



I face many years ahead without the task of raising my child and find that there is no model to accommodate whom I have become and what I have to offer. I don't want to be only a wife, I don't want to rejoin the corporate world which will leave me scarred and without a life outside the office, I don't want to hear a thirty-something tell me how to manage a project. I have done all that and more. So, where do I fit now?

As we look for the next step in terms of a career or purpose, we believe what the world tells us we ought to. We equate 'career' with finding a job amongst the many a thousand that already exists. In many cases that alone leaves us dissatisfied. A 'job' per se is, more often than not, not enough. What do I mean by that?

As we grow into our forties and fifties we change. Whether we have kids or not we change in measurable ways. From the days when we lived alone and all we had to worry about was our job and our wellbeing, once we marry or join lives with our partner(s) the essence of who we are is forever modified. Even if it is by virtue of living in a culture that sees women as the providers of emotional support, or whether it is because our partners can't alter the course of "their" direction, such elements push us against the wall of self-reflection.

Who are we now? Now that we have quit the earlier corporate job, have spent countless years tending to someone else's needs, have accepted less-than-what-we-deserve-or-can-do positions in the working world to accommodate our kids' schedule and the necessities of being part of a larger community, who have we become and where do we fit?

The answer lies deeper than one may think. It is now, more than ever, that we need to pay close attention to what our heart tells us. As Nor Hall says in *The Moon and the Virgin*,
"So the female void cannot be cured by conjunction with the male, but rather by an internal conjunction, an integration of its own parts, by a remembering or a putting back together of the mother-daughter body."

Similarly, Maureen Murdock, author of
A heroine journey

(a MUST read for all) and a therapist, tells us that

"Women...between the age of thirty and fifty (carry) a dissatisfaction (that) is described as a sense of sterility, emptiness, and dismemberment, and even a sense of betrayal...These women have embraced the stereotypical male heroic journey and have attained academic, artistic, or financial success, yet for many the question remains, 'What is all of this for?'

In Murdoch's estimation this 'success' has left us exhausted, stressed and wondering how it all came about. She moves on to address the necessity for women to embrace their feminine nature and to heal the "deep wound of the feminine."

If we look at history since the early 1900's, it's clear how we have arrived where we are. As early as half a century ago women didn't live past much past their fifties. Giving birth to sometimes ten, fifteen children, tending to them and to the farm (or, as it was the case in the 20's and 30's, to the factories), took its toll on women. The 'women problem' disappeared even before it had a chance to be acknowledged (never mind that writers like Virginia Woolf, Friedan, Rich and many others screamed their outrage at the overlooking of women situations; our institutionalized, industrialized, patriarchal society had different priorities). As the world wealth increased in North America and other Western nations especially, women became more educated, lived longer and had less kids. But this change left a huge gap in our gender's journey. Where is the *model* for the throngs of women who are still fairly young, who have worked in the corporate or non-corporate world to match their male allies and become independent, who have raised their children, who have gained spiritual and emotional understanding and maturity, and now face years ahead? How and where do they (we) fit? The first step, says Murdoch, is
"the redefinition and validation of feminine values and an integration of these with the masculine skills learned during the first half of the century."

In other words, listening to our inner-self and nurturing the 'daughter' we have inside that has been neglected in pursue of worldly and patriarchal dictated goals. The second step, I say, is to reconnect with one another in the firm belief that we are not alone, but rather a link of a much larger chain.

Our society values what we *do*, not *who* we are. Those of us who seek success in the world as it is today are bound to create an imbalance in our feminine selves. We know how to do things and achieve goals, but we carry a void inside that leaves us broken and lost. To heal we must first reconnect to our deeper selves, devoid of the world symbols, to listen to the energy within that spurs us to write, paint, sing or else. Let us be, not
do. Murdoch says:

"A healing...occur...as she begins to nurture her body and soul and reclaim her feelings, intuition, sexuality and creativity."

Once we have embraced all of us without shame and regrets, we must reconnect to one another for support and validation. Only us women can understand what we mean when we say: *"Now what? Now that my child is out the door, now that I have cooked thousands of meals and laundered hundreds of loads, now that I have worked endlessly for someone's high profits, now that I KNOW BETTER, where do I go?"*

As I spend my days doggedly reclaiming my true nature, I have faith in the journey and trust that the Universe will meet me where I am supposed to be. I hope that you do the same as it is from this place that the answer will come and, with time, a change will also occur in society that will reflect our quest and the integration of our deeper selves.

Please don't be afraid to comment. It is only through knowing that we are not different from one another in our feelings and thoughts that we can help ourselves uncover the next step(s) for our future and purpose. Thank you.

