

DECEMBER 2023  
VOLUME 31



# NEWSLETTER

BY: RAINA O'DELL @RAINA.ODELL

**- JOURNAL ENTRY:** *page #870*

*"10 days till Christmas. It's wild how fast this year has flown by. It feels like ages ago that I sat on the balcony in our Airbnb in Encinitas, crying because I missed the city so much, mourning because of what used to be, and writing a vision for what I wanted my next season to look like. Everything since then has changed - everything. Which, does feel odd to say.*

*This Christmas feels good - different, but good. It's the first Christmas - ever - that the girls and I will have at home, just the three of us.*

*Since Kenzie has been born, nearly 18 years, were spent with others and/or traveling.*

*So much life has happened over the years & being "home" now feels so good, the fact that the girls are happy about it also makes me happy.*

*It's that, and a combo of not traveling, being able to settle in.*

*I'm such a home body that has struggled with people pleasing, more so wanting my kids to have experiences I didn't have. I write that, not actually remembering my own "experiences" because I honestly don't remember celebrating any holidays in my childhood with the exception of one.*

*My 9th - mostly because of the memory of a giant barbie house as tall as me, was sitting under our tree that year and in front of the TV sat a saddle, propped onto something allowing me to sit on it while I watched a VHS of my new Shetland pony, an image ingrained in my memory.*

*I wonder if my dad came into more money that year?*

*There are no - I mean **no** - other Christmas memories before the age of 20 that I have.*

*It's as if they've all been wiped from my memory from staring at the red light the Men in Black carry. Gone.*

*It's a good thing & a bad thing because on one hand, I have nothing to compare the holiday to and on the other, I'm sure it was the consequence of struggling, young parents.*

*Then when I started making money, Christmas got fun.*

*Then when I got divorced, Christmas got hard, emotionally.*

*I've not yet been able to recover from the "hard" Christmases so it does feel like this year is a step in the right direction.*

*A clean slate, a new opportunity to create something just for us.*

*Archie is sitting next to me as I write, when I make eye contact it's like he's staring back at me, wondering why I'm thinking so much. Today is my favorite day, he thinks, and I'm reminded that being present in this moment is where my focus should also be.*

*Grateful for where I am and how far we've all come.*

*Breathe."*

# BEFORE.

Okay, I know you care less about the holiday and more about identifying the little tail peeking from between my feet in the first photo. I get it, I'd be the same way.

One week before Christmas, I was on my way to do some shopping and noticed a slow leak in my tire. I was sitting at a local tire shop waiting for my 4 new tires to be put on - *holiday surprise!* Apparently when one tire can't be repaired, all four need to be replaced if you have an "all wheel drive" car. \$800 *holiday surprise!*

Sitting in the waiting room, kind of bitter, I was working on my book manuscript when Mckenzie, my 17-year old, Face-timed me.

"Mom, I need \$500." she said.

I laughed. And then got kind of nervous wondering what kind of trouble she'd gotten into. \*Hello, intrusive thoughts\*

When I asked her why she needed money, she flipped the camera to show me four of the fluffiest little Husky puppies I'd ever seen in my life.

"No way." I said.

"Mom... please!" she said.

It went on this way for about 30 minutes. Every 5 minutes or so, I'd hang up on her



because I could feel the weakness of my decision peeking over my shoulder. I figured that if I hung up on her, she couldn't see the little devils' face.

There was a couple standing on the corner of the parking lot at Target with a laundry basket full of puppies. They had a couple of husky's who had an "oops" litter and couldn't financially take care of them.

My heart melted as my stupid thoughts went wild, thinking of what would happen to them if I didn't say yes to Kenzie.

So, I said yes.

Kenzie hung up, snagged a little brown and white Siberian Husky from the basket, and ran to the pet store to buy a collar before I changed my mind.

She brought him straight out to the ranch so I could meet him and as expected, I melted.

Rockie was "Kenzie's dog!" she insisted but we all know how that goes, don't we?

I've spent the past week puppy-proofing the house and potty training. I've been setting my alarm for 12 am and 3 am to take Rockie to potty, then again at 7 am to start my day.

I'm a bit sleepy but my heart feels so happy to have another boy added to our pack.

Rockie is the sweetest boy. Full of bouncy energy and a yelp that will get your attention at any moment, he's a talker. He's in love with his two big brothers, following them around constantly.

Dexter is still very unsure but slowly starting to warm up to Rockie. We've caught them playing together a few times now and it always makes me happy to see playfulness brought out in Dexter.

Archie has turned out to be the best big brother. He and Rockie are attached at the hip, wherever Archie goes, Rockie follows. They've tug-of-war'd their hearts out and shared bursts of zoomies around the backyard & under the couches.

You know me, I'm a believer that things happen right when they're supposed to. In one of my last blog's, I shared some "lessons learned from my animals" and Rockie has brought his own lessons for me with him.

He has brought so much laughter back into my home. Something I didn't realize was missing, yet it was amplified when his paws hit our floor.

He brought laughter.

He brought presence.

He brought a playful energy that has allowed this holiday to be one of a kind.



**- JOURNAL ENTRY: page #878**

*"Two days till Christmas.*

*Dexter is seated behind me on his usual spot at the top of my chair.*

*Archie is curled up at my feet.*

*And Rockie is using my arm as a kickstand on his tippy-paws to watch my pen move, barking at it like it's the devils' creation.*

*The girls are sleeping like rocks in their comfy beds. We're home.*

*This time last year we were settling into our rental in Encinitas - ahh, I can smell it. The year before that, we were getting into Richmond, VA with Chad to celebrate on the East Coast. The year before that, we celebrated via Zoom with Chad & new puppy, Archie, in the middle of the pandemic. The year before that, we had family over to our loft before going to Richmond with Chad's family. The year before that, we traveled to KC and I rotated awkwardly between my family and my ex-family. The year before that, I sat with my ex-family, expecting nothing as we attempted our first holiday, post-divorce. And before that, every year since I was 18, we spent the holiday in KC with my (ex) in laws, celebrating Christmas. It was an event that lasted days. It took me years to try to rebuild the excitement for my kids around the holidays because we had built such strong traditions with a family that was no longer mine.*

*It's been hard, personally, to recover from that also.*

*So - I'm trying. We are home in Colorado, just us three girls, for the first time - ever.*

*And it feels good. Three cozy pups, two sleepy girls, and a partridge in a pear tree. All safe in the home we've created together.*

*We've got our tree up, my "dream tree" that I bought in 2019, and lights hung up outside. Bella said we've got the brightest & prettiest house on the block. Plus, some gossip around the pilates studio is that it's supposed to snow on Christmas Eve. The girls will be so happy if Santa makes that happen.*

*I'm going to leave two gifts out under the tree, unwrapped and surrounded by all the others.*

*They'll know it's from Santa. Haha!*

*I do need to finish wrapping today. We are going to Denver this evening for dinner and the Luminova Lights at Elitch Gardens, it should be great! Tomorrow, Christmas Eve, we will do dinner out again & go to the Zoo Lights event, Bella loves Christmas Lights. Still at (almost) 16 years old, she says it's her favorite part. I'm guessing it's because they're the only constant she has, wherever the holiday is celebrated - there are always lights.*

*Rockie wants to play, I need to get dressed. I'm heading to pilates & breakfast with a friend."*

## DURING.

I'm currently working on this newsletter at home in my office. Archie & Rockie are on the floor passed out at my feet, Dexter in my lap, also catching up on his Zzz's. The holidays alone are draining, throw a puppy in and guaranteed: you'll struggle to keep your eyes open at 11am.

Good news, the kids got me a latte machine for Christmas - literally with their own money. I know, it's wild getting to the age where your children insist on spending their own money on a gift for you. They even filled my stocking - I mean Santa did - entirely on their own, adamant that I *not peek*. Oh, how times have changed.

I'm back into *a flow* today.

But taking a break in an hour or so because the kids also got me an hour massage at my favorite spa in Boulder.

You guys! If you're struggling this holiday season, feeling stressed - moms, if you're feeling unappreciated - I'm here to tell you that *one day* it all pays off.

One day, your babies will be filling your stocking and getting you gifts that aren't handmade or paid for with your own money.

Oh trust, I've been there and I soaked up every ounce of it with gratitude. Still, I'm thankful that I'm through that season of my life.

Not so much because of the gifts, but because emotionally and mentally, I don't think I

would have been able to maintain the *scarcity and lack* that consumed me for most of the holidays I spent with my children.

In all honesty, I never even connected the dots that I was probably trying to constantly live up to my barbie house & Shetland pony holiday. Yet, I financially couldn't live up to that expectation.

My (now ex) husband and I were living paycheck to paycheck for most of our marriage. There were some years that we've have to take out a payday loan in order to have a few hundred dollars to pay for presents.

We were 18 & 21 years old when our life started as parents, creating a lot of stress financially for two young adults who didn't quite know how to adult.

I remember feeling so anxious before Christmas, feeling like I had already let my kids down, without realizing they had no expectations. He & I would take a trip to Wal-Mart with a \$100 per kid budget, writing down ever penny spent so we wouldn't have our card decline.

I'd search for the smallest toys or best deals simply because I wanted the tree to be filled underneath. My in-laws knew our struggle and I was always so thankful for the fact that they went above and beyond, every year, for our girls.

My girls never knew the lack or disappointment I felt knowing that only a few of the presents were from me.

I think things shifted for me in 2014 after starting my own business and soon surpassing the income my husband made.

For the first time in my life I felt like we had enough, plenty, more than we needed and I allowed myself to enjoy the process of getting my girls what they wanted for the holidays.

That year, we surprised the girls with Dexter.



A puppy for Christmas - it felt like every kids dream.

Every year, I've felt so blessed to be able to treat my children to a Christmas that felt like my barbie house & Shetland pony holiday.

I share all of that to say that this year felt wild.

It felt like the tables turned, my kids being able to spoil me, and I made sure they knew it wasn't unnoticed.

I'm so proud of the humans they're becoming. They got so much joy from being able to fill my stocking and purchase two large gifts for me that I'm sure, drained a chunk of the money they had saved.

Bigger than that, we enjoyed the quality time with one another. I think that was the gift I enjoyed the most: their time.

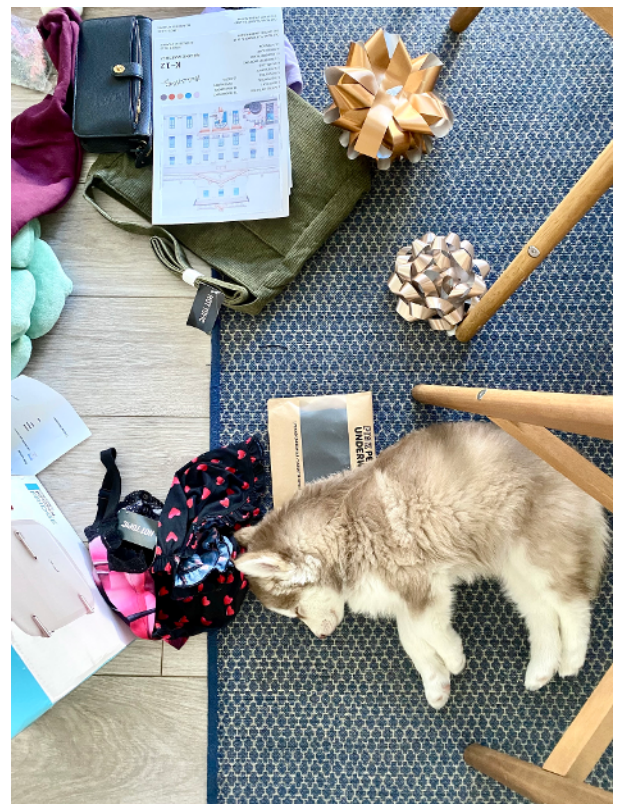
I woke up around 7:30, the pups allowed me to sleep in. I told the kids I'd wake them up at 8 am which felt like a big shift from the 5 am wake up call I'd get when they were little, excitement to see what Santa brought taking over their little bodies.

I made my matcha and sipped while I cut our biscuits needed to make Monkey Bread for breakfast. Once the kids were up, I put breakfast in the oven and we took turns opening gifts, laughing & fully in gratitude for what we gifted one another.

We cleaned up the aftermath while the dogs napped, worn out from the excitement, before sitting down to eat breakfast together.

Each of us took an hour or two to put our stuff away and get the house back in order. I made some practice lattes & installed some puppy gates while the girls played music & did their thing.

We reconnected to watch the new Hunger Games movie and the girls nodded off, I think I'm the only one who watched the movie all the way through.





After our movie, I headed to the ranch with a couple of candy canes in hand to tell Cesar & Joey hello. The boys were out in the pasture when I arrived so I headed out to see them. Cesar came running up to me and Joey followed, it puts a smile on my face every time. I told them Merry Christmas & fed them little pieces of candy cane while I told them about my day.

When I got back home, we put Christmas movies on in the background while I started dinner: Prime Rib, twice baked potatoes, brussels sprout with bacon, and rolls - so good.

The teens took off to do their thing after we ate & cleaned up so I plopped onto my big chair with all three boys for snuggles & another movie.

Today - back to a flow. Not my typical flow though, as I said - but I'm working towards it this week, ready for a new normal come January.

Bella's birthday is the 28th so we've still got some partying and decorating to do. I'm taking a few one on one calls this week and working on my manuscript, but that's about it.

I do plan on hopping back onto my social media in January, hesitantly. I've really enjoyed

the break over these last couple of months. It's been nice hearing my own voice again, distraction free. It's been nice living my life, without having to share proof of it.

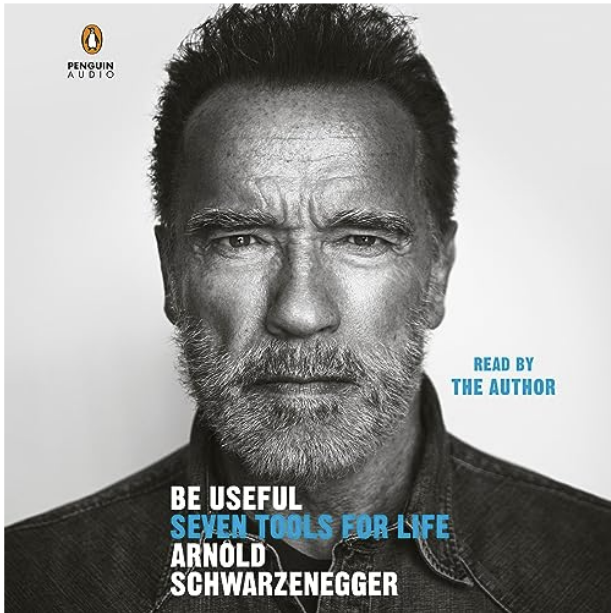
I'm excited for 2024. I'm ready for 2024. In 2021 my "word of the year" was **slow** and I really did slow down. In 2022, my word was **intention** and I lived with a lot of it. In 2023, my word was **trust** and I most definitely have.

For 2024, my word is going to be **listen**.

To me, that means embracing the quiet, chasing the stillness, and allowing myself to truly hear that voice, inner knowing, and gentle direction that we've all got inside of us. Happy New Year.



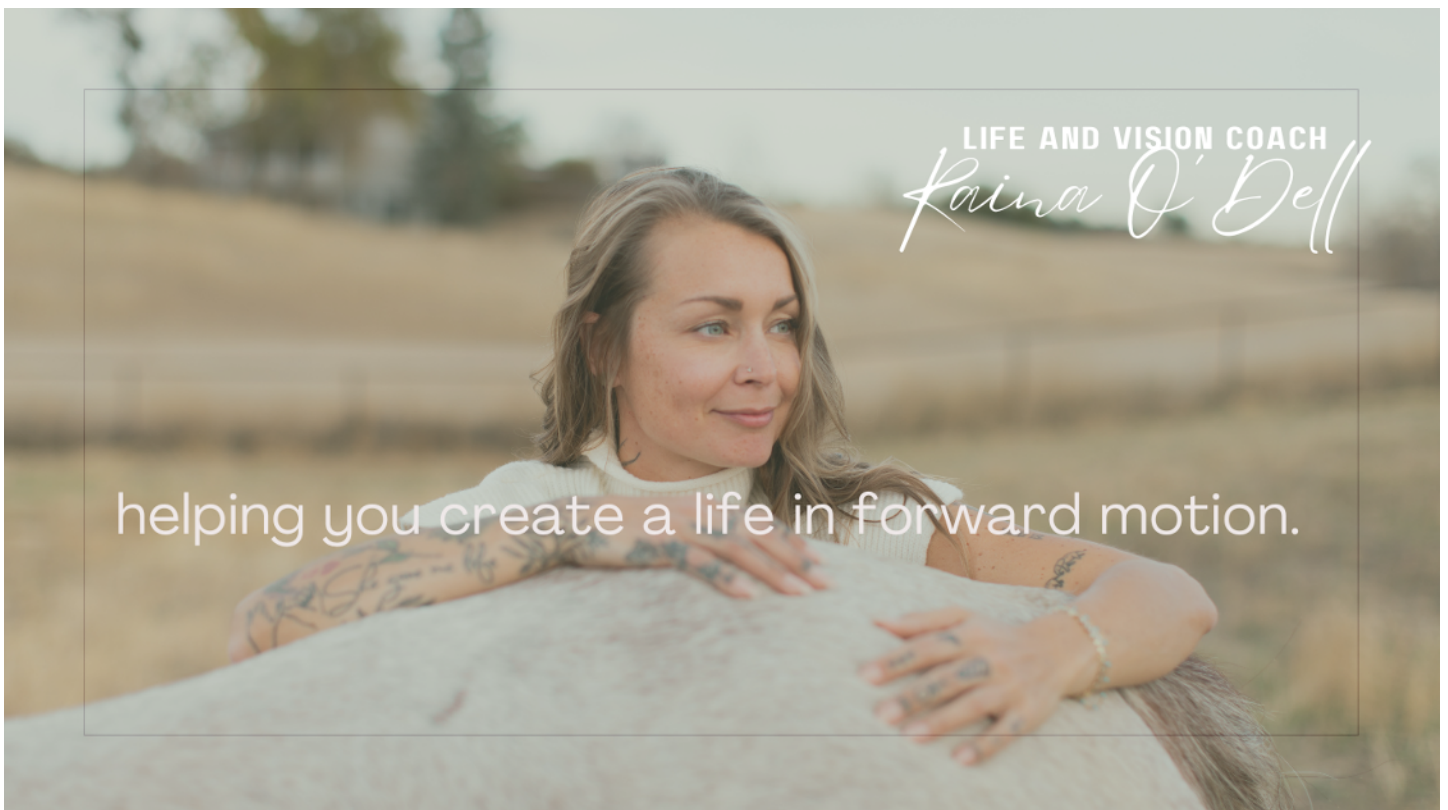
# MUST LISTEN.



I had a member of my Daily Rhythms Community recommend this book to me because she said that so much of it reminded her of everything I *preached* about. Intrigued, I downloaded the Audible and listened while I drove, while I mucked stalls, and while I got dressed during my slow mornings. I am obsessed with Arnold, his voice, and the realness he shares in this book. I've already adopted and trust in so many of the *tools* he shares yet found myself insanely inspired and motivated to make more shifts in my life. This is a must read.

**CLICK ON THE IMAGE TO DOWNLOAD BOOK**

# WORK WITH ME.



**ONE ON ONE COACHING SPOTS ARE OPEN FOR 2024!**

I'm excited to connect with some new souls, sharing some of my new tools & helping them create a life in forward motion and expansion.