



Honoring Complexity, Being Rooted in Simplicity, by Richard Powell

The complexity of life can mask its poignancy. The web of daily tasks and events can seem so manifold, so knotty and tangled, that the deeper richness contained within them gets overshadowed, lost in the labyrinth of scheduling, obscured by the preoccupation with efficiency. The ongoing attempt to stay on track, to balance multiple demands for time, eventually conditions us to accept dizziness as normal, and multiple distractions as a daily inevitability.

We get good at screening calls, scanning emails, and multi-tasking. We grow used to over-stimulation, resigned to clutter and excess. Instead of periods of busyness, we find that the details of each opportunity pile up like snow during a very long winter. Each flake seems so small and harmless, lovely on its own as it drifts from the sky, but when there are several feet of those flakes piled up, those little details become a blanket of obfuscation.

Are you longing for a Christmas break in the "detail deluge", a holiday respite from the snow load of particulars and possessions? Maybe you have begun to realize that the warmth and security that goes along with procuring the necessities of life can also be accompanied by the colder precipitation of multiple possessions. Perhaps in the bracing reality of making a living you have lost touch with the warm pulse of life. Don't worry, the pulse is still there, still rhyming each moment with a rhythm of meaning. All those details, meetings, appointments, tasks, and obligations can be recognized as the colorful paper, wrappings, and trappings that surround subtler gifts. Understood in this way, each busy life can provide a steady supply of hidden presents.

Many wise traditions know the importance of finding a balance between action and stillness. One way of achieving that balance is by a simple yet profound way of living called 'Wabi Sabi'. It is a way that is natural, drawing close to the real world, and relaxing perpetually into beautiful patterns that exist there. Wabi Sabi is a way of life that appreciates and accepts complexity while at the same time values simplicity. It nurtures all that is authentic by acknowledging three simple realities: nothing lasts, nothing is finished, and nothing is perfect. To accept these realities is to accept contentment as the maturation of happiness, and to acknowledge that clarity and grace can be found in genuine unvarnished existence. Filled with subtlety and depth, this way is a river flowing toward and away from you, and always within you.

--Richard Powell

