



# Navigating the Unknown

This morning I want to start with a quote from Pema Chodron. Pema Chodron is a Buddhist nun and author. I love Pema because she's so down to earth, and she just has this simple, practical, everyday wisdom that is accessible to any of us. This particular quote is from her book *When Things Fall Apart: Heart Advice for Difficult Times*. She has this to say, "Letting there be room for not knowing is the most important thing of all, when there's a big disappointment, we don't know if that's the end of the story. It may just be the beginning of a great adventure. Life is like that. We don't know anything. We call something bad; we call it good. But really, we just don't know."

I think this is a particularly wonderful passage to read today because, at least in the United States, we are one week out from our election and we just don't know. We just don't know what's going to happen. A lot of people are identifying the possible outcomes as good or bad. And the truth is we don't know. We don't know. This has been so true for me in my life; some of the darkest times, some of the most difficult times, some of the messiest times that I thought were so horrible, that people around me thought were so horrible, were actually the times in my life that were the most transformative.

I've seen this happen in my clients lives repeatedly where something happened such as getting fired, they losing their home, losing a loved one, and all kinds of things that we label as bad but that turn out to be blessings, turn out to be good, turn out to be transformative. I know that when my mother died, it was one of the most difficult things I've ever been through. I thought how horrible it was, and of course, it is painful to lose a parent, to lose someone you love, but in the final analysis, her death was a wonderful gift to me and proved to be such a transformative time for me. That doesn't mean that I wish she had died. Of course not. But my point is that so many of the things that we label as bad up front, turn out to be transformative.

So, as you're going through your day and as you're going through your week, when you're feeling the chaotic thoughts, the stressful thoughts, the fear about what might happen, whether that's politically or in some personal issue you're dealing with, I invite you to hold your heart and your mind open just a bit, to settle down, to give yourself a bit of space to tune in to who you are fundamentally, to tune into the goodness of life, even in the midst of the chaotic. I invite you to open to possibility, and to allow yourself to not to know, making room as Pema says for not knowing. Getting comfortable with not knowing, allowing yourself to settle just a bit so that there's room for possibility, room for joy room, for peace, because all of that is available to you in any given moment. And what keeps us from seeing that at any given moment, generally, is our stressful stories about how things might turn out.



We know from brain sciences that human beings are terrible at predicting the future. We're just not good at it. It's not particularly useful to try to predict the future. So I invite you today to have some space between you and the news, to have some space between you and your stressful stories about what may or may not happen, and give yourself a chance to settle and come back to equilibrium. In your day to day, I invite you to notice the moments or even the seconds of goodness. Because even if you're having a hard day, even if you're having a hard time right now, I guarantee that if you pay attention, there'll be something that sparks, a little toy a little piece, a little sense of okayness and your day.

I know that even in my darkest days that when my dog comes to my side, I can feel myself smile just a bit. Those moments are there throughout your day, but you have to pay attention in order to notice them. We have to tune into them. So in the midst of all that's going on for you this week, I invite you to take moments in your day to notice the good, the true, and the beautiful. They are there. And noticing them will make a difference for you.