

*And everything that's new has bravely surfaced
Teaching us to breathe
What was frozen through is newly purposed
Turning all things green
So it is with You
And how You make me new
With every season's change
And so it will be
As You are re-creating me
Summer, autumn, winter, spring
-Nichole Nordeman, "Every Season"*

Spring. Not my favorite season, actually, due to all the rain & the mud & the inevitable problems with our septic field. I'm not terribly fond of all the wetness, but I'll tell you what I do like – watching all the *new* come up. Seeing the crocuses and daffodils poking their green heads out of the dirt – sometimes still with snow around them. Seeing the buds coming out on the trees. Seeing the cardinals & robins bouncing around on the lawn. I love this. There's such a sense of freshness to it.

When I think of spring, the song I quoted above is the first thing that comes to mind. After we've spent so many months cooped up inside – seeing everything frozen over in a state of suspension – the thought of rebirth is amazing. The thought of getting to be “new” and start over is so freeing, isn't it? But it's not always right there in your face. In the hustle & bustle of our lives, we can miss it all – the change outside, the fresh new beginning, new life coming to the surface, even the changes that happen within us or those we love. It's amazing to me how, as we get older, time passes by us so quickly. A month, which took *a-g-e-s* when we were children, now flies by so fast that we miss it. That is, unless we make it a point to notice it. Noticing the changes, the re-creation, the newness of life is something that I'd like to make a point of this month. They say that March “comes in like a lion & goes out like a lamb”. Can you notice this change in your own life this month?

If you remember back to January, I challenged you all to get a notebook (or 2 or 3) with which you can start to write down the things you notice in your life. Stuff your kids say, things that come to mind when you're in the car, ideas or inspiration that hits you whenever – that kind of stuff. (If you missed that article, you can read it here: <http://www.butternugsquash.com/journaling.html>. It's the link to the “January 2007 DST Insider article.”) Well, I want you to pull out those notebooks again. I'm going to challenge you to not only notice & record, but now to do something with it.

Think about spring. Think about the feelings & ideas that come to your mind as you read the verse from the song I quoted above. Who or what comes to mind? Can you make that person/idea into a layout? I bet you can. It's about newness, freshness, rebirth, recreation, second chances, becoming a new person – all of that and more.

Now that you have an idea, what do you say about it? I can help with that. I'm going to give you some journaling prompts that you can use to get your creativity going. Use one or 2 or all 5 – whatever you need to get what's inside your heart & soul into a written form. If one question unleashes a whole flood of memories or an intricate story – write it down. Don't just touch on it – get it all down. Because THAT, far more than any pictures or embellishments, is what will be precious & priceless to future generations.

1. What is your favorite part of spring? The appearance of flowers? The cleansing rains? Spring break? Choose or take a picture that captures that thing and then write about why it's your favorite part. Is it attached to a special memory? A special person? A memorable event? Write it all down.
2. Think about the concept of becoming "new". How does that apply to your life or the life of someone you love? When winter ends & spring begins, many things that seemed to be dead come vibrantly back to life. How have you seen this in your own experience? Could be in a special tree from your childhood or in the life of someone you loved who almost died or even just how something changed in your own life, making you able to really come alive. Write it all down – feelings, facts, and intuitions, what you've learned.
3. Do you or your family have any spring traditions? Places you always go, things you always do? Do you do a big spring clean every year? Scrap about it. Tell the details – if it's somewhere you go, where is it? What do you do? Who goes? Why do you love it? If it's something you always do, what is it? Why do you do it? Does it have special familial significance? If it's a spring clean, tell about it. What do you do? How do you do it? Why did you start doing it? How does it make you feel?
4. Compare yourself to the spring bulbs that will be coming up. You've spent 3 or more months indoors, out of the cold, waiting for spring. Soon you'll be able to "show yourself" – peeking out from under the dirt, reaching for the sun. Do you feel like one of those bulbs? What will you be "reaching for" this spring? What have you "reached for" in springs past? What will make you grow tall & strong & blossom beautifully?
5. Spring is a time of rebirth. Think about how you'd like to be "reborn" this year. What changes do you want to make? How do you want to reinvent yourself or have recreation done within you? If you are a person of faith, you might talk about how God is changing you with every season – making you stronger, fuller, more *you*. You might talk about how God has brought you through a winter season – a struggle or difficult time, a time of feeling "frozen over" – and how you're starting to feel that time is melting away & you're "newly purposed".

With all of these prompts – they're just a place to get you started thinking about what's really going on inside you & your family & your life. It's up to you to dig down & mine the gold. Don't worry about being a great writer or having fantastic grammar. When you're typing (or writing) pretend that you're being interviewed & just type what would come out of your mouth. As is. Don't think about making it fancy & pretty – just talk. Remember – you're telling your story. It's *yours*. Just let it out.