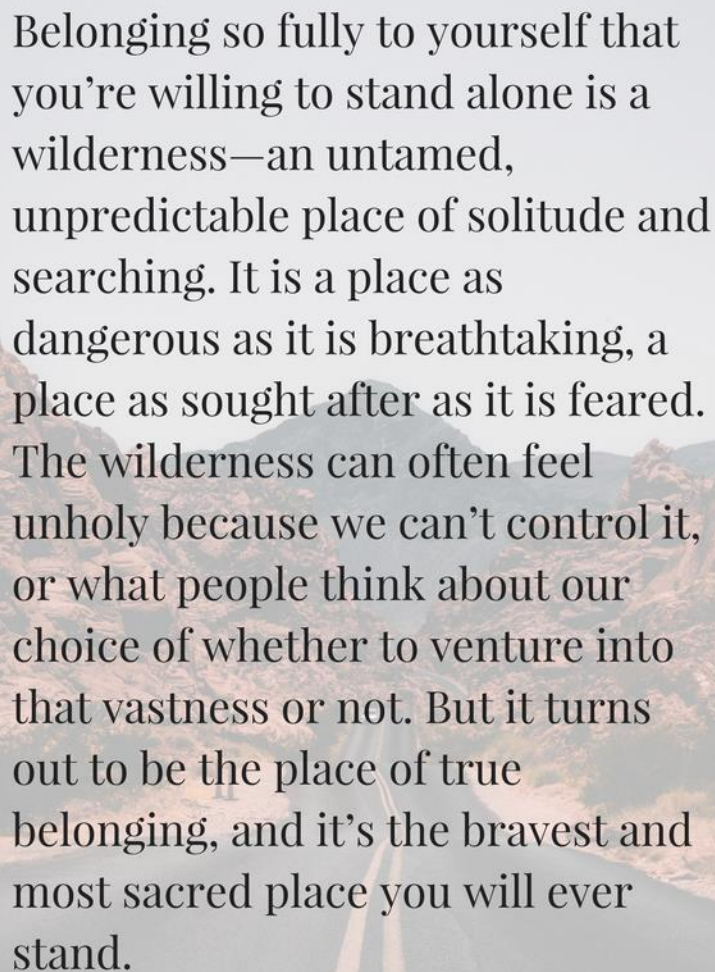


Rev. John T. Crestwell, Jr.

From Isolation to Innovation

Brene Brown Reading



Belonging so fully to yourself that you're willing to stand alone is a wilderness—an untamed, unpredictable place of solitude and searching. It is a place as dangerous as it is breathtaking, a place as sought after as it is feared. The wilderness can often feel unholy because we can't control it, or what people think about our choice of whether to venture into that vastness or not. But it turns out to be the place of true belonging, and it's the bravest and most sacred place you will ever stand.

BRENÉ BROWN

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The wilderness, the desert...The unknown. The void. The Zero point. It is here that true growth happens. When we are confused and hurt and grieving and unsure. That is where we grow as people and a planet. Mother Earth has sent us inside, so she can heal from our foolishness. She gives us a few days of sun and we get ambitious; and then she sends us back in the house with cold, winds and rain, so we can contemplate again. To sit in those dark, uncomfortable spaces. That density is like the dark matter in space. It is the soil. What if space was Creation's garden full of planets, stars, and galaxies? A vast garden of Eden. See, Soil is the dirt, the ground. And when it's good it's fertile—things can grow continuously; and in that space we are creative and innovative and thinking about all the possibilities. Soil can be overused which is why some Native America Tribes were nomadic. They knew the earth needed to replenish itself. When the ground is depleted. When we are depleted, we begin hearing those old fear-based narratives that have not served us well about what we can't do or become. Tell it "I don't need you today."

Sometimes, soil must be scorched to be cultivated. We must cancel those negative thought patterns—burn them off with lots of spiritual practice, breathing, meditation, and quieting our mind—which sometimes seems impossible given the time we live in.

The soil. The wilderness, the desert, the unknown, the void (same story)..that is where we give birth to new constructs. The “dark night of the soul” it has been called, is where we begin another heroes journey to survive and thrive on this planet. Moses had a wilderness experience and came back and led his people to freedom. Superman and Supergirl would go to their fortress of solitude to remember who they were; to restore the balance (not outside but inside first) to recover and begin again in love. From hibernation to participation we go...Isolation to innovation. To isolate something means to set it apart; to detach so as to make it alone (says etymonline.com). To isolate is to quarantine. We have to go inside... Mother earth has told the children to go in the house. The street lights are on, “Go in the house.” “You can’t play outside for a while...You are grounded....But this is not punishment.

Rather, we are being asked to get in touch with the Ground of Being. Grounded—is where we find our true essence as sentient beings. We realize that we are not alone, or abandoned or forgotten. AND my fear now that things are rapidly moving toward opening is that we will forget the lessons we are learning. I hope not. You see, when we are truly in touch with the ground of our being, the GOD or NO GOD of our understanding, we remember that WE ARE ENOUGH, as Brene Brown likes to say. BTW UUs have been saying this stuff for decades... Society is catching up with us some. That's good. Our values are beginning to permeate reality more and that's good. Don't forget to get grounded during self-isolation. Get grounded to the best parts of you that you can find.

You know, I find it interesting that in 1918 people didn't know where the flu came from. The Spanish had a relatively free press and began reporting sicknesses before any other country—hence the name the Spanish Flu. But guess who else was getting the blame for starting this epidemic in 1918? China. We're always looking for someone to blame.

And guess what? They don't know where the Flu originated in 1918 just like today, but they think it began with American soldiers after WW1 and in Kansas. History repeats. You want to know what may happen in the years after 1918—go look at the history. That may give an idea of what may occur from 2019 and forward unless we learn from our past. Every BIG blip on the history timeline is a reminder of what we got right and what we got wrong. We've been isolated many times in human history. So, we go from isolation and loss to innovation and growth. BUT society gets a little better.... In the years that followed the Spanish Flu better chemistry and biology advanced. DNA would be named by the 1940s. Arts, music, spirituality all advanced. But we missed the mark with how we treat other human beings who are not Eurocentric. We missed the mark in designing a NEW DEAL that was for everyone. Evolution makes us repeat our mistakes with DIS-EASE. AND THIS IS WHAT IS GLORIAS ABOUT LIFE. We get to try again. I'm describing cosmic evolution... And we have to have the courage to embrace this new/old reality that is constantly at odds. This is how Gaia works.. One of the Gaia Principles say that Mother earth,

from time to time must regenerate and rebalance—and yes, the karma that we as humans have wrought over the last 100 years requires a time-out. Time to get grounded...refocused and rested, so that when we go back out to play we will be more responsible for what we say and do to the planet and each other. The mantra is “Do less harm.”

I’m not happy NOT being able to see you in person or hug you or see your children running/ “walking” around the church. I miss it—a lot! And I can tell you that at least once a week I feel sad and even depressed over our karma and dharma as a world; but then I remember the process of life—death—and rebirth. The process of Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva. The process of living and dying and living...to infinity and beyond. When I remember who and what I am, I find release (moksha) for a moment—most times over many days until I have to go back inside my soul, again, to get grounded. Like when I sleep—I go to bed tired and worn-out but I awaken anew with courage and hope. That’s the flow... Isolation to Innovation.. Recognize the flow. Recognize what Gaia is calling you to.

Friends, YOUR wave of emotions is natural, and you should be surfing and wiping out right now—having ups and downs. That’s okay. But don’t let the despair suck the life out of you. Touch the earth, take a walk, find something that restores your ETERNAL SUNSHINE. Find a thing that reminds you of your higher aspirations.

We are in a big paradigm shift—I’ve been saying that. And I expect that there will be many new ideas that will emerge after this. Church will change. Whole industries will change. Some won’t make it. BUT WE WILL GET TO HUG AGAIN. WE WILL RETURN TO CHURCH IN PERSON. WE WILL RETURN TO SPORTING EVENTS, SHOPPING, GOING TO LUNCH OR DINNER, all of that will resume in due season. AND I can say that I AM sure that after 24 months we will begin forgetting what we’ve experience. We will never forget. But it’s impact will wane. So, THIS IS NOT THE END OF DAYS. You will eat and sleep and drink and play like you have before but perhaps you will be more mindful? Do less harm?

Some things will change. Change alone is unchanging. We have reached the end of the Industrial Age—represented mostly in the way we work—in an office with a commute. That will change—but not completely. Over the next hundred years we will more than likely see ‘how we work’ shift a lot more. Many millions will work from their residence. Haven’t you realized how much simpler life can be now? But it’s also complicated. There is a gap with working moms or partners/couples working at home with their young children. There are a lot of distractions.

The information/technology Age is here it is the new story and it will impact all that we do. But, we will still DO. Life will go on. We will ease our way into this new paradigm. Children will grow up and give back to society. We will work and be paid. And, as Unitarian Universalists, we will keep fighting for justice. So...this is not a time for condemnation but for recalibration. I am anxious and excited at the same time.



GET RE-GROUNDED...That's the message today. Be creative, innovative-- be Brahma. Yes, create for your relaxation and enjoyment. Create to be mindful. Create for yourself. But also, while you are in isolation, create for the greater world. Dare to be **a new unsettling force with your innovation**. Dare to be more. You are no longer a widget in age of big machines...Oh no... You are a fully awakened and actualized being for such a time as this. What a great moment to be alive. We can change the world with our love—so let love guide us--because our thoughts are life's thoughts we are participating in the collective story; the collective conscious and unconscious dream that we call evolution. Praises be!

Question: While in your timeout, what can you create? What new ideas do you have for building beloved community? What is possible for you? What can you prepare now? What can you launch? Who can you collaborate with?

If you choose, please write your response in the chat section. AND I will read some of them aloud after you watch this video about being that innovative, new unsettling force for change...

ROLL VIDEO

READ RESPONSES

AMEN