

♥ Snippets of Encouragement #225

Hello darlings

It is day 225 of Snippets of Encouragement, and I am incredibly grateful for the bounty of spring.

I am surrounded by an abundance of blossoms from the trees, bushes, flowers and bulbs, and it's gorgeous to see these vibrant colours glistening in the sunshine.

I took a short walk around my neighbourhood the other day and found myself stopping at many of my neighbour's gardens to admire and smell the blossoms.

My mom always used to encourage me to stop and smell the roses, and while it may be too early in the season for roses, I encourage you wherever you are to stop and admire the spring that's sprung or the gorgeousness of autumn that's arrived.

As I leant over a neighbour's fence to smell an incredibly sweet fragrant blossom, I thought about my mom and then had to quickly step back as the bees were in a feeding frenzy amongst the flowers. I giggled to myself because it's great to stop and smell the roses, but you've gotta watch out for those friggen bees or thorns.

Jean-Baptiste Alphonse Karr said, "Some people grumble that roses have thorns; I am grateful that thorns have roses."

I am also grateful that thorns have roses and bees, what an incredible blessing that is!

I'm wondering what I'm rambling on about today and where this is going. I guess I want to encourage you to slow down today and pay attention to the natural world around you.

Be mindful of all you see, release your busy, hectic thoughts, and become conscious of the sights, sounds, smells, and texture of the world around you. Be present at this moment and expand your consciousness and heart to embrace it all.

You may even want to think about people in your life who are special to you, have made and impact on your life and send them loving energy.

As I walked around my neighbourhood, mindful of the beauty around me and embracing it all, I thought of two very precious people to me.



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One of them was my mom and the other my friend Shona. We have been friends for twenty-nine years, and she's had a profound impact and influence on my life. She is someone I know is always in my corner and who supports me in all phases of my evolution.

I was thinking about Shona because five years ago when I went to walk the Camino de Santiago, she sent me an email on my journey that was a great encouragement to me.

She praised me for my bravery at undertaking such an epic adventure, and she encouraged me not to focus only on getting from A to B but to take time to stop and smell the roses. She said when I do this, I should know that everyone who loves me is supporting me and upholding me in faith and love.

The day after receiving her email, I was having a horrible day. My body was in tremendous pain, the temperatures sizzled my body, and in my mind, I was a self-pitying, angry, raging pilgrim.

I was slogging through a horrible ghost village. After the property boom at the turn of the century hundreds of housing developments sprung up throughout Spain but then the economic crisis of 2008 struck and people lost and abandoned everything. The town I was walking through was a prime example of this phenomenon. Beautiful homes and estates stood empty and abandoned, and in my misery, I felt as if I was walking through a doomsday movie. I hated every second of it, and I was swearing and complaining with great élan as I went.

"What kinda shit hole is this?" "Why the fuck must the Camino pass through a ghost town?" "Nothing but fucking concrete and tar, my feet are not made for this shit." "What the fuck Shona! Where the fuck must I find a friggen rose to smell in the barren, rock infested country?"

I told you I was having a lousy day...

Just as I finished swearing and cursing about the lack of fucking roses in that barren landscape, a rambling rose sprung free from behind the fence I was passing and literally hit me in the head, thorns, and all.

This I swear is a true story!

At first, I thought I'd been stung by a bee and had a moment of panic as I'm allergic to them, but then I realised whatever hit me was larger, pink and sweet smelling. When my eyes focused on the swaying rambling rose, I started laughing so hard I nearly wet myself. Passing pilgrims wondered if I was dehydrated and hallucinating as I clung to the fence laughing like a mad woman.

There was my fucking rose, and there was my powerful reminder to be present in the moment, be grateful for all that is and to know that I am loved. While Shona may not have been thinking of me at that exact moment, I felt the connection of love and friendship and remembered to get over my self-pitying self.



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Perhaps there's another practice you have for being present and mindful in your daily life. Whatever it is, do it today. Slow down and enjoy your life and know that you're surrounded by love and beauty.

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