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Don't sit on the bank of life, jump in the river

Carol Meyer | Apr. 12, 2011 Eco Catholic

Existence in God's creation is too astounding for you to be a bystander.

When I read the book *Into the Wild*,I was both allured by and frightened of Chris McCandless? challenge to live more on the edge. Some primordial part of me resonated with his radical desire to give up conventional ways and live in the wilderness. It isn?t surprising, because all of us have emerged from the evolutionary womb of mountains, birdsong and blazing stars. But we?ve forgotten who we are and lost our intimate connection to creation, and thus to most of our joy and exuberance for life.

Here is my modest proposal and challenge to you this spring and summer: Intensify your bond with creation and see what this does for your soul, your health, your happiness and more. I?m willing to bet if you take more walks, look at the moon more often, putter in the soil, sit by a lake, or some similar outdoor activity (or non-activity), it will serve you well. We Americans spend most of our time on three things: working, watching TV, and shopping. Surely we can?t call this living.

I have always found that if I take time for new adventures, vacations, to pray, exercise, and to be in and appreciate nature, God provides adequate income. We are designed for leisure, contemplation and a balanced flow to life. Too much work and stress is at odds with the graceful ways of the universe.

Tom Brown, Jr. relates in his book *The Search* how he spent a year of solitary survival in a New Jersey backwoods. His description of the beauty and perfection of pristine nature left me longing for such an experience. .

He says: ?My joy was so great that I couldn?t contain it. It would break out in a screaming run across field and through woods. I was a bird on the wing. My body sang.?

When is the last time we have felt anything akin to that kind of exhilaration?

Deepak Chopra, physician and author, says we should talk to the universe. Since we?re an intimate part of it, it?s very natural and fitting to commune with it in reverence and gratitude.

Some years ago, I did a Vision Quest in Canyonlands National Park in Utah, which included three days of solitude just ?being? in nature. No books, no pens. Nothing to do. Nowhere to go. It had its challenging moments, but was ultimately blissful and transformative. I learned to relate to my creation kin in a whole new light, as equals and family, and felt all loneliness and separation depart.

If we plunge deeper into the mystery of life in all its forms and seek to be united with it, surely we?ll feel more alive, and maybe even empowered to protect our life-giving Earth. We might even have a new appreciation of ourselves as luminous beings journeying in cosmic celebration!

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