

Need to Know

I set off for my silent retreat with one question in mind, what is next? I have reached an age when the question of what's next in life seems to pop up from time to time. Years ago, this question struck me as I watched the documentary titled, "Consider the Conversation". In the documentary a gentleman being interviewed described life as "always knowing what's next". He began by describing the natural order of things from childhood through young adulthood. Then he pointed out that there comes a time in life when we don't know what's next. Heading off on retreat, I had an urgent need to know.

After hours of prayer and reflection about whether I was on the right path for my life, open to learning, building relationships, giving my attention to the right places, I came away from my retreat having no idea what the future holds! No idea what's next! But, I actually gained a level of peace in not knowing. I was assured that I did not need to know.

Here is how I came to this realization. As I began to reflect on my life I realized that there had never been a time in my life when I knew what was next. My life played out the way it was supposed to without me needing to know. I began to understand that if I had known what was next, I would not have grown spiritually. I would not have learned to trust. I would not have learned patience through times of anticipation. I would not have experienced the joy found in surprises. I would have been reluctant to build relationships for fear they would be lost too soon. As hard as it might be to admit life is better when we don't need to know the future (funny how this well-known truth had slipped my mind with this urgent desire to know).

Consider for yourself the times you wondered about the future. Ask yourself these difficult questions. How is it I arrived at this place in time? Who have been the instrumental people in my life, my mentors, and my supporters? How have I come to know a higher power in my life? What can be learned from my life experiences? As you take the time to ponder these questions can you see how valuable they are in deepening awareness into your own spirituality?

I will admit at first I was disappointed that I was not enlightened as to the accuracy of my life choices, but in the end I arrived at a new level of peace in not knowing. I was reminded of two bible verses, which brought me great comfort as I pondered what's next. The first was from Jeremiah 29:11, "*For I know the plans I have for you," says the Lord. "They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope."* The second verse is from Psalm 37:7, "*Be still in the presence of the Lord, and wait patiently for him to act.*" They suggest patience. They encourage trust.

These verses suggest that wondering is normal, for they offer great advice. They also remind me that I am not alone in whatever lies before me, whether I know what is ahead of me or not. When I keep my mind focused on the bigger picture and the fact I have a role in it, I am assured that it will unfold exactly as it is supposed to and there will be no need to know.

Questions to ponder:

- What is my level of "need to know"?
- How can I trust God to lead me on the right path?
- Where can I seek comfort in being patient?
- Who will mentor me in my unfolding future?

May God's Peace Be With You,
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