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By Nora Martin

IN MY SIXTEEN YEARS, I HAVE AMASSED A FRIGHTENING LIST OF PARTIALLY FINISHED CREATIVE PROJECTS. For example: I decided to make a dress once. Jo-Ann Fabrics was far away and my pockets chronically slim, so I found an old flowery bedsheet and eagerly began cutting away. After about a week, I got distracted by the impulse to write down every dream I had ever had in a cute, hard-backed notebook. That, in turn, was tossed aside in favor of the Morse alphabet. I mastered A through O and wrote the rest down on a piece of paper, fully intending to memorize them within the week. P through Z remains, sadly, in that fateful fibrous grave somewhere in my dresser.

Now when I begin a new hobby, I fully expect my interest to fade within the first few months. When I woke up one morning and decided to take up embroidery, I gave myself two months, maybe three, before I would inevitably move on to something else. The first project was a pair of pants: I hoped to stitch a favorite quotation across the back pocket. Unfortunately, the stitches proved too difficult for me, the pattern much too long, and the few fabric adjustments I attempted ended in disaster. When I was done, I had a Frankensteinian beast of a pant that would definitely bring tears to the eyes of any self-respecting seamstress.

All the elements to my familiar formula were in place: an overly-ambitious task, poor execution, and a lackluster product. I should have just quit. But I didn't. I had actually enjoyed making my monstrosity. Now, ten projects and almost a year later, my skills have improved quite a bit. Embroidery, I've discovered, makes me happy.

► Nora Martin

I can put words on shirts, flowers on hats, and an assortment of little designs on mask after mask after mask.

What sets embroidery apart from everything else I've tried is the realization that I genuinely like the process of making a project. Slowly and monotonously threading a needle, drawing it through fabric, bringing it back down, and rhythmically drawing it up again is a perfect foil to the hobgoblin living in my head. My mind is perpetually stuck in overdrive. When I embroider, however, the frenzy of endless planning, analyzing, *thinking*, gives way to silence. And peace.

Psalms 46:10 advises, *Be still, and know that I am God.* In a world where every second is filled with noise, it's easy to forget the value of rest. God, in His infinite wisdom, foresaw our need to stop, clear our heads, and breathe. Think of prayer — one of the best ways to center the mind. While speaking directly to the face of the Almighty God, daily stressors can diminish and even melt into nothing. The knowledge that there is something out there that is greater than anything that the next day might throw our way is one of faith's greatest blessings. Sabbath, too, offers opportunity for rest and restoration. It can remove us from the trembling wire of the week-

days and place us in the loving arms of our Creator.

Yes, it's good to slow down. It's good to rest. And, I've discovered, something as simple as a series of tiny stitches can go a long way to creating still. ■

Nora Martin originally hails from North Carolina. She's a freshman at Andrews University studying Psychology and English.

Nora received a \$100 scholarship for this article. If you're a youth or young adult interested in submitting an article for consideration, please contact: herald@lakeunion.org.



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