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Allow the Waves to do Their Work

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Allow the Waves to do Their Work

By Carolyn Massiah
UCF Forum columnist
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I have found that the beach is one of the most relaxing places to visit.

Fortunately, I live in the great state of Florida where I am able to visit a beach on either coast on just about any day of the year. So it was that I found myself recently walking along one of our east coast beaches when I began to watch the waves leave and return to the shore again and again.

While watching the waves roll over the shoreline, I began to think about life and the work of the waves that roll through on a daily basis.

I am a business professional/academic by training. Beyond the usual general education requirements for my undergraduate degree years ago, I hold no special body of knowledge regarding oceanography. However, I grew up near Rehoboth Beach, Del., a beach town in the northeast.

Throughout my childhood and into my teenage years, I remember that the news would constantly have stories about the condition of our beaches. The stories would focus on erosion, shoreline rebuilding and also the positive effects of the waves and tides on our coastline. As a child, I did not understand the importance of the work of the waves on our beaches.

Now I understand.

While on my recent walk on the beach, I thought about my life these past few years and the waves, big and small, that have washed over me – much like the ones I stood watching wash over the coastline in front of me. Because of the waves that have rippled through my own life, I have been eroded, replenished and reshaped in so many different ways. However, I cannot say that I did not fight the waves and their work in my life even when the erosion and replenishment was necessary to reshape or refocus me in a positive way.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration has conducted a great deal of research on the science of waves and their effects on beach environments. I think when

we examine some of their findings, we will find guidance in allowing the waves in our own lives do their work:

1. **There are good waves:** The waves that you see break on the coastline every day at a beach are wind waves. The wind has blown across the ocean and created ripples that roll onto the shore. These waves are necessary because they move nutrients to and from the shore. They also remove sediments and other natural trash from the coast.

There is a big difference between how the beach and humans react to these wind waves. The beach, on a daily basis, allows the waves to do their work. Humans fight a futile battle against these waves in life. Each day, month and year in our life brings changes positive and negative.

However, I have often found myself standing on the coastline of my life attempting to hold onto dirty sand while the waves are attempting to wash those unneeded parts away from my life. Simultaneously, I am not taking the moment to find and appreciate the beautiful deposits of the waves much like the shells and nutrients gifted to beaches by every wave rolling onto shore.

I challenge each of you to allow the wind waves in your life to do their work. Allow these good waves to take the bad and leave the good.

2. **There are bad waves:** A tsunami is a wave that is not caused by wind. Instead, tsunamis are waves that are caused by some abrupt disturbance such as an earthquake, landslide or underwater volcano eruption.

When tsunamis arrive on shore, unlike wind waves, they can cause massive destruction and loss of life. The recovery, though possible, can be prolonged and very difficult. But there can indeed be recovery.

In the past few years, I have experienced several tsunamis in my own life. These were massive waves that washed over me, knocked me down and took large pieces of my soul. I have had to rebuild and recover. However, the rebuilding of my life has actually left me with a stronger mind, body and soul than I had before. Because of those tsunamis in my life, my unstable foundation was washed away but I was also forced to conscientiously rebuild a foundation in my life that is the strongest it has ever been.

So, even in the case of such devastation, I had to allow the waves to do their work.

Yes, good and bad waves exist both in the ocean and in our lives. These good and bad waves can and will have positive and negative side effects on the beach as well as in our lives. However, how you react to the waves will determine their true and lasting effects in your life.

Be more like the beach. It allows the regular wind waves to do their daily jobs of replenishment and erosion because both are necessary for the continued stability of the coastline. The beach allows the wind waves to do their work.

The beach also waits in anticipation of those unexpected tsunamis that will surely come. After, the tsunami crashes ashore, the beach slowly but surely recovers and, undoubtedly, returns stronger than before the disaster. The beach allows the tsunamis to do their work.

How about you? Will you allow the waves to do their work in your own life?

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