

## Week 45: Why the Most Mundane Life is Sometimes the Most Passionate Life

I couldn't find a darn thing.

During the week after we moved back to my hometown, I was completely discombobulated. New house. New light switches. No place for my keys. Different cupboards. A microwave with strange new buttons. Unmapped nooks and crannies. Boxes still taped up, holding answers to many of the questions I was asking. Everything slightly different—small differences which, taken separately, were pretty insignificant, but when taken together, amounted to standing in the middle of the room, bewildered.

And for crying out loud, where is the toilet paper?

And now, two decades since I last lived here, where is the ATM, and which stores contain which groceries, and who provides phone service around here, and what time does the Walmart close because those screws I thought weren't very important turn out to have been really important, and what are the rhythms of this place and how do we fall into them as quickly as possible?

Usually, the idea of routine seems boring and mundane and a little slavish to me. But it only took four days with absolutely no routine to make me ready for a routine again. Regularity and order. Normality. Mundanity. Not because I'm tired of adventure, but because routine is the *birthplace* of adventure.

You see, adventure is a good thing, even a great thing. It holds endless possibility. It stirs our hopes and dreams. It gives us room to be transformed. It gives us space to work out our redemption. It brings new things and some of them may be painful, but many of them are likely to be brilliant, too. Adventure is gutsy, and it makes us feel a little more alive. Adventure can reveal to us who we are and who we want to be. It can point us back to the best things inside of us and around us.

But continuous, relentless adventure is ultimately unsustainable for limited, finite human beings. Our nervous system can handle only so much excitement before a constant state of fight-or-flight makes us sick. Adventure as a lifestyle is Hollywood-sexy, but it just doesn't work very well in real life. And we romanticize adventure at the risk of devaluing that which makes *healthy* adventure possible:

Routine.

All those boring little things we do over and over again, the same way every time. All those parts of life that feel a little dull, like a steady and stable marriage or the same route to the grocery store or the friend who always shows up or paying the bills at the first of every month. Adventure isn't a way of life; adventures are the moments made possible by the way we live.

Adventure is made possible by the boring.

Several days into our big move, a million loose ends still dangled from the edges of our life, and I spent a whole day setting up my home office. With so much spiraling and chaotic around us, I wasn't sure if it was the wisest use of time. But something inside of me was hungering for a space I could count on. And the next morning, when the alarm went off at 5am, as it does every morning I write, and I got up and poured myself a cup of coffee with the same amount of cream and sugar as any other morning, and I sat down to write my first blog post in two weeks at a desk that had been replanted from the home where I'd written for the last four years, I realized it was the best decision I'd made all week. I realized the regularity and order of the space made it possible to jump headlong into the adventure of words.

In the words of Gustave Flaubert, "Be regular and orderly in your life, so that you may be violent and original in your work."

I want to be violent and original in my art, which means the rest of my life around that adventure needs to be a little boring, a little routine. I need to know where to hang my keys and where to find the toilet paper, and I need to know that Walmart is open around the clock and that the rhythm of this place is simple to find as long as you're willing to stop and breathe and look around for a little while.

What looks boring is what makes possible all the wild words I want to write.

What if we quit lamenting the repetitive routines in our lives and began to embrace them, not as a *barrier* to the adventure we want to live, but as the *container* for the adventure we are dying to live? The truth is, every single one of us is an adventurer—we have unmapped territories within ourselves to explore. Every single one of us is an artist—we all have something we want to create, something good we want to birth from the center of us. Every single one of us has a voice whispering at the edge of our heart, beckoning us into something new and risky and probably breathtakingly beautiful.

The question isn't, *should* we create? The question is, *will* we create? And will we let the boring repetition of our daily lives be the canvas upon which we create? Your adventure awaits you.

Make a habit out of it.