

Looking Back at Your Life

It may seem crazy, but I like to look back before I move ahead.

Luckily, I have a good memory and lots of diaries, letters and scrapbooks to help me.

To my surprise, I often discover that so many things about my childhood that I was POSITIVE were true, weren't. Either they took place years before or after I'd remembered. Or, in a totally different place than the scene etched clearly in my mind. Or the "quintessential photograph" that accurately portrayed my place in the family looked nothing like I thought it did. Memory, I discovered, is more fluid than I'd imagined. Therefore, I'm learning to be less attached to what I "know" to be true about my stories of the past.

I wanted to look back to explore some of the influences that made me uniquely me. What fascinated me and what did I love? How did I stand strong? Where did my dreams take me? What had I believed was true about life around me? About myself?

Remember, as you look back, you aren't trying to relive your childhood. The past is over and you aren't a child anymore. You've lived longer and know more about the full story of your life and self than you did back then.

You are heading back as a loving magician, seeking glimpses of that amazing part of yourself that held true no matter what. Though that part of you may have long been hidden in the corner or scrambled in your attempt to make the best of things, you survived and grew up to tell the tale. See your strength and wisdom, then and now. Bring forward the gems you want to have readily available, and drop the rest along the side of the road as you crawl, walk or dance (different moves for different times) into your future.

Most importantly, have some fun along the way.

Dreams

I rarely remember my dreams, but as an eight and nine-year-old I had a repetitive nightmare over several years. Not every night, but often enough that the dream seared into my memory.

Years later, I remembered the dream and decided to look at it anew with grown-up eyes. I was startled to discover that it held hints about myself and the work that has filled most of my adult life: My insatiable



longing to touch the sacred. Dancing in and out of church doors, institutional hallways and “good girl” rules, always holding tightly to sacred guidance.

**Did you have any repetitive or memorable childhood dreams/nightmares?
If so, write it/them down.**

Do you notice any connections between this dream and your life as it has unfolded in the years since?

Stories

I loved to read anywhere and everywhere. *Millions of Cats*, *The Boxcar Children* and *Little Women* were among my favorites. Sometimes the stories we were drawn to in our younger years can reveal our longings, fears or dreams.

When I take the time to look at the storylines and themes of these books, I get another glimpse of what mattered to me:

- Love flows despite times of too little, too much and just right
- Everyone of us, including children, are capable and enterprising—especially when we work together
- The delight of finding other strong-willed but generally obedient girls who loved to write

Did you have a favorite Fairy Tale?

A cherished book?

If so, re-read it and take notes of your observations, including what themes may have woven through your life.

The Essential You

Illustrator Khara Scott-Bey drew me as a free and self-confident girl, sure of myself and ready to take on life. Though I’ve always worked hard to be good and helpful, my bolder side also came out to play on warm summer days. I liked to write, draw and create things that danced in my imagination. I often blurted out my thoughts. I had an insatiable curiosity, and wanted to understand how things were connected. I had a fierce sense of loyalty and fairness.



Was there a time when you stood boldly and confidently?

**During those times when you could stand
with your feet wide apart and hands on your hips?
What could you see as possibilities for your life?**

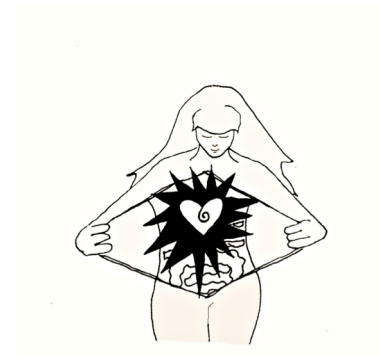
What were your dreams? Fears?

Was there a time when you lost touch with that bold spirit?

Fascinations & Future Learnings

I loved dissection in college. Especially peering into the human body during anatomy lab in physical therapy classes. I thought our muscles, bones, nerves and blood vessels were awesome.

Simultaneously, I also liked to look inside my mind, seeking to understand my thoughts and longings. As a young woman, the flow of blood or ideas made much more sense to me than my jumble of emotions and questions.



What parts of life/of yourself fascinated you as a child or teen?

What did you want to be/do when you grew up?

What did you see when you peered into yourself?

Enter the Loving Magician



Now that you've caught some glimpses of the younger you, pick up your magic decoder ring or detective magnifying glass and see if you can find any threads of evidence about you and your life today that you've never seen in this combination before?

How might these threads fit into the fabric of your life today or fit into your dreams for next steps?