

COMMENTARY

Slow down and embrace the fullness of the internal spring

By Robert Mulhall
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With the arrival of spring, trees and bushes are starting to slowly bud, flowers are bravely emerging, and birdsong fills the air. But rather than surge ahead into the season, Kripalu CEO Robert Mulhall says, it's important to slow down and take notice.

BEN GARVER -- THE BERKSHIRE EAGLE

“Beauty isn’t all about just nice loveliness. Beauty is about more rounded, substantial becoming. I think beauty in that sense is about an emerging fullness, a greater sense of grace and elegance, a deeper sense of depth, and also a kind of homecoming for the enriched memory of your unfolding life.”

— John O’Donohue

The hours have changed, the light is here. A few colder mornings for sure and we can always expect some late flurries to keep us on our toes, but spring is here. You can feel it, hear it, smell it.

It's a great moment in the year, when we collectively feel something lift, it's like life gets a little lighter as the season fully arrives. It also feels fuller at the same time, the trees and bushes are starting to slowly bud, more flowers are bravely emerging, our gardens have more birdsong in the air, and we feel a call to emerge more fully.

What can happen for some of us is that we start to sprint, we finally feel some energy flowing back into our system and we want to charge ahead. Some of the best advice we can hold onto is "slow down," you will hear me say this over and over.

It doesn't mean stop or go backward or do nothing or quit (even though there are certainly times when it makes sense to quit something; it is a simple pointer toward how to emerge with skill, mindfully, not recklessly).

So often we can burn too fast and find ourselves exhausted again. Our culture doesn't reward slowing down. So, a small act of service and even rebelliousness is to slow down. The invitation is to flow with that energy of emergence while not rushing out of panic or scarcity that there is not enough time.

The more mindfully we move, the more time that often seems to open up. So, allow yourself to step into your projects, without forgetting how to care for yourself.

"Spring is the time of plans and projects."

— *Leo Tolstoy*

At Kripalu, we have started to embrace this energy more fully, we have launched some new initiatives and have started to connect more with our partner organizations about new pilot programs we would like to trial. Thankfully, there is a lot of humor circulating amongst the leadership team which always keeps us lighter.

Here are a few suggestions that you might find supportive over the coming weeks:

Lighten up

It's so important to spend some time allowing that lighter energy of spring in. To really soak in this shift, into our bones and minds. To take a moment or two to put the phone down and appreciate what is happening all around us.

Next time you are at a red light or waiting for your kettle to boil or your computer to boot up, look out your window and notice the emergence of spring.

Emerge

Allow yourself to emerge. That might mean saying yes to a few more invitations, it might mean signing up for a class or a 5k, it might mean cleaning some things out of your home that no longer bring you joy, it might mean moving toward a conversation you have been avoiding or waiting to have. The energy is emergence, embrace it.

Step outside before your day starts

One of my favorite things to do to set up my day is to step outside my house and breathe in the fresh air. I find this to really settle my nervous system before I get in my car, drop my son at school and jump into the workday. Those minutes outside allow me to feel a little bigger, just being outside my house and breathing in the crisp air.

I look forward to next month when we can feel the benefits of spring more fully and the soft whispers of summer will be calling us.