

More Than Just Surviving Thriving

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Well, it's here. The holiday season. Most of us have successfully navigated, maneuvered, survived, and will live to tell the tale of Thanksgiving 2009.

But wait! There's more!

Whatever your reason to celebrate – Guadalupe Day, Saint Lucia Day, the Winter Solstice, Christmas, Hanukkah, Kwanzaa, Boxing Day, Ramadan, New Year's Eve, New Year's Day, office parties, school plays, choir concerts, or December anniversaries and birthdays – chances are you are busy looking for the perfect gift or finding the perfect dress or decorating a perfect home or creating a perfect meal or searching for that perfect connection with family and friends. Maybe, just maybe, you're too busy. And maybe, just maybe, in between all of the happy busyness your spirit will sometimes feel sad or wounded or lonely or overwhelmed.

What's a wife, mother, grandmother, daughter, sister, boss, coach, director, coworker to do?

Well, we could do what Cinderella did – sit in the corner near the ashes of the fireplace and cry. We could do what Sleeping Beauty did – lie down on the bed and sleep for the next 100 years. Or we could do what Hansel and Gretel did – run away from home.

Those stories ended happily ever after, didn't they? In the end the fairy godmother heard Cinderella's cries and granted her a beautiful dress, great hair, gorgeous shoes, and a night of dancing. A handsome prince gently kissed Sleeping Beauty, woke her from her sleep, and cherished her all the rest of her days. Hansel and Gretel returned home with enough jewels and pearls to never worry about hunger again.

What's that? Those are only fairy tales; old stories not grounded in your busy reality?

Maybe not.

For it is Cinderella who reminds us to give in to the sadness from time to time and then reach out to a friend. In her case it was a fairy godmother, a friend who urged her to wash her face and change her clothes and go out into the world with a smile on her face – a friend who urged her to take a deep breath, to dance, to get home in time to get a good night's sleep for the new day ahead. It is Sleeping Beauty who reminds us to take a nap, maybe not a 100-year nap, but a nap to refresh our body and spirit. It is Sleeping Beauty who reminds us to surround ourselves with people who love us, who care enough to find us in our dark forest, to offer gentle love.

And it is Hansel and Gretel, having survived more than one bad day, who remind us to leave a trail of breadcrumbs so that we might find our way home. Home – that one place where you are a precious jewel – that one place or that one room or that one moment of each day where you find peace.

Happily ever after? I'm not going to worry about that right now. For now it's surviving – no, I take that back – it's thriving during the busy holiday season ahead. I'll take a cue from the old stories and take care of my spirit during these busy times. I'll call a friend. I'll share my feelings. I'll take a nap. I'll treat myself like a precious jewel. I'll take my spirit home each day. And amidst all of the noise and hurry and planning and purchasing and wishing, there I'll find peace.