

NEWSLETTER

WEEKLY FLOW

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HOPE FLOATS

Journal Prompt - What does it mean to hope? Is it the possibility that things could change for the better or the faith in knowing that they will? Is hope ever foolish? Is it ever wasted? What does hope give and what does it take?

Jay's response. Hope converts my pessimism into patience. Hope takes my sorrow and reminds me that I have survived all my bad days so far. Hope requires that I pick up the sword and the tools that I had cast aside and fight and plant again.

It is believed that King Solomon wrote this poem about seasons toward the end of his reign. It is an ode to the certainty of change. Life is change and Hope is the buoy that keeps us above water in the midst of stormy change.



SEASONS

There is a time for everything,
and a season for every activity under heaven:
a time to be born and a time to die,
a time to plant and a time to uproot,
a time to kill and a time to heal,
a time to tear down and a time to build,
a time to weep and a time to laugh,
a time to mourn and a time to dance,
a time to scatter stones and a time to gather them,
a time to embrace and a time to refrain,
a time to search and a time to give up,
a time to keep and a time to throw away,
a time to tear and a time to mend,
a time to be silent and a time to speak,
a time to love and a time to hate,
a time for war and a time for peace.





STORY TIME!

This is the story of how I ended up lying scalded and naked on a hotel bathroom floor after seeing my life flash before my eyes while a middle-aged mother of 5 peered down at me wondering aloud if I had cracked anything open. You see it was hope that left me jumbled up, embarrassed and bruised on this Italian marble floor; hope and a big dream!

Let me start at the beginning...

So after being recruited to my first job while still in law school, I was so excited about my future in 2005. I could walk across the stage in my cap & gown elated and satisfied that I had my offer letter in hand. Ya'll I was feeling myself! Little did I know that in a year, I'd be re-organized out of job and living back home with my Mother. Chile my little ego was crushed! Life had ripped my sails to shreds and I was just floating wondering what to do next. I started looking for a new job but this was right when the 2008 decline was starting but it wasn't yet in the news and on everyone's mind. I rode my savings out and then decided to take temporary placements in accounting while I looked for my next full-time legal job. I'd done accounting before law school. So I truly felt like I was hustling backwards. Somehow the dreamer in me saw this as an opportunity to do the things I'd been too goal-oriented to attend to while I was in pursuit of my law degree like dating, traveling, and giving my singing career another chance.

So I started practicing and training my voice and going to open mic nights. I then heard there was a chance to sing at a local contest where the winner would get a chance to sing on the Tom Joyner radio show. Tom Joyner ran the most popular morning radio show in the country! So I did my makeup and put a cute outfit and off I went. The contest was held in a club in the downtown area of Memphis. We waited and in line and was given a number. After getting a number we were able to go sit inside of the club and wait on our turn to perform. Now, listening to your competition sing is an intimidating process.

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I tend to talk when I'm nervous so I struck up a conversation with the lady sitting next to me. She was working temp jobs just like me and trying to make a go of singing professionally while raising her five children. My number came up and off I went to sing. I don't know if you've ever been so nervous that you can literally hear your heart beat like it's being played through a speaker but honey my heartbeat was competing with the band playing behind me. My performance is still a blur to me to this day. All I know is that a lady sang a Chaka Khan song after me and I knew my chances of winning were zero! I went back to sit and wait on the results. The lady I was sitting next to me complimented me on my performance. I thought she was just being nice until she asked if I wanted to audition for a back up singer gig. She was going on tour with a lead singer and band and they had just lost their other back up singer. I said, "Absolutely". To speed up this story, I sang for the lead singer and got the gig!!!

"I got the gig!"

We rehearsed for 8 weeks before flying to Northern Italy for a month-long tour. I grew up singing in church and this was my first professional tour! I was going overseas to sing. My temp job even said I could have my spot back after the tour. I'd never been to Europe or anywhere else outside of the U.S and here I was leaving for a month to a country where I didn't speak the language and travelling with people I'd known less than 90 days! But this was my dream and I had to take this chance. I got my passport. Borrowed a friend's digital camera. I added international minutes to my cell phone and promised my mother that I'd call everyday.



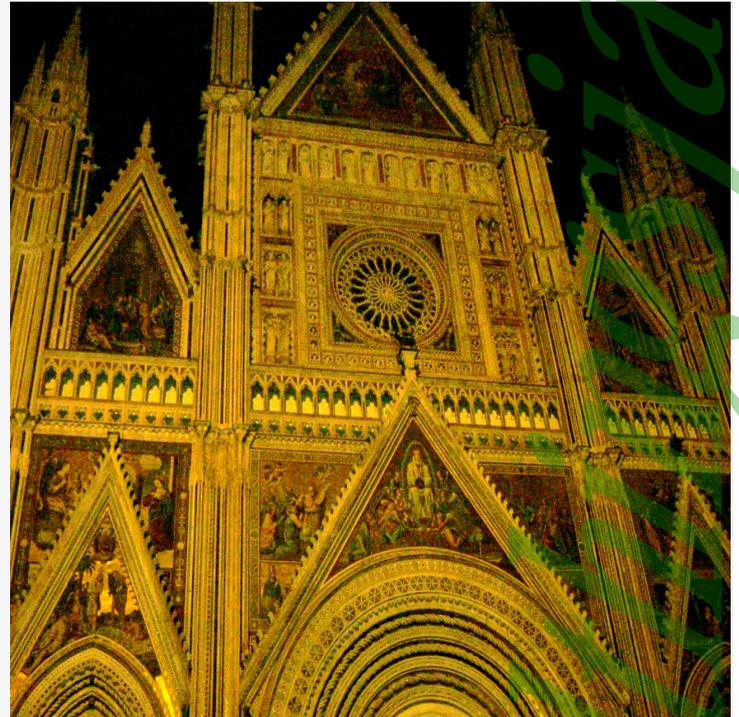
One of the many beautiful Catholic churches we performed in!

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After our 90 minute set that night, I was sweaty and tired from singing, doing choreography, meeting the audience and selling CD's. We packed up our things and walked the half mile back to the hotel in the cold December night air. All I was looking forward to was a long shower and getting to bed. I laid out my pajamas while my roommate removed her makeup in the bathroom. When she was done, I headed into the bathroom, relieved to finally be about to end my night.

I could write a whole book about the sights and sounds of being on tour. Maybe someday I will but you want to know about my bathroom accident. So the first 3 weeks of the tour, I had my own room for each stop of the tour. The last week was at a jazz festival and there weren't enough rooms, so I had to share with the other backup singer. We shared a room that would be pretty small according to American standards but despite the size of the room the bathroom was beautiful! Italian marble from floor to ceiling, a towel warmer, toilet and bidet and double sinks. The least luxurious part of the bathroom was the small corner shower. On the first night in the room my roommate remarked the hot water was acting a bit funny in the shower and to be careful. I had no problem with it when I took my shower to get ready for sound check, so I quickly forgot her warning (doggone ADHD forgetful brain).



200 year old cafe carved out of the side of a mountain where we performed

I turned on the water and got it to the perfect temperature. As I stepped into the shower, the water suddenly turned scalding hot and in my shock, I turned too quickly to get out of the shower. My wet foot missed the towel on the floor, and needless to say, my wet skin just slipped like an errant ball all over the marble floor. At some point, I banged up against the bathroom door and finally came to a stop when my shoulder hit the toilet. I yelled what I know had to be a few expletives and called on the Lord! Reader I know that's concerning combination! My roommate must have felt that way too because she yanked open the door and asked me if I was okay.



She quickly concluded I was not because I was naked wet and face down on the bathroom floor and asking Jesus to help me. Thankfully, she was able to throw me a bath towel that I partially wrapped around me. I used the other towel to dry my feet and the floor so I could safely stand. She asked if I needed help getting up. I told her no, because I was truly too ashamed to accept her assistance.

The only thing more alarming than my scalded fall were the bruises that appeared overnight. Well, my band mates pretended to be more concerned than amused, but their laughter and re-enactment of my fall proved otherwise. I started with this story time with a bruised ego and ended up with a bruised ass but I wouldn't change a moment of that year.



Dear Reader sometimes your dreams will take you places you didn't even know existed.

