego does like to hold onto its stories!!!)

This excerpt from “Wild Geese” by Mary Oliver speaks to this pattern that lives within so many of us...

*You do not have to be good.*

*You do not have to walk on your knees*

*For a hundred miles through the desert repenting*

*You only have to let the soft animal of your body love  
what it loves*

Reading these words helps release the tension my mind can create within my system and come back home to my heart...and help me to make different choices moving forward.

Specifically, this looks like me claiming more space in my schedule for me. I took a week of in July, went to a yoga retreat with some girlfriends, and am going on retreat for 2 weeks with my teacher in September.

More generally, this looks like creating ritual again each morning. Be that watching the clouds as I walk the dogs in the morning, sitting down for meditation in the morning, doing a few minutes of breathwork as I wake up in bed, or simply lighting a candle in honor of my intentions, I am committed to starting my day with purpose and a slower pace.



A yoga teacher at the retreat asked me what is most important in my life. I responded, without even thinking, “connection”. He asked if I was dedicating more time in each day to connection than anything else. With tears in my eyes, I told him I wasn’t. He advised that once I started spending more time and energy devoted to my highest value, I would truly find everything I need, including unconditional love and community, in those places where I start showing up.

In that moment, I realized that I have a choice, in every moment, about how I spend my time. And when I don’t choose what is really important, on a soul-level, everything else feels pinched – and unfulfilling. I felt full of inspiration and freedom with the simple gift of remembering that this IS actually accessible to me – in every moment. It all comes back to what I choose. And choose next. And choose again.

It simply comes down to a couple of questions...

***What am I going to devote myself to?***

***Does what I’m choosing in this moment nourish or deplete me?***

Right now, in this moment, put your hand on your heart. Close your eyes. Take a deep breath. Connect with the soft animal of your body. What is s/he asking for? What would bring it a little more ease in this moment? How can you slow down today? What could you let go of, even if the mind labels it necessary?

These moments of stillness create a more conscious choicepoint. When we allow ourselves more space to reflect and connect, the path of our highest potential comes clear.

If reading these words speaks to you and you’d like to take some time away from day-to-day life to explore the calling of your heart, come to [Costa Rica with me!](#) Blue Osa retreat center on the Osa peninsula is the perfect place to get grounded and re-centered in yourself. If you want to dive in before the retreat, let’s work together now so your retreat is even more powerful.

**[Retreat Details Here](#)**

Wherever this journey may take you, know that as a fellow human, I am walking the path too. What if when we connect with our Humanity, we were able to hold it with Lightness and Compassion rather than judgment and criticism?

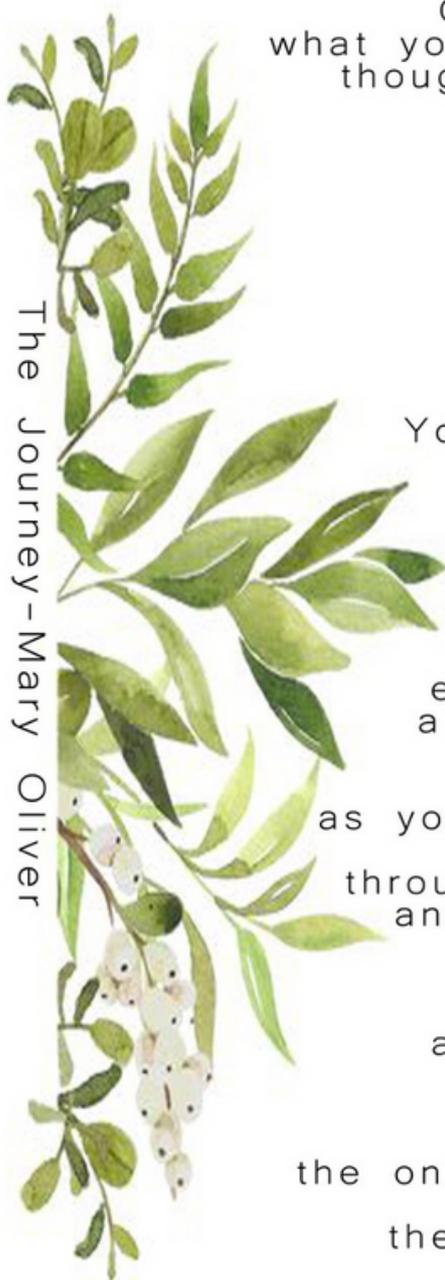
That is the path to true health and freedom.

Sending love and light to each and every one of you~

Dr. Nicola

P.S. The retreat is limited to 16 participants – [grab your spot](#) today!

The Journey – Mary Oliver



One day you finally knew  
what you had to do, and began,  
though the voices around you  
kept shouting  
their bad advice --  
though the whole house  
began  
to tremble  
and you felt the old tug  
at your ankles.  
"Mend my life!"  
each voice cried.  
But you didn't stop.  
You knew what you had to  
do,  
though the wind pried  
with its stiff fingers  
at the very foundations,  
though their melancholy  
was terrible.  
It was already late  
enough, and a wild night,  
and the road full of fallen  
branches and stones.  
But little by little,  
as you left their voice behind,  
the stars began to burn  
through the sheets of clouds,  
and there was a new voice  
which you slowly  
recognized as your own,  
that kept you company  
as you strode deeper and  
deeper  
into the world,  
determined to do  
the only thing you could do --  
determined to save  
the only life that you could  
save.