

The Art of Waiting

How to live when our formulas fail us

The Art of Waiting

Waiting is about allowing a healthy relationship to develop with life, as we come to experience it. Waiting is about becoming aware of timing, through allowing and respecting the various dimensions of life—people, God, yourself, nature (and the mysterious space between these)—to have their own free will. Waiting is about listening and daring to join the dance of existence with your intentional initiatives for sure, but without force, manipulation, or the use of power and control over another.

Waiting ultimately involves wrestling with hope. To be sure, in the waiting, what we have placed our hope in is being clarified. And then, as we wait, we refine, reform, or in some cases—most cases?—just plain dump it in favor

of a hope that is, eh-hem, *hopefully* more trustworthy.

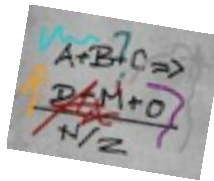
Who really wants to wait then? That's a lot to process while not getting our needs met immediately. Is what we are hoping for, what we have decided matters in the end, really worth waiting for? What if it means that our present needs will not (or never??) be satisfied?

If we can bypass any of that, especially if it offers a temporary relief from the dark abyss of the unknown, then why not? Or better yet, if there was a formula out there that could guarantee our getting what we hope for, then we could imagine "waiting." With a formula, we won't ever have to risk having to experience disappointment, despair, failure, anger, betrayal—any of those nasty feelings

associated with the possibility of not getting what we hope for.



Self-help books are a whole industry based on formulas... as if life could be reduced to a cause-and-effect formula: if A then B. "You can guarantee your heart's desires if you follow this formula (and buy my book for \$19.99.) In your uncertainty of things hoped for, the world only seems to be about every letter of the alphabet: if $A+B+C$, then $D-M+Q:N/Z$. Huh?? But I have made it simpler for the masses: the answer is, drumroll please... A then B. Forget the whirlwind of



complexity. My formula will guarantee that you will have complete control over the outcome of your life... the risks you take with my 1-2-3 method will guarantee your hopes being realized... guaranteed... just sign here."

I hate to say this, but *there is no formula to life, there is only relationship*; and

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relationship, by definition is never formulaic. Relationships are full of surprises-- they notoriously do not follow protocol. Indeed, relationships are full of *dynamics* between two entities. Living, then, is more like a dance between two or more of these entities,

organic, not formulaic. It is a full body-soul-mind-spirit engagement, in which waiting is an essential move to learn, if the dance is to be ultimately deep-down-to-our bones satisfying.

Being beckoned onto the dance floor (if you're like me) with all the risky, fearful—exposing at times—behaviors, is often met with some form of socially acceptable **kicking and screaming**: one foot on the dance floor, one foot flailing mercilessly around not wanting to



commit to this rather scary engagement. We don't want to face "life as it is", ie $A+B+C$, then $D-M+Q:N/Z$. And yet, "life as it is" is constantly beckoning us onto the dance floor and daring us to dance with it. Is it not?

Left foot. Right foot. Left foot. Right f... fall. Ouch. Try again. Listen. Left foot. Flail. Oy. Try again. Listen. Flying leap! Ouch. Ok: not ready for that yet. Laugh. Try again.

Little by little, as we practice the art of waiting on the dance floor of life, we just might begin acquiring the capacity for real hope. Formed exquisitely in the waiting, real hope becomes one of the most solid realities we can enjoy. Apparently, faith and love are the other two.

But we have to dance to lay hold of it.