



Self Improvement

Under the Moon . . . in Will County

Submitted by Marcie Stern



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Summer is a time when many people sell their homes and move to new locations, uprooting themselves and their families in hopes of new beginnings and new possibilities. The season makes me consider how our lives are more transient than a generation ago and our

sense of connection to people and places has changed dramatically as well. We rely on Email or cell phone minutes to stay connected to friends and family; we live in “subdivisions” instead of “neighborhoods;” and the “local” store may be a 5 mile drive to a mega, “buy-everything-here” superstore.

There is truth and familiarity to what an unknown author once said, “It takes hands to build a house, but only hearts can build a home.” What we feel in our hearts as we experience the concept of “home” can change over time based on the people in our lives, the work we do, the community in which we live, and how fulfilled we personally feel. But, though our address and external environment may change, it doesn’t mean our concept of “home” must change along with it.

Connecting with past experiences of “home” and understanding how they shape our sense of “home,” allows us to appreciate all that we have, identify what’s missing, and give a sense of how to return “home.” Of course, “home” doesn’t necessarily mean where you and your family live; “home” can be found any place where you feel (or have felt) a sense of belonging, love, and acceptance — anywhere you feel completely authentic and alive in the moment. This feeling can help us experience “home” wherever jobs and family may take us.

One of my favorite bedtime books to read to my children is “Under the Moon” by Joanne Ryder. It’s about a mother mouse who teaches her baby mouse to use her senses to recall and connect with all the feelings of their home. What a wonderful

concept: to describe the meaning of home based on our senses and to use such an exercise to help tap into what “home” has meant to us in the past and what it means for us now.

For example, my childhood memories of “home” include my mother handing me a beater of chocolate chip cookie dough for licking, and the smell of warm cookies emerging from the oven.

They include the sound of Barbra Streisand’s voice singing “Funny Lady”



tunes and the feel of my sister and I dancing without inhibition in our living room.

There’s the sight of bright red tulips framing the front of our white suburban home and the sensation of holding back tears when the words, “There’s no place like home” were spoken reverently by Dorothy when the Wizard of Oz aired annually on TV.

Such images and sensations are powerful because they remind me of what was

real, and they help me choose how I might bring what was in my heart then, into my home and my life now.

Consider the following as you use your five senses to describe what “home” means to you:

- What was “home” at age 5, 10, 15, 20, 25, 30, etc.?
- How has the “home” of your childhood carried into your present “home?”
- What is missing that you would like to recapture?
- What is present that you would like to let go of?
- How would you like “home” to be in 5 years, 10 years, 20 years?
- How do your descriptions of “home” reflect your values?
- What is your legacy as you consider imprinting “home” on your loved ones?

I invite you to consider the synergy between your personal values and the way in which you describe “home.” And, if there is a gap between how you describe “home” today and how you want to describe “home” in the future, consider what element of that description is missing and what steps you can take to close that gap. Make a commitment to take just one small step to creating (or recreating) a “home” that enlivens your senses and is full of heart and meaning, just like the mouse who found his home . . . “in the meadow . . . under the moon.”

“Where we love is home. Home that our feet may leave, but not our hearts.”
~Oliver Wendell Holmes, Sr., Homesick in Heaven

Please share your stories of “home” with me. I’d love to hear how these questions/exercises have helped you to connect with the concept of “home.”

For more information about the “Finding Focus in Your Forties Workshop Series” scheduled for Fall 2007 or how to close the gap on where you are today and where you’d like to be, contact Marcie at mstern@vocalconsult.com.