



COMMUNITY CALL: PRACTICING FLEXIBILITY IN DELIBERATELY DEVELOPMENTAL SPACES

Led by Isabela Granic

February 29, 2024

A TURNING POINT

Briefly summarize a turning point in your life.

Focus on the details of the experience itself (your age, emotions felt, people you were with, context, and so on)

Realisation at the age of 40 that I was not living the life I wanted and aspired to, that my job was probably the least suited for me and the one I had no interest in, that I was overly self-reliant and independent, that I replaced socialising with material things and that I'm very neuro divergent. My (material) success gave me justification that whatever I was doing was right. I was with my family.

I was around 33 and my father had been diagnosed with a terminal illness. It helped me realize i did not want to go on running the non-profit i was running because it wasn't what i truly enjoyed or was committed to. I partly realized whilst on vacation with him and working to release a big project and being up at 4 or 5am to talk with team and then be with him all day and realizing it was taking me away from presence with him.

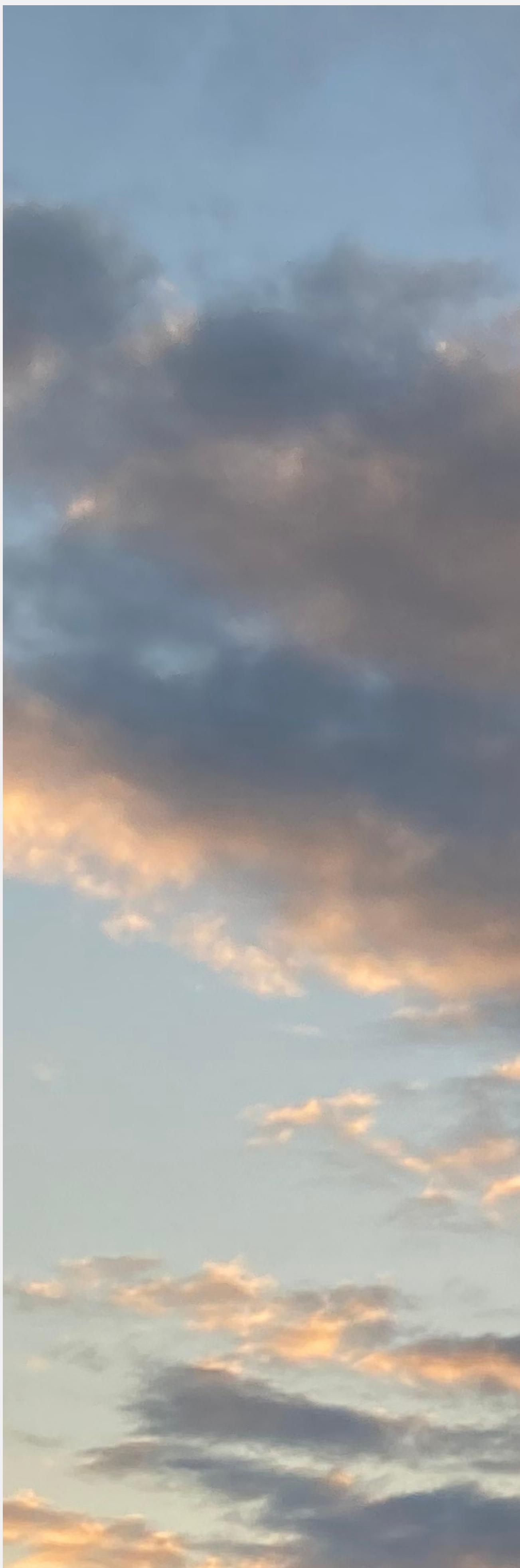
An immediate turning point in my life is transitioning my dad into hospice care, assisting him in that transition as well as my mother and brother. Obviously there are a lot of diverse emotions, as well as really wanting to make the correct decisions.

I was 25. I was in a conference in Cambridge. I saw a poster asking for someone to go and research an endangered species. I went to talk to the man who was showing the poster.

This year (at 22), after graduating college in the USA, I decided to return back to Europe (specifically my home country Romania) to reconnect with family and explore avenues for work that were more collaborative, inspiring and aligned with my vision of the future than what seemed possible in the bubble I was in before.

Seven years ago, had things going wrong on all fronts (job, family, relationship, social life). My job was very stressful. I remember feeling rage, anxiety, despair most of the time. I was out drinking seven nights a week and had a very demanding job.

Last fall @ 60 yrs old - huge transitions. Career change + separation from wife of 19 years + moving out of home of 25 years from large wooded lot with garden to urban apartment. Emotions all over the place - excitement on transition of career to something I love + grief/sadness on separation + frustration with response of my partner.



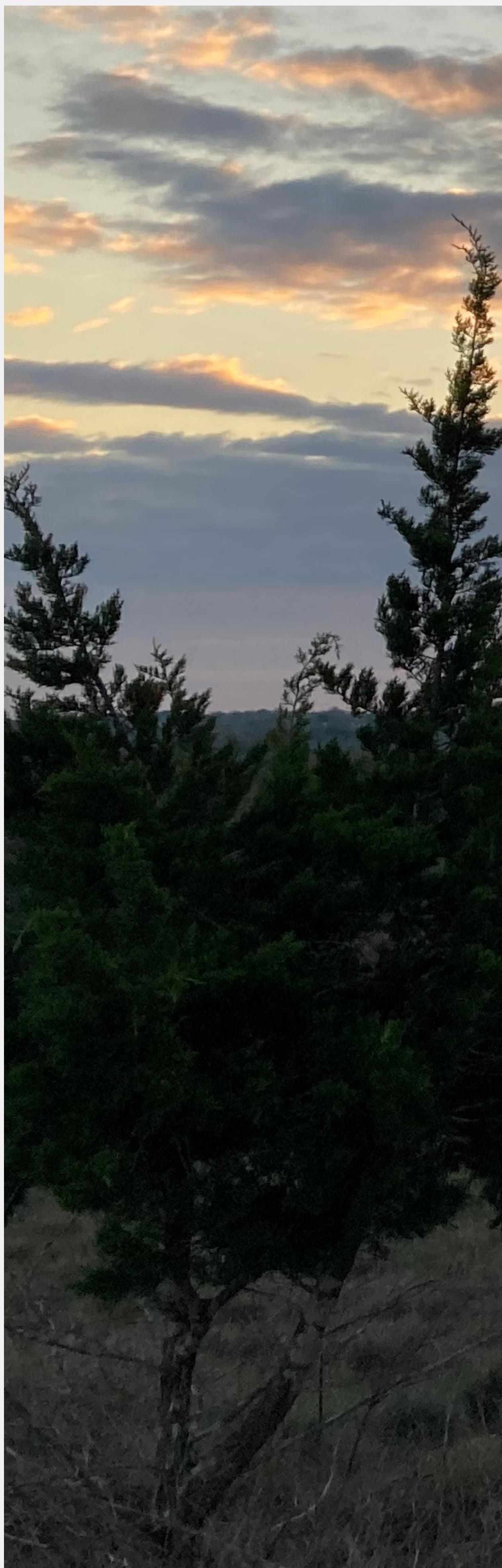
A TURNING POINT...

Starting university in Canada, I was 18yo, felt amazingly excited, surround by 2 of my best friends, and many new ones, starting to feel more confident about myself

I was struggling with a slumbering burnout for 1,5 years when I met an art collective that invited me to participate in a residency. In the first group meeting, I was nervous, and kept looking for certainty by asking many questions. But this prevented me from listening and attuning with the group, resulting in the initiator telling me afterwards that he doubted my fit in the group. I was shattered, because I felt that the group was so aligned with me but I had been acting out of character. This triggered a series of learnings and self explorations that continue to this day, and also allowed me to reconnect with the group 2 months later. Trusting in listening

24, sadness, grief, fear, anger, not belonging, humility, insecurity Was in year long community living program with 20 ppl - got into conflict, felt unsafe and unwelcome and not received in my positive contributions. Had to overcontrol myself a lot to sort of "fit in". Made me question more of my held patterns and base ideas about the world and I am now asking and living a lot more questions than previously. It was a painful process and did bring me to depression for 1,5 months, but I am also gaining lots of perspective and newfound carefulness & respect for the difficulty and complexity of the world

Ayahuasca, 33, intensity, freedom, pain, grief, love, movement, play, expansion, ENERGY. Group experience in Costa Rica. Life changing - gave me a reason to want to be here and helped me understand life - "to keep moving".



A TURNING POINT...

50yrs old, exhaustion, frustration, disappointment - closing a business venture. In good company, yet lonely. Lessons learnt. Knowing the need for change, and grateful for the developmental journey.

I was 12 years old and halfway through my 7th grade, my family moved from Toronto to Palm Beach Gardens, Florida. Seduced by my Romanian mother's dreamscape of palm trees, Disneyland, and perpetual sun, I had conjured an abstract, Hollywood vision of teen possibility and adventure. My first day of school in Florida was the first time I had experienced full-frontal racism (not towards me directly). While my brother coped by skipping school for 6 weeks, I created a story to blend. I threw out all my old clothes, sprayed Sun-In to lighten my hair, and created Isabel, the city-smart girl with loads of rich, famous friends (but "they're Canadian... you wouldn't know them"). Before this move, I was a kid living in a 1st generation-immigrant neighbourhood full of people who knew and loved (or didn't) me from 4 years old onward. I couldn't fake anything much: everyone knew my parents had "weird" Romanian values, that I couldn't sleep over anyone's house, that I was grounded for 2 Cs, that I kissed Robbie in truth-dare but I "actually" liked him. After this move, I learned that EVERYTHING could be made up, and people would believe you, mostly. So I lied a lot for many years. And I never again felt like I fit in to any group the way I did in that early Toronto neighbourhood.



CORE INSIGHTS

What was one core insight you gained from sharing your "turning point" story with your partner?



I didn't share the story - but I've been changing gradually and that has been met with suspicion and attributed to mid-life-crisis

I didn't get to do that.

The choices represented were not "either / or". There were a lot of "both". And sliding around based on perspective.

I only just got to the point of thinking what transition point to choose. starting to think how I might begin to answer the question. As it was a transition, everything changed through it, and it lasted months really. I was grateful that my partner needed at least the full time to share his own transition. However I asked him one question that maybe made sense for me too: how could you feel both bold and uncertain? Actually it's a weird question: if you are certain, why do you need to be bold?

I realized I found it hard to separate a specific turning point with my broader development, since the decisions I made inform and are informed by my psychological and spiritual changes.

I felt under too much time pressure to come up with something, and since I didn't know my partner I didn't feel comfortable sharing it.

CORE INSIGHTS...



Recognized that some values on the spectrum were challenging to identify - as I needed both sides of the spectrum as identified. Also, just in the telling recognized pull toward one side during stress - and then shift over to another as process / integrate / heal. For me was intellectual -> intuition.

felt some shame and some enthusiasm

That the distress I was experiencing at the moment of realizing I was not living/being in alignment with my deepest values (resulting me to potentially not being part of the group) felt uncomfortable, but was actually a helpful and necessary signal that sparked much personal transformation.

We didn't have time at all to go deep enough - and we didn't even swap. My partner was a bit slow and we spent first 2 min on tech difficulties.

Didn't participate

Moving through the polarities, all present

VALUE TENSIONS

What was the most relevant or meaningful value tension for you?

Independence-
Dependence /

Humility-Boldness
Dependence

Trust & Uncertainty.

Trust - Uncertainty.
Because I was
uncertain about
everything. I said 'What
I need is this' the poster
was exactly what I said
I needed: a
recruitment ad. But I
was still uncertain

Wholeness vs diverse
parts, because I made
the changes by trying
to move towards
integrating the various
parts in me.

Misalignment



VALUE TENSIONS

What was the most relevant or meaningful value tension for you?

Intellectual -> Intuition

vulnerability-strength

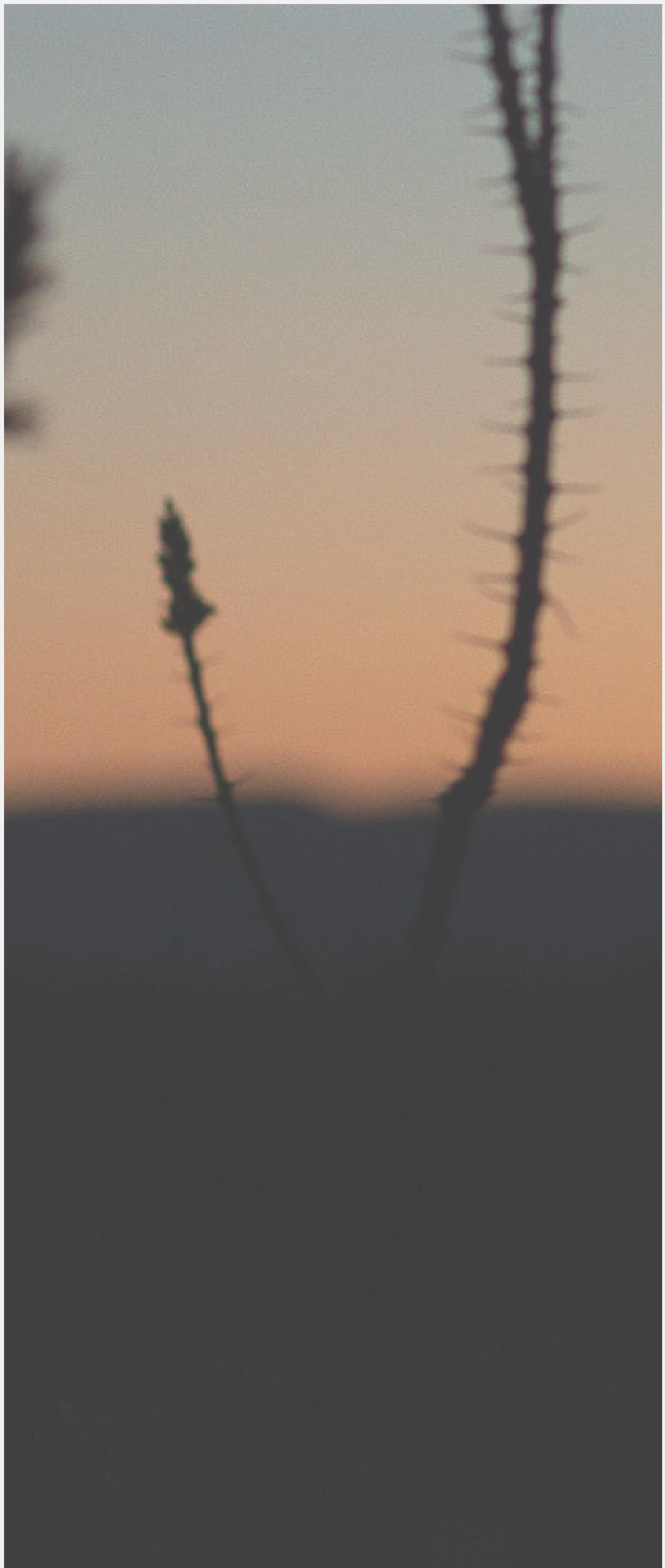
Wholeness, Diverse Parts

Vulnerability/strength? I dunno

Vulnerability/Strength because to me vulnerability IS strength. And Intellectual / Intuitive as it is a daily battle which to listen to especially as a woman - when intuition feels less valued or seen as emotional.

Independence vs dependence....Because we arrive at a point where it's only you that can take responsibility

Wholeness vs diverse parts; I felt whole and never questioned that feeling before 12. I felt inauthentic and played many many parts in my teens and early 20s.



INSIGHTS

What was a lesson, reflection, or deepening insight that emerged for you when considering values along a continuum between polarities?



I just became much more accepting of new perspectives, but that does tie in with my until then "hidden" neuro divergence

Given that this transition is really in the moment and on-going, the lessons, reflections, and insights I believe are still to come.

That you often can't have one value or experience without the other (eg. Trust and uncertainty) and while at certain times we prioritize one, we move through them constantly, not just like pendulums swinging between the extremes but more like water encompassing all

The experience had six or seven different main relationships and situations, so it wasn't easy to know which one to pick

How shifts occur during transitions but also I think that the different polarities support each other - as called out in chat - intellectual can lay groundwork for trust in intuition and intuition can inform areas of focus for study and more research.

INSIGHTS...



that it requires one to be able to experience the other, interdependence

Maybe, the way to wholeness is through fragmentation. Or at least a sense of fragmentation that we experience when we open up to diverse parts we weren't familiar with, but need to be included to experience wholeness.

that both are present in different ways and that it's not clear cut. I was unsatisfied with most of my scores because of this. I imagine that's supposed to show the paradox/liminality - the cynic in me wants to express that it can also just be a sign of sub-par options.

That nothing is static and nor should we try to make it and each has its part and place. So a reminder, it, life, the experience is a dance.

How do we ultimately negotiate the energy trade-off between staying at one extreme of a polarity, compared to the movement between?

The polarity of wholeness <-> diverse parts feels relevant every day to me. I do IFS parts work myself and can feel the power of thinking of my experience along this whole continuum. It's really useful for me to listen to the needs my different early parts have, but I'm also learning to approach these parts from the Self perspective. Also, integrating the parts more seems to promote important aspects of flourishing...sometimes. So I seem to feel I'm moving daily on this continuum.



PRACTICES

What is one regular practice that helps you navigate life transitions and/or the tensions between values?

Self reflection, identifying my own perspectives and analysing them

I didn't really have one at the life turning point so much. I was meditating quite a bit but it was in and out and quite superficial at that time. At a later life transition doing the finders course helped a lot.

meditation

Journaling - laying out these tensions on paper or talking to a trusted one.

Meditation, the I Ching, journaling

meditation + journaling - one sitting in silence and see what arising and one freeform opening and recording in journal the thoughts that arise.

meditation and mindful speech

Meditation. Improvisational dance and music. Teaching/facilitating/space holding

meditation, when I do it and do it right

Meditation with rapé (ha-pé/ha-pey), dancing, journaling, writing or painting - not really one. Staring at the moon or sunset / sunrise too.

Dialogue, being seen, being heard

Meditation

FAVORITE ARTIFACT

What is your favourite quote, poem, or song about change, transitions, or trust in the unknown?

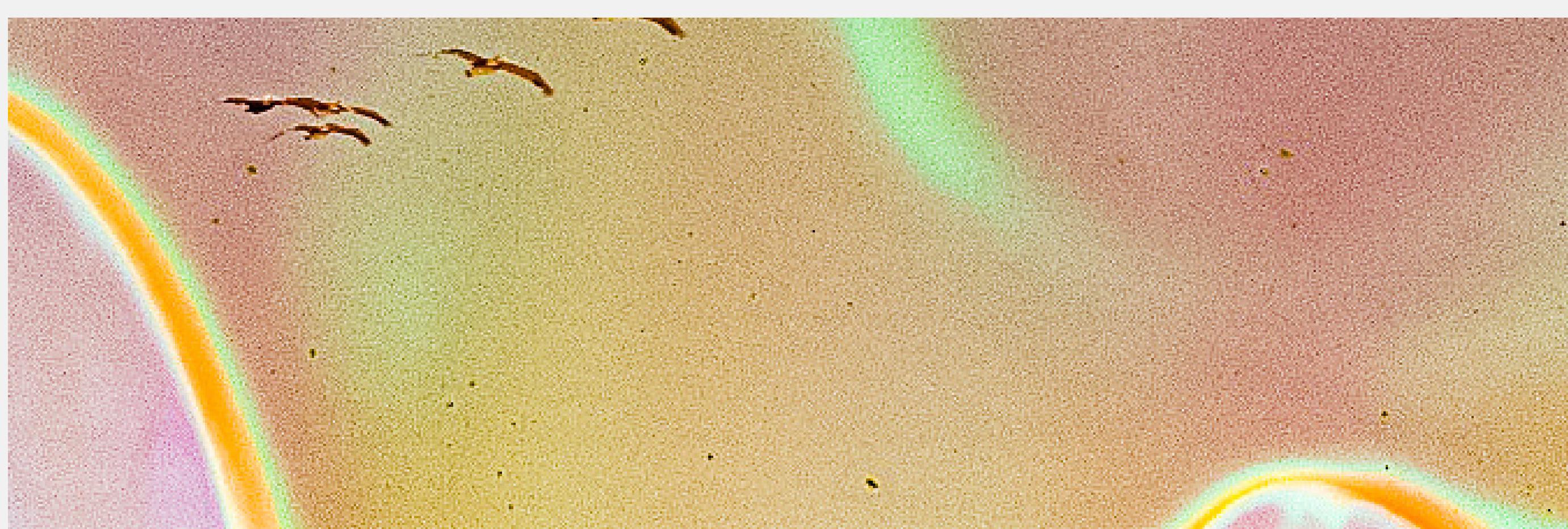
Let it flow, let it blossom... :-)

hmmm

"Be patient toward all that is unsolved in your heart and try to love the questions themselves, like locked rooms and like books that are now written in a very foreign tongue. Do not now seek the answers, which cannot be given you because you would not be able to live them. And the point is, to live everything. Live the questions now. Perhaps you will then gradually, without noticing it, live along some distant day into the answer." - Rilke

The Needle and the Damage Done

Sometimes fate is like a small sandstorm that keeps changing directions. You change direction but the sandstorm chases you. You turn again, but the storm adjusts. Over and over you play this out, like some ominous dance with death just before dawn. Why? Because this storm isn't something that blew in from far away, something that has nothing to do with you. This storm is you. Something inside of you. So all you can do is give in to it, step right inside the storm, closing your eyes and plugging up your ears so the sand doesn't get in, and walk through it, step by step. There's no sun there, no moon, no direction, no sense of time. Just fine white sand swirling up into the sky like pulverized bones. That's the kind of sandstorm you need to imagine. -- Haruki Murakami,



FAVORITE ARTIFACT...

Buddha's teaching

chchchchchangesss

Mihali - heart song

Follow every call that excites your soul - Rumi, or Birds born in a cage think flying is an illness. This to shall pass. The only way out is through (I love quotes). Life is beautiful and I have time.

Jazz impro music

"Turn, Turn, Turn"

Music and Lyrics by Pete Seeger

Performed by The Byrds

From Ecclesiastes 3:1-8)

To everything

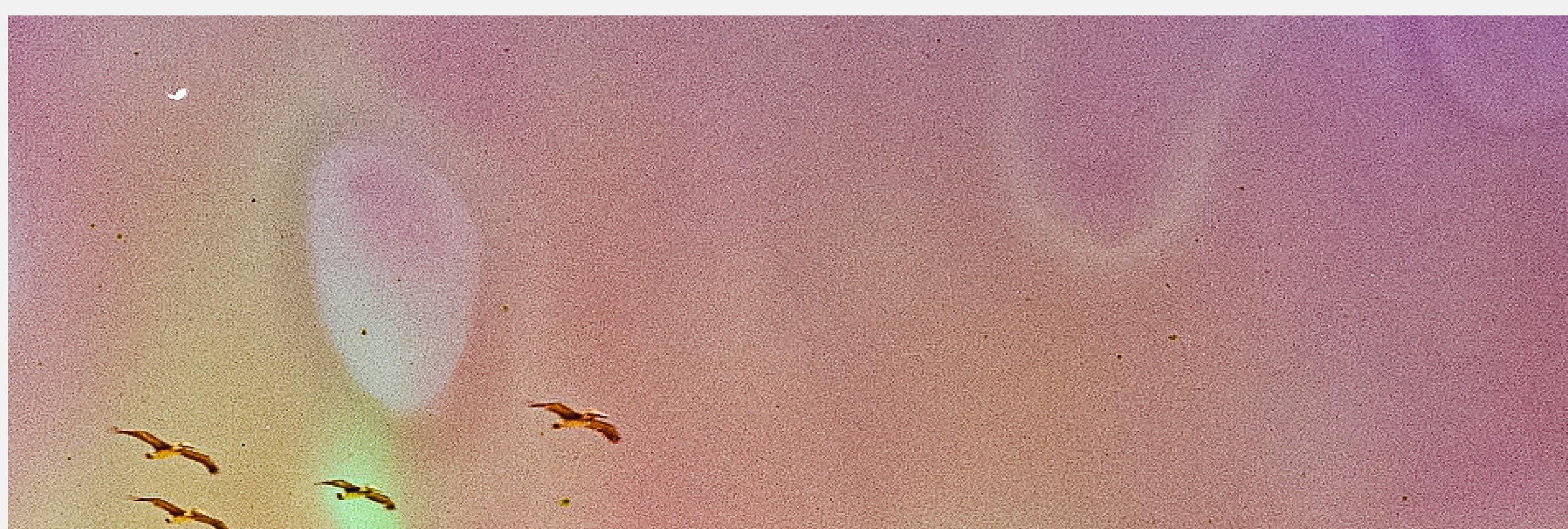
(Turn, turn, turn)

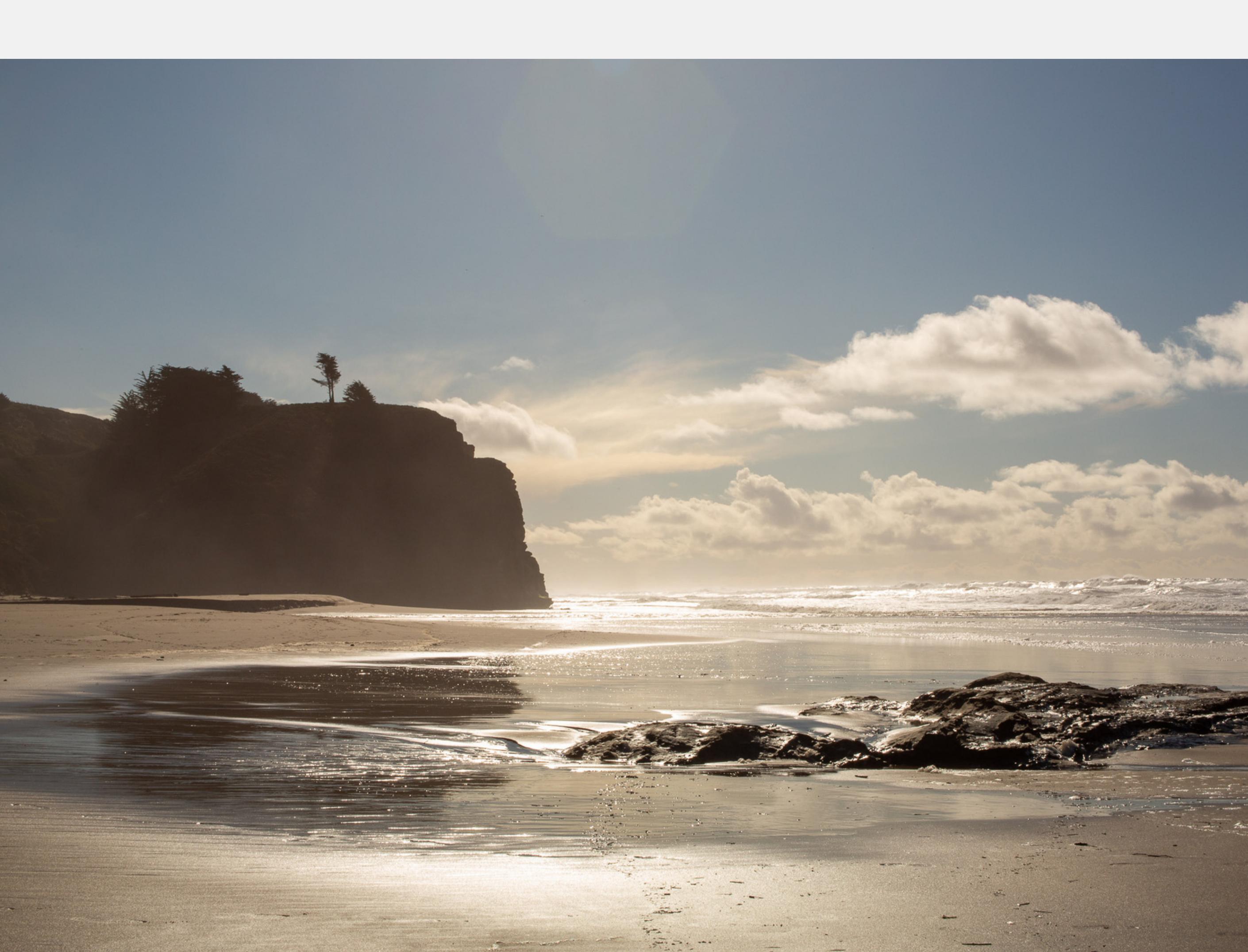
There is a season

(Turn, turn, turn)

And a time to every purpose

Under Heaven -- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W4ga_M5Zdn4





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