Angela Answers

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Finding Yourself in the Story

BY Angela Myles Beeching

Dear Angela: This time of year, I'm usually excited to take on new projects. But with all that's going on in the world, I've lost nearly all my motivation. How can I get it back?

LET'S FIND OUT. FIRST, I SUGGEST YOU take a break from the news and all social media. Take a few days to regroup. And in that pause, expand your perspective—think beyond this season and the immediate years ahead so you can...

Tune into a larger truth

To reframe how we experience challenging times, let's turn to narrative. Here's an ancient creation myth, most often attributed to the people of the Lakota Sioux nation, that speaks to the present moment:

Deep in an undiscovered cave, an old woman sits weaving a marvelous tapestry. She's weaving the world using pine needles and porcupine quills which she flattens between her teeth. She works tirelessly—and only leaves the weaving to occasionally stir what simmers over the fire at the back of the cave: a stew made of all the necessary seeds.

As the old woman slowly makes her way to the back of the cave to stir the cauldron, her black dog sniffs at the precious weaving. Biting at a loose thread, the dog pulls and pulls at it, unraveling everything.

When the old woman returns to her work, she finds what the dog has done. For a moment, she just stares at the tangled chaos of colors, the scattered threads and quills. As she takes all this in, she starts to see new possibilities. She envisions a new design for the tapestry—a design more wondrous than ever before. Bending over, she plucks up one of the loosened threads, and with it, begins to weave the world anew.

As the story goes, if the tapestry were ever completed, it would mean the end of all existence. So everything depends on the old woman's weaving, on her stirring the seeds that sustain life, and on the dog that unravels it all, again and again.

Life is cyclical: it is creation and destruction—alternating forever.

That's the larger story, and within it is your own

We are all in a collective dark time now, and we each have a crucial role to play in the reweaving of the world. How will you proceed? It's your choice.

In folk tales, the dark times happen when the main character finds themself in an impossible situation. Somehow, they must find a way to transform it. And they always do.

Think of the unsung heroes who came before you—who made the life you live possible. They, too, faced dark times. Yet they put their beliefs into action and planted the seeds for a better tomorrow. And because they did not give up on you and the future, you must not either. You owe it to those who came before you and those who will come after.

In this brave new year, you get to choose the role you'll play in the larger story: victim, survivor, or resilient citizen-artist.



Angela Myles Beeching is a career consultant and the author of Beyond Talent: Creating a Successful Career in Music. *Angela works with individuals, ensembles, and organizations to facilitate positive change.*