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Dear Friends,

I remember going into my friend's living room in Washington, DC, where a pool table took up most of the real estate, and her four teenage children lived right out loud, along with all their friends. There was a constant swarm of kids; it was the house in the neighborhood where every child hung out. I loved that. They even built a theater in the basement to provide a safe place for kids to gather. There were hockey sticks and school backpacks and roller skates everywhere. The couch had Sharpie marks on it. One day, she looked at me as we sat in her kitchen and said, "What I need you to know is that I *really* do like nice things," making an (unneeded) apology for the chaos.

I like nice things, too. But with three cats and three dogs and a teenager in our household, it's just not our time to be precious and pretty either. The living room features dog beds and two desks where we can study and learn rather than a sofa; things that need doing remain undone sometimes, and that's okay.

What if, instead of longing for the nice things, I can acknowledge that these *ARE* the nice things, all these hockey sticks, and basketballs, and dog beds. They're the real life, not the Pottery Barn one. Treasures.

**A few links to ponder this week:**

1. Parents (and others who work with kids), here's [how to grant your child an inner life](#).
2. What is [the danger of a single story](#) we keep telling ourselves?
3. [Verbs](#) are everywhere.
4. "Never argue with a fool. Onlookers may not be able to tell the difference." -Mark Twain
5. To this day, [this is how I use a paper towel](#).

**What's coming up:**

**Women's Writing Retreat - Fall 2020** - Come write with me in the mountains of NC in September (Sept 7-12). Info is [here](#). This is my most intimate retreat, with only 7 writers for 1:1 time in a beautiful space. *Three tickets remain.*

**Hard Conversations: An Introduction to Racism** - Begins March 3, with live calls from 8-9:15 pm Eastern on March 10, 17, 24, and 31. We focus on systemic racism, white privilege, the myth of colorblindness, and how to be an effective ally. [Go here](#) for more info.

**NEW COURSE****Hard Conversations: Whiteness, Race, and Social Justice**

Begins April 7. Focuses on white racial identity, hallmarks of white supremacy culture, what it means to be white in a racist world, and how to create a positive white identity. [Go here](#) for info.

Thanks for reading. If you like this newsletter and want to support it, forward it to someone who'd like it. If you're seeing this newsletter for the first time, you can subscribe [here](#).

Life the life you've got right now,

Patti

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