

Dirt

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As I was planting my spring garden, I noticed that I felt better for a moment than I had since the birth of my child. I stopped to wonder what it was that was making me feel so elated and as I looked at my hands and my feet, I noticed the power in the earth that covered me. I realized the strength that was found in dirt. Yes dirt, the simple matter that we try to wash off and keep away from is actually amazingly powerful. As I stood there I began to think about the women who came before me, my own ancestors who worked in the fields of their farm after childbirth and I pondered how they felt. I had my baby slung to the front of me and I could see their faces, wet with sweat and their hands and feet dirty as they also held their children while they worked. It gave me strength to know that in this dirt there were memories of all the women who preceded me and their hard work, sweat and tears. The dirt told the story of their perseverance through hard times and the memories filled me and made me feel whole again. I have within me the strength of all the women who came before me. Then I realized why thousands, including myself, anxiously await the spring when we can plant, bringing life back to the earth. I understood then, what I had known before, what every child is born knowing, what every ceramicist understands and what horticulturalists live for; there is immense power in dirt. Dirt is all that was once alive and is now dead. It is the earth we walk on. It is the precious material that helps plants grow. Dirt may not be alive, but the memories and feelings it can stir are very much alive. It links us to who we once were and it paves the way for the future of humanity. I

believe that if we embraced dirt and dug into it more often, we would all feel more connected to our Earth, our food, our surroundings and our past. Throughout the rest of my years, I will continue to plant each spring and summer. I will dig in the dirt and teach my child that it is OK to be fascinated with dirt. It holds a great deal of potential for it supports our lives and it also holds the memories she may need to keep her strong one day as well.