

The Spirit of Yes by Barbara McAfee

When was the last time you were completely and joyfully astonished?

What was your last amazing surprise?

How often do you feel filled to the brim with “yes?”

In the midst of a growing tide of chaos and anxiety, many of us retreat into the comfort of predictability. Routines turn into ruts.
The miracles of our days pass by uncherished.

Surprise rarely pays us a call.

Or if it does, we don’t bother to answer the door.

I saw the power of astonishment beautifully displayed on a postcard-perfect summer afternoon on a Minneapolis lake.

I am shooting a music video for my song “Yes,” along with two friends. While they trail me in another canoe with a camera, I paddle around lip-syncing the song in a “crystal canoe,” a completely transparent canoe made of polycarbonate. A local inventor (who wishes to remain anonymous) created it with the intention of opening the spirit of creativity in all who see it.

As they see me floating across the water in a nearly invisible canoe, people of all ages and circumstances come completely and wonderfully undone.

Their eyes widen.

They look once and then again.

They shake their heads.

Their faces bloom into incredulous, wonder-drenched grins.

Unguarded and joyful words erupt out of them:

“Wow!” “Awesome!” “Incredible.”

As its creator intended, the miracle of the crystal canoe opens up new possibilities in the

imaginations of all who see it.

The “Yes” song evokes the same spirit of joy and surprise.

The chorus consists of one word, repeated again and again: “Yes!”

A friend added a gesture to it – arms up and open – that transforms the whole body into one big yes.

In the grip of this song, people’s cynicism, deadness, and loneliness fall away.

They join voices and bodies into creating something beautiful together.

It’s easy to get stuck in “no.”

There are many good reasons to say it: to make clear choices, create sacred space, and live purposeful lives. May we also remember that these perilous, beautiful times call for a steady diet of joy and astonishment, for raising our hands and voices together in beauty. To call out a great big “yes” to each other and to Life itself.

“May you breathe easy.

May your heart be light

May you open your life to each joy, each delight.

May you walk with assurance that your way is blessed.

May you dwell in the spirit of YES.”

- Barbara McAfee

You can watch the crystal canoe video here:

For more inspiration, join this upcoming workshop with Barbara McAfee on "Finding Your Full Voice." More details and RSVP info here.