

Hello Friends!

Wow, so far 2019 has proven to be fast, wet, and cold! I'm banking on at least seeing some blue sky in February!

I'm glad to get back to a normal routine after the holiday shake-up. I've enjoyed jamming on Sunday nights with "No Strings Attached". It is true therapy. Playing and singing many of the old songs my granddaddy used to play and sing for me makes me feel close to my heavenly family. We did "Wildwood Flower" Sunday before last. That was the one my grandmother liked him to play. I didn't play guitar while he was alive, but I like to think there's some kind of window in the floor that people in heaven can watch us through. Not in a creepy way. I picture him pulling people over to see me playing the guitar.

I've gotten to hang out with friends and family this month, make a new writer friend (That's Renee on the left in the pic) start a couple of new songs, get back to Beth's yoga class on Mondays, haul away a truckload of stuff from the attic, etc., and learn a new way to fold clothes from the book, *Tidying Up*, which is revolutionizing my closet.

Again, not in a creepy way, this morning I decided to meditate for ten minutes. A book I'm reading suggests that it's a good way to free your "true self". I had a series of pictures, visions, or whatever you want to call it come into my mind. It started with a hermit crab, tentatively reaching his claws out of his shell, then I saw myself break up through the surface of a large body of water, hearing the words, "true self". After that, the words *heart, soul, mind, and strength* circled in black space like orbiting planets in a solar system. Then the word "transcendence" filled my mind. After this, I wrote it all down. It seemed pretty straightforward to me that I was perhaps emerging in a more authentic, persona-free way from the water. I looked up the meaning of "transcendent" on [merriam-webster.com](http://merriam-webster.com):

**Transcendent:** "exceeding usual limits; extending or lying beyond the limits of ordinary experience; being beyond comprehension; universally applicable or significant.

**Synonyms:** magical, miraculous, phenomenal, preternatural, superhuman, supernatural, supernormal, uncanny, unearthly.

## **Antonyms:** natural

I was curious about the hermit crab and googled “hermit crab as symbol”. Well! Who would have thought the lowly hermit crab could be such a symbolic celebrity? For the third time, *not in a creepy way*, I found some compelling info about Hermie on Avia Venefica's site called [what's-your-sign.com](#). It isn't about horoscopes (which I don't do). It's about symbolism (signs). I simply liked what this former hermit crab caretaker had to say about what hermit crabs can symbolize, based on their characteristics and habits.

She pointed out that hermit crabs really aren't hermits at all but prefer to be with as many as one hundred others of their own kind. They communicate through touching and body language. They are brave, curious, protective of their "space", patient, flexible, explorative, playful, and relationship-oriented. You can read her complete article here: [Hermit Crab Symbolism](#)

This spoke deeply to me and specific things I need to work on. Anyone who knows me well knows that, though I enjoy intimate, private gatherings with a few friends, I sometimes call myself a hermit, not being very social. I like my space and embrace quiet and solitude. The hermit crab I saw while sitting quietly (that's what meditation is, at least for me. No om's.) was *reaching out of his shell*. And next, I popped up out of the deep. It must be time for me to come out of a season of “hiding away” and reach toward communion with like hearts, minds, souls, and strengths.

I feel certain that you and I at least share the commonality of having ebbs and flows between our interactions and solitudes. Some of us need more interaction, some more solitude, but all of us need a mixture of both. That mixture may change over time. I don't want things like the results of a personality test or enneagram or some other assessment that can only take a snapshot of who I am at the moment I choose my answers to box me in. Is anyone else like me when taking those tests? I struggle intensely between choices like, “Would you rather stay home and eat popcorn alone or enjoy a wild romp around town with your best friend?” My answer is yes! It all depends on the moment.

"We're all like hermit crabs: little naked creatures that have found a suitable shell and decided to live inside it until it stops fitting." *Times, Sunday Times* (2016) [collinsdictionary.com](http://collinsdictionary.com)

Thank you for reading, for your support, and for your prayers.

Peace,

Lori