**Labor Day**

On Monday we will celebrate Labor Day in the U.S., a day of tribute to the working class in recognition of the contributions they (we) make to the” strength, prosperity, and well-being of our country.” Although no one knows exactly who first proposed the idea, we’ve been celebrating this holiday since 1882 (legislation making it an official holiday passed in 1894). Always the first Monday in September, Labor Day traditionally marks the end of summer, and, excepting those in the retail and service industries, most Americans celebrate the day with barbecues, picnics, parties, and parades.

And so yesterday, I began thinking about the many meanings of *labor*. We have an entire working class of people that we call Labor. And yet, no matter which socioeconomic class you belong to, the word also has personal implications. *Labor* is work, exertion. When we make an effort to accomplish something, we are “laboring.” However, the word also has negative associations, such as drudgery, menial work, and sweat shops.

Today’s journaling prompt help us reflect on the meaning of *labor* — from a deep, personal understanding to the broader context of society as a whole.

How did you celebrate the Labor Day holiday? How do you usually celebrate it? And what does this holiday mean to you? Do you think it’s appropriate to have a national holiday honoring the contributions of organized labor and/or the working class? In what ways yes, and in what ways no? When you think about Labor, as a class of people, who do you imagine? What do they look like? What kind of work do they do? As you have defined or imagined it, how do you feel about this group of people? How do your feelings and attitudes about labor affect your perceptions of life? Share your thoughts

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