***The Leap***

*- by Diane Weller*

It is February 29th, leap year day, when I take a leap of faith to leave the comfort of my career in Information Technology, and my employer of twenty-four years, in order to focus my work in the area of people development. By far, the biggest scariest decision I have ever made. So big, that it took me several years to leap!

Today, I give the gift of this reflection to my many friends, peers, colleagues and superiors who have trusted me with their own stories of discontentment, uncertainty or fear. To those who’ve expressed the wish of having my bravery or courage, it is already within you. As I’ve learned, I only needed to get out of my own way to expose it.

In the eyes of my baby boomer generation, I’ve done something radical, disruptive and perhaps foolish in the minds of some. I’ve broken the mold. My response: That is OK. With the conviction, no single job or access of healthcare will direct my life, I’ve chosen to no longer conform to my previously adopted mindset around job and career. It is a mindset that has the power to limit one’s possibilities and human potential. The great non-conformist, Martin Luther King Jr., said it best, when he said, “Conformity is the jailer of all freedom”.

To become free, I first had to become still. In becoming still, I could better see the effects of being stuck and it allowed for new light to shine on what is possible. Stillness gave me the opportunity to hush all doubting voices and to look through a new lens.

Looking through my new lens, I see that nothing is more precious or fragile than life itself. As I sit by the banks of the mighty Susquehanna River writing this reflection, four dear friends are battling cancer. One’s statement to me – “you can’t get back time” – was a powerful force and encouragement to take my leap, while I am in good health and I have the drive and vitality. Thank you, my dear friend, for the gift of your words.

Drive is all that is needed to initiate a leap. While having led a financially responsible life has certainly provided me a bit of comfort in giving up a steady income, I am not financially wealthy. Financial wealth did not enable my leap nor is it allowing me to stray from continuing to be financially responsible. My wealth is in the form of having newly found time, focus, possibility and joy. My leap has gotten me back in touch with what is truly important and is providing me the beautiful opportunity to reimagine work, self and relationship. Many new doors are opening because I courageously closed one.

Having stepped away, I can now see more clearly how significantly my offering, spirit and energy became stifled in my old career role. This was the *real cost* of my healthcare then, a huge price to pay, had I stayed.

A few months have passed and, with no regrets, I am happily working more directly with people, predicting my future by creating it, and enjoying being in the driver’s seat of my own life. My wish is that by sharing the story of my leap, I will inspire others to take their own leap, because we have only one life to live to its fullest.