

Mixed Blessings

Have you ever heard the expression: be careful what you wish for, you just might get it? I have, and it comes to mind every time I am dealing with a situation that has managed to get completely out of hand. It makes me wonder if we humans really know what will truly bring us happiness. I have always found that the anticipation of something that I believe will make me happy, is often so much better than the reality. I had visualized my perfect employment situation, worked diligently to obtain it, and within a few weeks I was thrilled to be offered a receptionist position in a downtown health and beauty spa. My twenty years working as a hair stylist had involved booking appointments, assisting clients with retail purchases, and keeping things clean and running smoothly; it was a very good fit. Most important to me, it was a long wished for day job, with the occasional evening or Saturday thrown in. And...they were willing to allow me to take unpaid time off to go on vacation with my husband, who gets three or more weeks off every year.

My first morning at work, I arrived to find the place in total chaos because one of their service providers had suddenly quite or been fired. The person who was responsible for training me on the spa's software, equipment, and daily business practices, was too busy trying to rebook unhappy clients to really help me get oriented. Also, I was not given any clear idea of exactly what hours I would be working for the next two weeks, which made it rather difficult to make plans for supper. Fortunately, my husband who travels a great deal with his work, was away for one of those crazy weeks, so I was free to just go with the flow. My first two weeks at the new job I managed mostly through trial and error. I did things the best way I thought I should, until someone told me to do it a different way.

It wasn't long before the rest of my life began to reflect how I was feeling: scattered. The house looked like a bomb went off in it, and I am sure that my friends and family suspected that I had been abducted by aliens. The deadline for my Arrow story was coming at me like a runaway train, and my book.....I hadn't opened that file in about three weeks! I also wanted to get organized and pack for our trip to Newfoundland at the end of the month. I have to admit, I was feeling a little squeezed, and very much looking forward to our week away. Then Monday morning when I arrived at work for week number three, my boss told me that she needed to speak with me about something.

The good news is that I have all kinds of time this week to get ready to go away. The bad news is that I am laid off. The spa's owner had realized that now being short two service providers, she couldn't afford a receptionist. I can't fault her for this, she has to do what is best for the survival of her business. She told me that she enjoyed working with me, and would be happy to give me a reference. We parted with bridges still intact, and truth be told, I think she felt worse about the situation than I did. It had been very stressful trying to get oriented in a new job where no one really had time to help you get into the groove, and I had been working more hours than I had expected to.

For the future, I think that it would be more realistic for me to seek part time employment. I enjoy putting time into my writing, and making our home a pleasant place to live. I tend to move to the beat of my own drum; a smooth steady rhythm that gets things done, while still allowing for attention to detail. In the past I had worked hard, pushing myself to the limit, and all it ever

got me was *burned out*. My experience of the last three weeks has reminded me yet again, to be careful of the seeds that I plant.

I have often pondered on how as children we want to be grown ups; then as adults wish for freedom from so many responsibilities. The birth of a child is a moment of joy followed by countless sleepless nights. That fabulous pair shoes that you saved up to buy, most often gives you blisters, and later in life bunions. Your snappy new sports car ends up requiring numerous and expensive repairs even before you finish paying for it, never mind how much it costs for gas, insurance, and speeding tickets. You buy a brand new house, and realize that you really miss the lovely, big tree in the back yard of your old home. Most things are mixed blessings, I believe, and you must always give up something in the pursuit of your desire. It could be time, money, effort, old habits or beliefs, relationships, ethics, your health; perhaps even your life. Only you can decide what you are willing to give, or what the value of something is.

Sometimes wishes that you don't even utter out loud are granted, although being unemployed, wasn't quite what I had had in mind for my solution. Nor was working in chaos on my employment wish list, but it was what I certainly received. Still, the people that I had worked with there were kind, and my employer had generously paid for me to try their teeth whitening service, so it wasn't all bad. I guess even when things go wrong, there is something good to come out of it. I may have been laid off, but now I can look for something else, and this time I will really know what it is that I truly desire.

I am certain of my wish for all of you to have a Happy Canada Day, filled with just the right mix of fun and relaxation. May all your wishes bring you joy and love.

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