

June 04, 2006

This begins my portfolio blog. I have done some reading and surfing around. I opened a site on rcampus.com, but I have not sent out invitations to anyone to join up.

Rcampus.com's idea is a good way to protect kids, as everyone has to register, but I don't see any way to keep creeps out or verify who someone is. It should cut down on spam generators though. And it gives them a nice opt-in marketing segment.

Coming back to class after the break has been unexpectedly hard. I am not teaching right now, although I will begin mentoring some new online teachers at the end of June. I am not thrilled about doing it, but I need the money for my school expenses and so that I won't get into the financial bind I have been in all spring. I have almost forgotten what it was like to have money coming in all the time. I liked it. I want more of it. But I remember being on the box 12-16 hours a day too--not much balance there. I find myself sighing as I sit down in my computer chair. It's almost like a treadmill for my fingers and eyes.

I will pull out my papers done so far and reflect on what I have learned and how I have changed. I can see some definite differences in my goals and my thoughts in the last few months. I am hoping that this experience will help me to formulate my vision more clearly and show me that I am on the right path for me at this time. Some friends and I have talking about working up a card or role-playing game about going into the dark. That is certainly where I feel that I am at this time: way in the dark.

June 8

I want to work on the "It's My Turn" conference, but I don't know how to organize it or how to plan a circle to do the brainstorming. I don't want this to fall through the cracks like so many of my ideas have in the past, but I find it hard to focus this quarter. I guess this quarter is supposed to motivate me to learn how to plan and how to organize my projects. That is certainly my weakest point. Even when I try to do things ahead, it seems that I can't get a clear idea of the time involved.

Now I have to think about how to collect my stuff together and show that I am competent at something—what being the question. I have no idea about how to do a portfolio or what should go in it or how to present it. I can see a slick Flash website on a CD, but I don't know that I can learn the interface and pull it together that quickly—might as well do PowerPoint or a 3-ring binder. I remember thinking of doing a project for a literature class I took ten years ago. I finally gave it up and wrote a paper, which I could do in a few hours. Why can't I write fiction on demand? I guess self-imposed deadlines don't have the same essence of urgency that school deadlines with their attendant grades to. Patti is always telling me to work on what is important rather than what is urgent. What *IS* important?

June 11

From the classroom post: "Now if we could learn some marketing to teach others to love us as we learn to love ourselves!!!"

The portfolio is a very good way to show both growth and achievement, even to ourselves, but I think we need to develop the skills to see that growth, even as we learn the skills of self love--which is not narcissism, the opposite of self love."

I wonder if I would learn what I need to know about how to present myself if I took some classes in marketing and sales. I hate selling, but that is the only way to make any money. I guess it's just the American way to work too much, eat too much, drink too much and think too little.

How can I view this assignment as an affirmation of my own abilities and talents, of my achievements and growth? I know I am changing, but I don't really feel qualified to assess the direction of the changes, much less the value of them. I am not learning much about intellectual things, but I am more aware of my attitudes and perspectives. I guess it takes time to learn a new paradigm, but it is hard to be a one-eyed woman in the land of the blind, deaf and dumb.

June 12

From the classroom: "I want to know more about how to use a portfolio, or a journal for that matter, to further my growth.

So much of what I write seems glib to me, just more clickings or scribbings off the ends of my fingers. As I am working on an Nth revision of my novel, I find that the themes I wanted to address are there, but they don't fit together the way I wanted them too.

I don't want to work on the sequel for ten years...

June 15

I envision myself as a speaker, a writer, as someone who has done what she wanted, finally, with her life. I see myself standing on a podium and telling my story to other women to inspire them to do the same. I do not see any teaching at all—no kids, no adults, only attendees. I am not teaching now, only coaching some Axia-Phoenix newbie instructors, which doesn't pay all that well, but it doesn't require a lot of time or energy either, just more than I have.

Yet, what I actually do with my time is work, work, work. I have my head in the computer's lap all the time, working on this or that website—which I do enjoy, but for which I do not seem to be able to get paid. I like learning new web SEO stuff, and how to do Flash. But that does not get me closer to my vision. Maybe having to do a portfolio will force me to pull the rabbit out of my butt at the last minute, like I do everything else.

June 16

From the classroom in response to Judith's question about rubrics:

"I can manage the one about rubrics. There are two reasons to use them:

1) you have some idea of what is expected and how it will be assessed, which guides you in assembling your portfolio,

2) the assessor has guidelines for assessing your portfolio, which gives you some reassurance that each portfolio will be assessed on the same criteria, that we are all playing the same game.

Pete, where's our rubric?"

I remember being resistant to using rubrics when my department head forced them on us, partly because it was a hassle to keep them printed up and then to staple them to student papers. But at least I had some way to show students what they did wrong and what they did right instead of giving them some "holistic" A, B or "do it over." I have come to see that giving a student a rubric for how a paper will be evaluated can help them out.

It is helpful in my Phoenix classes to have the rubric to know what the Instructional Design team had in mind for the assignments (although sometimes I'd rather know what kinds of drugs they were on). Phoenix/Axia has gotten so canned that all the instructor does is paste and grade—that's much too far in the direction of "standardization."

Now that I think of it, we had some kind of portfolio—or at least a list of what we had taught, classes we had taken and other jobs we had—to get hired. But that was THEIR rubric, their concepts. Maybe what I am fighting is just having to think for myself.

June 23

I spent every day this week working on a paper for Cynthia, and today I find out that I have already written two extra papers—and still have to do the circle one. I missed out on my writers conference classes because I was trying to finish a paper I didn't need to write.

She may be a good teacher, but she writes lousy directions. Of course, I didn't know she had been sick and without Internet access—maybe Roxana or Cindy told us, and I just didn't see it. Maybe I can't read a syllabus. I wish Pacifica would do some how-to-teach-online courses for their instructors. It does help to have to do a month's worth of posting and answering discussion before you try to do it without a net. Maybe I can teach a how-to-teach-online class for Pacifica. It's the first thing I have thought about teaching in some time.

June 24

This just isn't working. I have no idea what to write about. I am lost. The other classes have me busy and I am up to my neck at work. I don't have any idea what I am doing. I hope I can catch on soon.

June 28, 2006.

I am feeling a lot of resistance to this project. Jumping through a hoop is one thing, but having to build the hoop, and deciding where it will be positioned and how high, and whether it will be flaming, seems like a bit too much, especially when so far, I have had no input as to content, order or direction of classes. This much resistance clearly

indicates how much more work I have to do on myself, but at the moment, while I can see some benefit to doing a portfolio, I feel that the groundwork has not been laid by Pacifica for us to have any idea of what to do.

My goals are shifting like sand under my feet as the waves wash in and out. I will barely have enough credits to add to my subject matter with the Masters, and I want the PhD, which has not even been designed yet, for the piece of paper as much as any actual accomplishment. I keep thinking of the folks I know who have the paper, and they don't show any more wisdom or knowledge than my high school grad best friend. Last quarter put a bad taste in my mouth about how the Pacifica administration and the instructors did not seem to gee-haw, and I felt that we wasted a lot of time and energy doing what amounted to nothing but channel surfing.

I am beginning to realize how much money this is costing me and I can't quite put my finger on what I will have when I am finished other than another house payment going out in loan payments. Our Jag camaraderie is gone, and the new sense of group has not coalesced. Maybe that will change when we come back together in August---something else I have to manifest a month's extra salary for.

I have many projects that I never have time to work on. This week I got ideas for a children's book and another novel. I have not had the energy to finish editing the first novel. I am doing my schoolwork and my other job at my day job, which I don't feel good about, but I have to get it all done. I don't miss teaching, which I am not doing at all now except for an occasional day-class in computer applications. I am learning more web design stuff to keep my job and to get more money. I may need to put together a portfolio to show that I am DOING my job at work. I hope that I have kept enough emails and other stuff to put some kind of log together.

So, coming up with a goal statement and some kind of rubric will be a challenge.

June 30

As I have reviewed some of my papers, I begin to see a theme. I came to Pacifica as an expression of my belief that I can create my own life. Just getting on a jet and flying across the country was a huge challenge for me, especially to do it by myself and to pay for it myself. Most of my papers are about how I am coming along, who I am becoming.

My best friend and I were discussing this idea yesterday, and she says that learning how to BE is very different from learning how to DO.

My lifelong dream has been to be a writer, but I have not been willing to face the inevitable rejections that come with being published (they call it *submitting* to a publisher for a reason). I have not done the work, the actual writing. It is clear to me from this program that I can write on demand, and that I can write well. I have no excuse. Do or do not, as Yoda says.

Southern writers have to leave the South in order to write about it. I have been too afraid of leaving home to do that. I can't imagine living away from home, and I think that my

homeland is beautiful, if culturally backward. So, I make these small trips to this foreign land.

Still, I need to develop or find standards for my goals

July 1

I am considering a web-based portfolio to present myself as a writer and speaker, an artist in residence

It would include my philosophy of life (as far as I know at the moment, and my various schoolings--might even put PDFs of my transcripts and job descriptions to show that I have had many kinds of experience, and that I am not limited to being a public school or college teacher.

I would have a blog of reflections on various subjects, perhaps organized as a travelogue on the heroine's journey.

It would include samples of my writing:

- academic papers
- short stories or novel excerpts
- myth retellings

It would have topic outlines for presentations that I am available to give:

- myth or urban legend? (Internet stories, the monomyth and ancient mythology)
- whose journey is it? (His or Hers?)
- awaiting the magical kiss (how to manifest what you want)

For the purposes of graduation, I would probably include some more academic stuff, perhaps letters of recommendation, lists of resources, sample lesson plans

There would be a certain amount of sales pitch both for books that I would like to sell, and my own services.

July 7

My actual goals for myself are:

1. to write wonderful stories that will be fun to read as well as to write and fun to talk about with readers who spend lots of money to keep me writing
2. to get out of poverty consciousness and go past my parents' and society's limitations concerning personal growth, cash flow, and health
3. to maintain and grow my goddess website into a content rich site and possible product for sale with art, meditations and information on CD or e-book.

4. to be a sought after and acclaimed (and well-paid) speaker to women and girls (and even men and boys) about personal growth and writing

July 10, 2006

A month ago my best friend, my daughter and I discussed the possibility of developing a website/computer game/e-book called something like the Path of the Unseen Rainbow or the Higher Dark or the Sacred Shadow. This idea continues to call to me as I have been working with Ereskigal—to the point that all my other research sources have dried up and left me hanging. I am waiting impatiently to buy these domain names and to establish a blog or something to begin to work on this idea so that when it is done, I will have something to show for my work.

So, the portfolio will be a beginning of that work, a depiction of my journey into the Higher Dark. I want to do it as a flash presentation, which is probably overkill, but that is the way I learn. It can be very simple at first, but by the time I finish the MA, it might be the basis of what I want to do.

July 12, 2006

I do not think this is working very well. I am tired, I can't find anything that I have done that I think is worth sharing, and I hope that there are a few files on my laptop that I haven't transferred over because what I have is not going to work. It's a good thing that this is not the big one.

July 20, 2006

I think I will try PowerPoint for my portfolio. Lily asked about doing hyperlinks, and they are easy to do. I will do a website later when I have some time to think of something flashy and cool. I want to use the skills I have, but I want to develop new ones too.

July 20, 2006

I am beginning to see the need for a portfolio as an expanded resume of the various things that I do, probably online, especially as a speaker or instructor for writing or self-help conferences. Like Walt Whitman--I am many faceted...maybe I can build a flash diamond for the presentation vehicle. I don't like the limitations of PowerPoint.

My mockup for the future is still shifting and shimmering, but I am riding it. I am getting used to the idea that any kind of fixed expectations will be disappointed, and being open for new developments could be as much fun and terrifying.

July 27, 2006

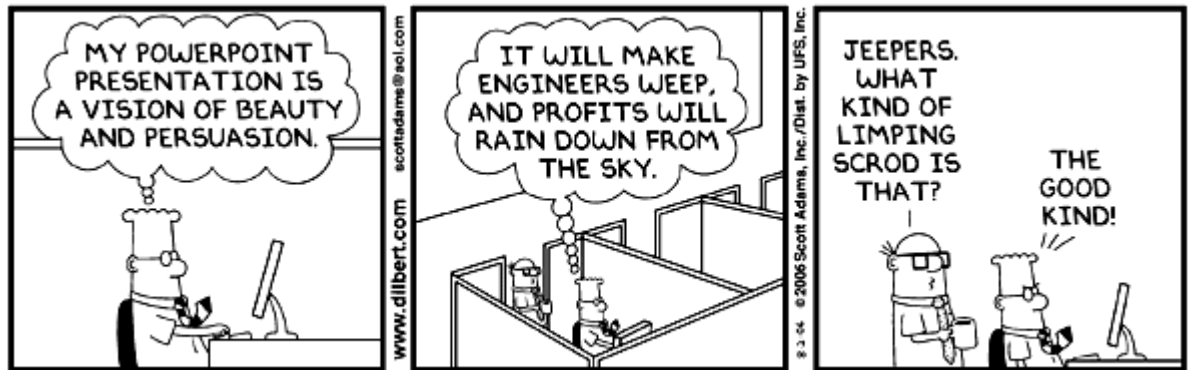
So far the portfolio as tool has done more for me than anything else about getting clear on where I want to do. I am still in transition about where I am going and what I might want to do when I get there.

I told someone today that I feel sort of like a chick that has managed to hatch, but I'm still wet, blind, cold, and unable to move around much.

I hope I get fluffy soon!

August 2, 2006

From my comics email:



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August 10, 2006

I've pretty much said what I can say about this. Another hoop to jump through, and I realize that it's part of the process.

August 15, 2006

I am wondering how I will present this thing. The format is not set up for big screen viewing but for a more intimate—and leisurely—viewing on the monitor. Maybe I can make the webpage after all....no, there is just not time. "Leave it like it is."

August 17, 2006

It is finished. I worked on the consistency of the fonts and added Ninhursag. I am more pleased than I thought I would be. The Ninhursag project pulled these last two quarters together for me. I am more comfortable with the ambiguity of goals that are continuing to formulate, that are not clear at this time. I try to remember that there are more ways to go forward than there are beaten paths to follow.