

# ON TIME

BY DARCY SIMONSON AND SHEILA SORNSIN,  
THE GRATEFUL GODDESS

## DARCY MUSES:

I was telling a young stay-at-home mom, whose oldest of three children is 8, about how I used to look to the day when my boys would go into the world and leave me in peace! Staying present was not my forte. Now, as I perch my 18-year-old son on the edge of the nest and prepare to give him the gentle nudge that sends him soaring, I realize that his boyhood days are gone and I barely remember them.

When I shuffle through shoe boxes full of old photos, I see the spirited eyes, joyful smile and wildly curly

blond locks that still have the relatives talking; I catch glimpses of the little boy who wanted nothing more than to match his father on the field, or in a fishing boat; I see the superstar skier less than three feet tall in his turquoise jacket, red sunglasses, matching nose and those persistent curls popping out in protest beneath a jester's hat.

The hair is now warm brown, with only a cowlick or two. The ski jacket hangs in the basement, too dated to pass on to the nephews. The trinkets and treasures he would fill his pockets with through the years (found bones and stones, keys and old coins, empty shotgun shells) surface now and then to remind me of what I missed in my haste to get on with my life, and how much I will miss him as he gets on with his.

What elusive goal or end was I chasing that caused my life to become little more than a blur with scattered memories? What can I do now to make certain that life doesn't continue to slip away?

## SHEILA MUSES:

It doesn't take much to make me cry these days. And not just the little stray tear that is wiped away before anyone notices, I mean the big heaving, can't-talk-but-keep-trying-anyway sobbing that has people mistake me for Holly Hunter in Broadcast News. You see, my little Christmas bundle, the one who grew to be a toddler with big billowy blond curls and piercing blue eyes who had people questioning my faithfulness has graduated from high school and will be leaving for college soon. He no

longer has the blond curls and people now recognize him as belonging to me, but that is just it, he doesn't belong to me. He is a full grown man stepping into the world on his own.

At dinner recently, the kids reminisced of horror stories from daycare days. I chuckled along, but couldn't help feel the pang of my Mother Re-



📌 **Mother Child** artwork by Darcy Simonson

port Card being marred with less than straight As. There were more than a few times in my working mother's career, when I compromised my intuition and motherly instincts for the convenience of getting to a meeting on time.

Oftentimes, I found myself pushing the river to make things happen rather than going with the flow. I have a different perspective now.

My 2008 mantra is 'I have all the time in the world and everything happens in divine order.' It has released me from a lot of demands I had placed upon myself. If I had to do it again,



I would be more present to my kids rather than seeing how many things I could check off my never-ending to-do list. And yet, if I am to truly learn about the passage of time, it would be to let the past go, forgive myself and live in the present. I still have this very moment to truly BE with them.

## TIME ROBBER

If we were to personify the past it would be dressed in black, concealed behind a mask of self-importance, reaching its long arm into the present and stealing it for its own amusement. Richard H. Nelson said, "Never let yesterday use up today." Yet we do it all the time, and when we do, all tomorrow can ever be is more of the past.

Our security guard against the time robber is being present. To live life fully requires being present in the moment and appreciating all aspects of it either through joy or acceptance.

Sounds easy, but because of the frenzied pace and cultural conditioning of the Western world, it's not. Based upon our musings, you see it's taken years to come to the realization that the time robber had devoured much of our lives.

So, what is presence, and how do we practice it? Presence is all there ever is, all there ever was, and all there will ever be...but that doesn't necessarily make it tangible or accessible to those of us who haven't consciously experienced it. To find presence, we must first quiet our minds of that persistent conversation in our heads, made up primarily of echoes from our past, which want nothing more than to live on in our future. Meditation, even for a few minutes, will help us find that void between the chatter and presence. Nature, too, brings peace and presence when we clear our minds and breathe in her beauty. We can also be present in conversation when we listen to

someone without judgment, but with genuine interest. Quiet the conversations we have with ourselves while others talk; listen, allow and BE with them.

We've seen what comes when the time robber finds us, and we strive to keep him at bay. Although we cannot retrieve lost time, we can create a life of joy, acceptance and gratitude right now. As you end this reading, practice presence by gently acknowledging and silencing the voice in your head. Become aware of the energy within your body, and drink in your surroundings with appreciation and non-judgment. Take a deep breath, feeling grateful for the very moment you're in, and slowly release. Stay in this place for a moment or two. Now, wasn't that time well spent? If it was, you were present.

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