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2017 seemed to be a year that, figuratively speaking, bit a lot of people on the ass. For me, bereavement and illness were a huge part of it and that inevitably compounds an appreciation of just how short life can be - and how precious it always is.

It was also a year of big change for me, not least with a move up to rural Scotland with my husband and toddler son. We now live at the end of a track in an old mill house by the river with 15 acres to play with. A far cry from our small London flat and compact little garden!

Now we have a big adventure ahead – which begins with endless lists. Rooms to paint, floors to sand, furniture to build, gardens to create, woodland to explore, family to visit...not to mention work to do, meals to cook and a toddler to play with and keep a routine going for.

So, lots to do and the knowledge that we cannot take life for granted. How do I respond, cram as much in as possible?

Before Christmas I agreed with my husband to have a bit of time to myself each morning – it's better for us all this way ;-) I wanted to use this time to think, to explore the countryside, go for walks, do some yoga, wake up slowly with a nice cuppa, have a bath, do some writing, send some messages, do a bit of work, polyfill some gaps...by the end of the first week I was frustrated and using my time poorly. I couldn't do all of that! And wanting it all meant I had done none of it properly and was starting the day in a jumble.

So now I do two things each morning: wake up slowly with a nice cuppa (well, 2 cuppas really...) and some yoga. If we've had an early start there's sometimes time for some other bits, but generally letting go of the multitude of aspirations has really helped me get the most out of the ones I am giving space to. Instead of starting the day in a jumble I have a relatively clear head and can focus on my family and tasks.

Life is short, walk slowly. I heard this phrase in a massive Kenyan church tent many moons ago and lately it has been at the forefront of my mind. How much importance we place on doing more, seeing more, exploring more...but what about time in there for all the processing that needs to follow and absorption of any experience – good, bad and all the grey ones in between. The big life events of last year have left ripples and a strong residual sense of being buffeted around: last year

was too much, too fast and it wasn't helpful to have so much happen at once. Much of this was beyond my control, but perhaps this is one of the lessons life is teaching me.

Of course the work in the house needs to be done and I do LOVE painting (the 20% reward after 80% of effort goes into prepping...) – but it will and in good time.

Life is short...I will try to walk slowly!