

Teawayfarer

Each month, we introduce one of the Global Tea Hut members to you in these magazines in order to help you get to know more people in this growing international community. It's also to pay homage to the many manifestations that all this wonderful spirit and Tea are becoming as the Tea is drunk and becomes human. The energy of Tea fuels some great work in this world, and we are so honored to share glimpses of such beautiful people and their Tea. This month, we would like to introduce Brandon Boyd.

I've spent most of my life juggling my relationship with technology; both wary of it and grateful for it, a bit like a coin toss whereby I, the user, can decide more often than not on which side I'd like the shiny alloy to land. Do I take the antibiotic for this cough, or should I ride this one out and power up on vitamin C and rest? Should I turn on the air conditioning today or maybe open the doors and let the outside in? Shall I check my phone to see what has appeared in the past twenty minutes or maybe read that book? This last decision is perhaps one of the more perilous ones that we are faced with of late.

I am at the ripe age of 40; young enough to have processing space for tech developments whereby I can embrace new, shiny modes of transport, but old enough to recall a time when there was space to be bored. I feel almost blessed in a way to have lived half of my life unplugged and half (so far) with three prongs into the grid.

Tea came into my life at an amazingly opportune moment, as I am sure it did for most of you. Like a gentle gust of serendipity, its simple yet sturdy song crept into my world right at a time when I had begun taking meditation more seriously. I had made the decision to do so because I was starting to get the sense that certain elements of my inner experience were beginning to (or perhaps I was just noticing them) fragment. My attentions seemed to be starting to structure themselves a little too much like the way the Internet was structured. Like a web, but not the kind we imagine right away, backlit in morning sun with supple drops of dew glistening on the silk. No, my attentions were more akin to the web you find behind the garage or under the house; erratic and formless, leaving one wondering if they'd even want to encounter who or what designed it.

Tea took its time to really penetrate my daily routine. I would banter with it and enjoyed our talks and our silences, but I was slow to dive deeper. I felt like the extended family around me had that covered. The vast and swift enthusiasm for this new friend almost brought an inner contrarian out in me. Like the band all your friends raved about that you rolled your eyes at until the moment you got them to yourself on a long drive and finally "got it," Tea eventually sang to me in a way that I desperately needed. And after years of enjoying the ritual, the fine craftsmanship, the history, the stories, the conversations, the silence, and yes, the divine flavors, I have come to realize this morning that Tea has almost proved itself a psychic avatar of sorts, arriving precisely at the moment when it was needed most.

Once Tea had Her soft claws in me, I began noticing how my other friend, the Internet, kept tugging my attentions away from hot water and leaves. My desire to check my



phone became a little like a phantom menace of sorts. And I started to feel the way that friends who were trying to quit smoking had described their attempts to me. I was tethered, in a sense, and the cord was widening, stronger with each tug. So, here was something quietly and successfully drawing neural maps alongside something that was gracefully and slowly making maps of its own. One leading me into presence and mindfulness, one fragmenting my attentions and making it harder and harder to remain present. But what does a lad do when the problem also offers so much hope of connectivity? Practice, young Jedi. Practice. Music is born of silence in my experience, which has a pang of irony, as it requires so much noise to arrive at an end result with song craft. All that being said, I have had some of my proudest moments as a songwriter in the presence of Tea and Silence.

I don't want this piece to be seen as a diatribe against technology. I am fascinated by technology and I believe in it. But something being mindful on occasion has taught me is that there is never *just* a good idea. There are always unintended consequences. The acknowledgment of both sides of the coin before tossing it, while it's spinning in the air and in the moment before you read the outcome, is both wise and necessary. Imagine all that we've learned from this millennia-old ritual of leaves and water, silence and presence, and I challenge you to not agree with me, Tea Geeks, that Tea is the perfect medicine for the age of the Internet.