

Written by Allan Besselink
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I just came back from a trip to Canada - to see my family. Some friends of mine think that "going to Canada" entails "going on vacation". I would suggest that "going to Canada" entails "spending a lot of time with family" ... and that's not always a vacation!

After a number of days of great conversation and catching up with family and friends - I am exhausted.

Five days can go by very fast. Since I only get home about once a year (go ahead, interject the "bad son" thoughts here before you read further), it seems like you take those 5 days to get caught up on all the goings-on from the recent and not -so-recent past. Add in a reminiscence or two and lo and behold, you're ready to head back to Austin.

But the most amazing (and perhaps comforting thing, in the strangest way) is that home is always just that - home. No matter how deep my roots run in Austin - after what will soon be 17 years of residence in the great state of Texas - I guess that Brockville will always be "home". Perhaps I need to rephrase that - Brockville contains the roots to my world, and perhaps Austin now contains the trunk and branches to my existence. Tree analogy aside, those roots run deep, very deep ... and in such a comfortable way.

My best friend lives in my hometown - and I've known him for 38 years. I can pick up a conversation with him and it's like I've never left town. I run into old high school classmates ... and within a few words, get caught up on their lives. In a town of 20,000 (oops 22,000, though the census figures didn't ever change in the 24 years I lived there!), the more things change, the more they stay the same.

When I was living there, that was exactly the thing that drove me crazy. Nothing changed. Ever.

Now, it's the one thing that stays the same - and I've grown to appreciate that as I've grown a bit older.

Home Will Always Be Home | Allan Besselink

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Sure, they now have a Home Depot ... and there is suburban sprawl ... and yes, suburbia there looks exactly like it does in the United States ... chain stores and restaurants ...

... but ... it's still very much the way I left it 17 years ago. Mom and Dad are a bit older, but they are still the great people I've known them to be, challenged by new adventures in life much as we all are on a daily basis. My high school - well, it has a new elevator (in order to meet accessibility issues), but from the outside, it's the same. Downtown - same. Waterfront - same. Rumblings of development - with the ongoing turf war between the old money and the new money - same.

And in the craziness of our lives, having some semblance of consistency can be a blessing!

For many years, I looked at it as stagnation. I think that I see my sleepy little hometown "as it is", nothing more, nothing less, and certainly not "stagnant". No, it doesn't change much - but that's just fine by me. It still has my roots ... and some people that are dear to me ... and that's all that matters anymore.