

Where True Transformation Begins

What if something could change so that I wasn't so very overwhelmed?

What would it be?

I'm not talking about the things that would make life easier, like not having to work, having a nanny and a cook, or receiving a ton of money. I'm talking about the realistic things. The things that could actually happen.

Yesterday was one of those days when I wondered if I will ever get to a place where I don't feel as though my head or my heart could explode at any minute. My mind swirls and my heart pounds and I just want to get past it all. I just want to get to a different place. A peaceful place.

I don't want to get rid of children, move (Ugh—no more moving!) or significantly change my life ... I want to change myself.

I'm wondering if it is possible for me to change myself. I mean really change myself. I can make some changes to get healthier, set a better schedule, get organized and make better choices in other areas ... but can I really and truly change who I am?

My circumstances have impacted the woman I am. After my husband left I became a more focused, peaceful woman even in the midst of the chaos that was my life. Then I became a stressed-out, single, working mom. I waffle between those two a lot.

Sometimes I feel like I've finally caught that perfect peace only to find that it has escaped my grasp again. Once again,

I'm a jaw-clenching crazy woman.

This past weekend there was a difficult moment with one of my children (who will not be named). I was angry, frustrated and tired. My middle son said, "Momma, your jaw is clenched. You need to stop doing that. It isn't good for you."

He was right.

It was clenched.

He is right.

It isn't good for me. Or anyone else in my vicinity.

It means I've let go of peace and grabbed hold of overwhelmed.

Why do I go there? How do I not? I honestly don't know. Well, I do know why I go there ... I'm tired and, for the life of me, I can't figure out how to get five things crossed off my to-do list before 10 more things are added.

I keep saying, "This is the day! This is the day I get all these things done!"

Inevitably, something comes up to ruin my plan. Why, Lord? Why can't one day be *super* productive?

Just. One. Day.

But there are other people in my mix ... other people who have and need things ... soccer practice, summer school, fitness training, job interviews, school preparations, dentists, doctors, chiropractors, ophthalmologists, house repairs, errands and enumerable other little things that disrupt my well-planned day.

But it really isn't just about not getting things done. It's about me. It's about how I respond to disappointments and disappointing others.

Oh, how I can't stand to disappoint people, to let someone down, to make someone angry. I know we would probably all like to avoid disappointing or angering others, but I wonder if this is way too big an issue for me.

Every dirty look from one of my teenagers makes my heart hurt.

I have friends whom I have disappointed because I can't find time to visit or I'm not doing things the way they think I should, and I hear their disappointment and frustration with me. Sometimes I understand it, sometimes I don't. It almost makes me feel worse when I don't.

I feel frantic to understand what I did wrong, because often I don't even know. I feel like I'm running in circles to please, take care of and love on everyone, but it never seems to be enough.

And lately I feel like no matter how hard I try, I always have someone irritated, angry or disappointed with me.

It's exhausting.

People-pleasing is a bummer.

I want to be a God-pleaser.

I don't want to worry about what other people think of me. I don't want to worry about other people leaving me. I don't want to worry about making everyone under the sun happy.

In the process of all that worry and work, I'm losing myself, wrecking myself. Last night, I got all weird in the head and started worrying that I might actually make myself pretty sick from all this craziness.

It can't be good for my health, all this worry and anxiety.

So what is the thing or things that are going to change? How am I going to become the woman of peace I want to be?

“You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on You, because he trusts in You. Trust in the Lord forever, for in God the Lord we have an everlasting rock” (Is. 26:3-4).

I come back to this verse a lot. I believe God wants me to make it my life verse.

The Recipe for Peace:

- A mind focused on Christ
- Trust
- A God who is my eternal Rock of refuge
- A focused mind

God continually reminds me that my eyes need to be fixed on Him. How often I’m like Peter walking on the water—eyes on Jesus—then the lightening crashes and the thunder booms and a wave crashes over my toes and my eyes dart to the storm clouds. I look back to the boat and wonder how fast I can run back before I sink.

All the while, right in front of me, is the answer to my fear—the answer to my need.

Jesus.

He is there. His eyes never leave me. He never turns His gaze away from me.

I doubt life will calm down anytime soon. If it does, that’d be awesome! But, again, it’s doubtful.

Looking to and at Him seems to be the answer to all the questions.

Me changing me? Probably not going to happen without my focus changing from anxious, overwhelmed, fussy me looking at all the things and people in my life to calm, peaceful, content me looking at Jesus.

“Be anxious for nothing, but in everything, by prayer and supplication with gratitude, make your requests known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will protect your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus” (Phil. 4:6-7).

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