

## Showing up for my life

Written by Elizabeth Barrett  
Friday, 09 May 2014 14:56 -

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“When you love someone, the best thing you can offer is your presence. How can you love if you are not there.”—Thich Nhat Hanh

As the mother of a high school senior, I’ve been asked many times how I’m holding up.

Translation (I think): How am I handling the last of the lasts—the last cross-country meet, the final speech, the end of high school chorus, etc.

Fine, really, most of the time.

I did have a moment last September when the gun cracked and fog lifted from the Minden golf course. The girls were bathed in sunlight as they sprinted down a fairway, lithe as deer.

Sunglasses hid my tears even though I wasn’t embarrassed.

It wasn’t the last meet of the season but the course is one of my favorites and I knew I would never return as the mother of a high school runner.

More than a week ago, I bawled as I drove home from Betsy’s last choral concert.

In the dark, I sobbed for three blocks and, as I emerged into the backyard still wailing, the eyes of three of our cats were wide as saucers.

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When I finished, I felt better, more alive and more present.

Perhaps one gift I've received as I grow older is allowing myself to feel my feelings, even the poignant ones. And sometimes that's rather difficult in a culture that does not support emotional awareness.

Doing my inner work helps me offer an engaged self rather than escaping from intimacy through work, overcaring, worry and all of those other things that can clutter my life and take me away from my spiritual core and my loved ones.

In less than four months, Betsy will move away to college and that's likely when the void will hit me the hardest.

I will no longer have a front row seat to her life and will miss many things such as her nightly embrace and hearing funny stories about her friends, school and other things.

Still, deep inside I know that when she leaves, connection can carry across the miles as long as we both keep showing up for our lives.

“Being present to each moment of my life is living my

spirituality.”—Anne Wilson Schaef