

Seven Affirmations From Summer Vacation | Allan Besselink

Written by Allan Besselink
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Back in the day, I can remember going back to school in the fall and the teacher asking us to stand up and tell the class what we did on our summer vacation. Some kids would come back to school with great tales of adventure and travel. Others might have told their stories of camp. Many just tried to avoid getting in trouble in their own backyard.

One thing that we never had to do was tell the class something that we learned in the process. It was just about the “stuff” we did. This year, I am finally doing it a little differently. Here are seven affirmations from this year’s summer vacation.

First things first. My brief summer break this year was spent in my hometown: population 22,000. The city limits sign has not seen a change in population for at least a decade, perhaps two. Surely you would think that I know this place pretty well by now, so what is there to be learned when the locale and surroundings change very little over time?

It’s more about the affirmation – or perhaps re-affirmation - of some things you already knew and held dear to your heart. Maybe some of these will resonate with your own hometown experiences.

1. Good friends will always be good friends. They might have been your best friends in elementary school or high school. You shared a lot of quality time with them. You may have even grown apart or now reside in different parts of the world. But, you shared a lot of mileage together and chances are good that after so many years, you will still be able to sit down and pick up where you left off – only a little older and wiser now.

2. Somehow those same good friends still understand you. It doesn’t matter how much

water has passed under how many bridges, they always have a way of being able to sit down and listen and understand. Somehow, they seem to know

you

and bring levity and a touch of reality to your present day world - even if they haven't been an active daily part of it in years.

3. Home will always be home. You may have been bound and determined to move away as soon as was humanly possible. But that place that you spent your formative years will always be a part of your wiring. Much as you may resist, it will always be the roots of your current world. In those moments that you step back and look at it from afar, you realize that there is a part of you that will always look back on it fondly in one way or another. Home is, somehow, always home.

4. Peace is a state of mind. We get so caught up in our day-to-day distractions. Oftentimes the biggest distraction is ourselves, the constant noise that we experience even in the quietest moments. If it is not the todo list, it is the household chores or work projects that keep our minds percolating. Having a simple change of scenery can help to refocus that peace of mind. But it doesn't require a vacation - you can also willingly go to that peaceful place on any given day. It might just require a big breath every now and then.

5. Being in the moment is a relative term. You may think you are living in the moment on a daily basis, making your best efforts to do so with family, friends, and work. But as soon as you remove some of the distractions and return some peace to the mind within, you find that maybe you weren't quite so close to "being in the moment" as you thought. This is a handy realization for re-entry into the "pre-vacation" world.

6. Time away is inherently good. It doesn't need to be an expensive world tour. It can be a simple trip home to visit family and friends. Disengaging from your world brings clarity. It brings focus. And it allows you to return to your world with a much healthier perspective. As much as I love what I do, time away is always a good thing. A change is as good as a rest, as they say.

7. The quirks of family are superseded by love. You may have always thought that your family dynamics were more consistent with the Adams family or the Muensters than a normal North American family unit. We've all had those moments of anguish, disagreement, or even despair. But you know what? They are your family. They are, and always will be, a part of you. They may be quirky, but blood is pretty darn thick and somehow you love them unconditionally

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regardless of the quirks.

Perhaps the most important affirmation was simple: none of us are getting any younger. We have to cherish the time we have with those we love – even if it is only once or twice a year.

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