

I'm Not Obligated To Be The Same Person My Whole Life

[BY BRIGID HOPKINS](#)

Several variations ago, we were sitting at a greasy-spoon diner, my bestie and me. We were having troubles, not the kind that would seem catastrophic, but it was to us. We hadn't had these types of issues before. We were charting a new course in the long river of our friendship.

As the waitress refilled our coffees for the third time, I took a deep breath of courage and said, "I appreciate how well you know me, and it's hindering my growth." She asked, "What do you mean?" I answered, "I mean that because you have known me to be one way, I am denied permission to be anything *but* that way."

What I see now that would have helped then, is that I was expanding in the kaleidoscope of who I knew myself to be. I was adding more colors to my complexity. This was new territory for both of us, and I was terrified! There was nothing more difficult in that season, then growing my capacity and having no gauge of when or how it would all work out. I simply knew I had to keep allowing this growth, no matter what.

When I say no matter what, it truly was that dire. I no longer fit into the world I once knew so intimately.

I either kicked myself out or was evicted without notice. It doesn't matter because the result was the same. There was no longer room for me, and I needed to begin finding a new

residence. It was all terribly messy.

Awkward conversations with me overly asserting my right to be whoever I chose to be, but I didn't know that girl. I wasn't intricately woven into her seams yet. I was still picking out the pattern, the thread count, and the tense thread that would hold it all together.

My marriage was strained, my friendships were strained, and my relationship with my children was highly unstable. They didn't understand why Mommy was choosing anything other than them.

Hell, I didn't completely understand it myself. I just knew that if I did one more PTA bake sale, I would vomit. I didn't belong in that world of fundraising and charitable time. I never knew what to say, how much was too much information, or why any of it mattered. Sure, I was helping my children's school, but the time it took to do so took away from joy. I wasn't enJOYing any of it. I was living in a place of what a good mom looks like.

I wasn't a good mom, at least I didn't feel like it. I was highly distracted, distant, and scared out of my body most of the time. I was devoted, but not present. I was often making a new scrapbook, or shopping for the best produce, or learning another new technique that would assure my sense of propriety of being a good mom. If I used x or y technique, the magazine guaranteed me that my children would be happy. My children were not happy!

They needed me, in a way I hadn't quite figured out how to give. I knew that I wanted them to have everything I didn't and yet, I had no idea what that even meant. I was chasing the tale of a venomous ghost. If I caught it, it was sure to bite me and inject the painful venom of truth. I didn't believe in myself.

I didn't believe that I had anything that anyone in my life needed, so I kept following the crowd.

That crowd seemed happy enough, good enough, together enough. And, I have little doubt that they weren't doing well for themselves. It just wasn't the right current for my life, my inner beat. I lost touch with this beat, and every now and again I caught a slight tingling of reverberated beats. I kept putting them on other people or circumstances until I finally realized they were just echoing my own beat back to me. It was actually coming from me!

Imagine my delight to learn that I had something. I wasn't exactly sure what it was, or how to use it. But, it came from me, and I found it interesting enough to stay curious.

As I sat looking at my bestie, I knew that every word I spoke was painful, crushing and confusing. She wanted nothing more than for me to be happy. Why the hell wasn't I happy? I have a great husband, three beautiful children, and a charming home (this means small and a little run down) just outside of the city. A legacy home that was built by my husband's grandparents. It reeked of tradition and middle-class values.

Why wasn't what I had good enough for me? What if I never felt good enough about it?

The truth is, I had everything that most people dream of, and each day I walked around in the terrarium of my life like a zombie, doing all of these things that never woke me up. I didn't feel alive living my life. I felt disconnected because if I accepted that this was all for me, created by me, then I would have to take a lot of responsibility.

I never wanted all of this responsibility and routine. I am a bohemian soul: free roaming, high spirited, full of wanderlust

and intrigued. This life I have sunken into is like quicksand, tethering my spirit. Don't these people know how high I wish to soar? Do *I* know how high I wish to soar? What will I do if I get to the top? Whatever that means?! Truthfully, would I even know what to do with this top that I am chasing? Where would I fit? How would I know I made it?

All my life I have felt this invisible thread leading me somewhere. No matter how hard things became, I would eventually feel the tug and a new reality would begin. I became dependent on the tug and trusting where it led. When I took the vow of honor and obey thy husband I lost contact with the tug, I keep manufacturing it. However, I haven't felt the clarity of it in decades.

I miss feeling the invisible thread tugging at me. The assurance that all I had to do was follow it and everything would be improved.

Right now I am living in the middle, a place that doesn't have a lot of rules. This is a place where I can cultivate the life I want to live, the way I want to live it. The only requirement is that I keep showing up, and trying, which is what I am doing. I am trying to be gentle with myself and others as I navigate the murky waters of freedom. That is what life in the middle is. It's a huge sense of freedom, once you choose to accept this state of living.

I get to exercise the free will of choice and decision. I can have imaginative play, where I try on different alter egos and see which one is closest to who I am choosing to be this day. I get to decide. Me! Ahhh, shit that is wild and fun and scary. What I don't get to do here is bullshit myself. The land of the middle is illumination to all B.S., there is no time or space for it here.

This is about living my life, this life, this moment, as best I can imagine, then doing it.

I get to keep practicing until it all makes sense and I feel 100% in integrity with who I know myself to be. The best part is, I am not locked in. I get to keep adjusting the kaleidoscope, expanding and contracting as I go along because this is how life is. There is nothing cemented or certain, it is always in motion. We are always in motion. Our identity, our perceptions, our joy. It's fluctuating and different each and every day. I think that is freedom!

I am learning to celebrate this new way of living. Honoring the space between where I was, what I knew for sure and where I am going, while staying open to the unknown. Whilst remembering I get to decide how I enter the doorway of my new state of being. Enjoy the newness without any pressure from the outside world.

It takes time for everyone to adjust to the changes that are underway. It's a time of exhilaration and contemplation. Trusting myself enough to know that this is for the good of all, and especially me. I am not obligated to stay the same person my whole life because it makes other people feel good.

I get to choose and play around with what actually feels good to me.

For more self-study, [The Urban Howl](#) recommends [Women Who Run with the Wolves](#) .

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Hide My Insecurity Of Not Being Good
Enough*

*To The Woman I Rose To Be Through Love
As Tears Flood My Eyes & Echoes Of Fear
Hang From My Heart*

"To be wild is to be liberated,
cyclical, and emotionally
intelligent. The wild will never sin
against itself, and that means you
will find you cannot go back to an
older, smaller version of you."

DANIELLE DULSKY

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