

From a Deep, Deep Sleep

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Published January 4, 2012 | Updated March 31, 2026

https://www.transadvocate.com/from-a-deep-deep-sleep_n_5108.htm

Abstract

Yawwwwn. As you might have noticed I took a tiny writing hiatus for the holidays so that I could mentally, physically, spiritually and emotionally step back and just observe. I'd love to share some revelations with you. Some epiphanies are big and need a little explaining. Some are silly. All of them sunk into my [...]

Article

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I'd love to share some revelations with you. Some epiphanies are big and need a little explaining. Some are silly. All of them sunk into my psyche in a deep, meaningful way during my vacation and without judging, I had a way of being with this awareness in a completely new way, like being taken to a party where I didn't know anyone. I had to feel my way around, ask questions, and above all else, I had to listen. So, let's begin...

Holiday cards aren't apologies. Years ago I adored rushing home from work and tearing into the holiday card envelopes searching for little treasures. Heartwarming pictures of smiling couples on the beach, children (whose faces you'd recognize but they seem to have sprouted overnight) huddled with their proud parents or sleeping newborns with squished little faces nestled in each envelope. Those were the days. Folks wrote a little something about their year and sent their love, it all felt so personal. So much love.

I was in on the game, too. I loved sending pictures of my beautiful children to all corners of the country and beyond. Like sharing a tiny bit of the joy I felt in my heart with each special person near and far. Then things changed. The year before Hope transitioned we sent our cards with a picture of the kids at their favorite play space; Will clad in a policeman's costume and my oldest in a princess dress, complete with tiara. You'd think I shot the Pope. The reactions to my son wearing a "girl's get up" were strong.

One could say it prepared me for what was to come, but it felt like someone had taken a special part of the holiday away from me. I know that sounds silly, but imagine if you had a special holiday feast with your family every single year and looked forward to it with such joy that you started meal planing two months ahead of time, and then someone tells you they'd rather eat at a fast food restaurant than eat at your house. Well, it sobered me right up. I began to see who was really accepting of us, and who wasn't.

The year after, the kids' father suggested no cards. And the year after that, and after that. Now my stream of holiday goodness no longer fills my mailbox. The cards just stopped coming. I get some here

and there, and don't get me wrong, I'm truly grateful, but it hasn't been the same. Just like life, things change, and we shift accordingly.

Imagine my surprise when there on the dining table was a card I'd never expected in a million years given our relationship. My knee jerk reactions was to toss the unopened rectangle in the recycling and start dinner, but I stopped. Maybe she wrote an apology on the back of the card? Something like, "Seasons Greetings! I'm sorry we make gay jokes about your child. Happy 2012!" I ripped open the card with almost the same enthusiasm as I once did, only to find two teens mugging surrounded by a hideous cherry red & kelly green bonanza. Back of card, empty.

I watched myself as I ripped the picture in half, slowly severing those two heads, then turned sideways to keep ripping and ripping until the little chards sprinkled like snow, peacefully falling to the ground. Then I was happy. Little kaleidoscope flecks reflecting from the chandelier like holiday lights. Nope, I didn't grab the glue gun and repurpose, I scooped it up and dumped it, dusting my hands over the bin, smiling like my Christmas wish came true.

My joy came from one place - truth. This is the first year I embraced my loss, my longing, my fear, my grief, my joy, my rage, my resentment, my inability to change things that will never be changed. They will always talk about us behind our backs. That's okay. There are people like that everywhere. Doesn't mean I need to like it, or dislike it. It is what is.

Earlier today someone mentioned that some people are like clouds, when they leave the room the sun begins to shine again. I like that. It's not the person's fault. It's where and who they are, and I can't change that. The only thing I can control is me, my feelings and my reactions. So my new holiday saying is, "When life gives you shitty holiday cards, make psychedelic snow!"

Every day I begin again. I'm not into New Year's Eve. Never was. Just like most evenings, I'm in bed around 10, and happy. You don't need a new year to roll around to have a clean slate each day; each moment offers you that same opportunity. It's never too late. Buddhists believe that death is like changing your day clothes into pajamas, you simply shed the old and turn toward the new. I like that.

Instead of resolutions that come and go, I savor the intention of being present, and if I can do that, try residing in a place of love. Simple, yet harder than it looks.

Never underestimate the power of Krampus. This was our first year lightheartedly talking about Santa's less popular sidekick. If you don't know him, Google. While tucking my kids into bed I had to assure them that he lives in Switzerland, and doesn't have a work visa.

Each past hurdle & heartache leads us to now, and I don't want anything else. I'd never trade a moment, even when I've fallen to my knees in despair.

So my child is gender diverse. She deals with extra challenges, encounters a world that doesn't understand her, feels outside the loop on many occasions, and doesn't understand exactly why this has happened to her. That's all true, yet somehow you'd never know any of that from knowing her. She is the most brave person I've ever known. She stands in truth no matter the result. Her courage inspires the rest of us, like moths to a flame. Still, her greatest quality is her ability to love, and it's taught me how to finally grow up and be the person I've always hoped I could be someday.

Well, today is someday. I'm living my dream. It might not look like it to anyone else. Our lives are messy, and complicated. Most people don't get us so they stay their distance and judge us on what they think they know. That's okay, because we are fine. We are loving and strong. We are living in our truth. And that means more than anything else in the world to me. It's my greatest gift.

My heart swells with enormous gratitude, for the lessons I've learned, the people I've spent time with, and the mere fact that I can wake from a deep, deep sleep and begin again.

Cross-posted from Today You Are You

Suggested citation

jen. "From a Deep, Deep Sleep." TransAdvocate, January 4, 2012.
https://www.transadvocate.com/from-a-deep-deep-sleep_n_5108.htm