

March-ish Newsletter



The Nature of Wind

Here in the mountains it has been crazy windy in the true spirit of March. Sticking with our nature theme as one of our essential ingredients of every Still Place retreat, let's explore the nature of wind. I invite you to take a few moments to be still and reflect on your own experiences of wind.

What comes to mind for me is the beauty, cleansing, destructive, uncontrollable, and refreshing nature of wind.

As I write this newsletter, I am watching the trees dancing outside in the afternoon wind. They look happy, still bare of leaves, shaking loose those last hanging on leaves, swaying to the music of the wind (which is more of a howl at the moment). They are evidence of the beauty of wind.

We keep our chainsaws in the jeeps these days as we never know when our superhighway dirt road down Julie Mountain is going to be blocked by a fallen tree or branch. This is the cleansing nature of wind. Nature preparing us for the spring, blowing away the leaves and debris getting rid of the dead wood. Confessions, I might have some deadwood in my life. The cleansing nature of wind helps me remember to declutter and think of the dead limbs in my life I need to remove.



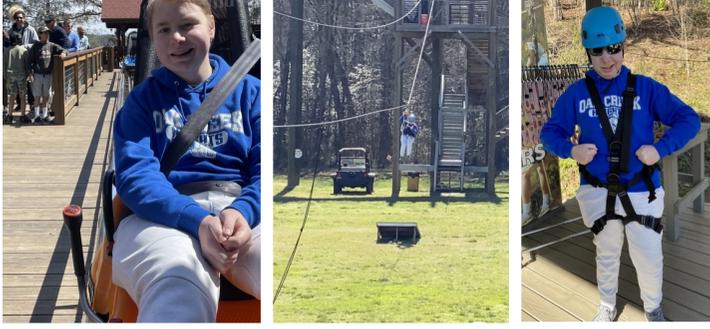
Sometimes the wind up here sounds like a freight train. In my early days as a mountain dweller, I used to hide thinking a tornado was approaching. Later we developed a whole story with the kids in our family during their young "Polar Express Days" about the ghost train that came over our mountain picking up and leaving off special guests. My niece with her little eight-year-old, very active imagination, imagined one night a sweet little ancient man from China was brought by the train to dwell in the forest, keeping watch over us, protecting us from bears as we picked wild blackberries. He was about her height, dressed in white and his hair came down from a braid high atop his head. One year while he was visiting, Aves, our grandson, lost his great-grandmother. The ghost train story became a way for him to grieve and feel her spirit and tell us all about her the night he heard the news and was away from his parents. We certainly had a very special guest dwelling amongst us that sad night. The wind can fuel our sacred imagination.

This family enjoyed the whistling wind of their very own Great Smoky Mountain Train Ride the old-fashioned way winding through the mountains.



Then there are tornadoes, dirt devils, whirlwinds. The destructive nature of wind. I think of New Orleans and the destruction that occurred this month, after those neighborhoods were just rising from the destruction of Hurricane Katrina. We seem to be in time of whirlwinds, all caught up in real and terrible losses, loss of loved ones, news of terrible diagnoses, challenges of health care, suffering, anxiety, and the list goes on. We all struggle to comprehend so many changes. We try to rise again; yet

often these days face another disaster. Where do you personally find shelter from these whirlwinds of life and how do you rise again?



Well for me, as usual, I have been humbled and have learned from our TSP families. This guy, CJ ;) had hiccups for over 4 hours as he approached the zipline. He and his family had recently learned the cyst associated with his tumor had grown again. He had just overcome relearning how to walk. His hand was still not working great, yet he still participated in everything with grace, (even wielding the big knife during Iron Chef). The whole family was trying to find their way back to joy and strength. He was always so gentle with his mother, making sure she was okay, always giving in to his spunky little sister after a good dose of resistance.

He taught me despite the whirlwinds out there, it may not be graceful, but we can face our setbacks, jump off the platform into life again and let the wind elevate us, helping us rise again. He taught me, we all need to encourage each other a little more and celebrate the little victories over fear and anxiety in our lives, take care of one another a little more, give in to arguments, laugh at ourselves. To experience joy we must be courageous, like the eagles we have been seeing around here lately, the wind can lift us when we catch it's current. Even if it at first it seems we are free falling, it does the work for us if we let it carry us.

Once I became a flying object myself and quit worrying about my hero seizing or having increased intracranial pressure...it was exhilarating. I looked over as the kids let go and were hanging upside down. I had to ask myself what was really holding me back...it was just anxiety...not true fear. Freedom overcame me and I let go...I let go of all the anxiety holding me back. I experienced the exhilarating, refreshing nature of wind.

Special thanks to Josh and his team who help us fly at Nacoochee Adventures just south of Helen.



It is the little things you do that matter most in life. So, let go and rise again with the wind under your wings.

-Dr. Dawn

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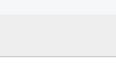
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