

Our soul intention for this e-newsletter is to create a positive, uplifting, inspiring and spirit-filled message (in amongst the conventionally-perceived journalism practiced today). We extend this offering to you and hope, if only for a moment in time, we provide a hint of another reality that is there for your embracing. Enjoy! You are invited to share this e-newsletter with those family, friends, colleagues and acquaintances you think may be interested.

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If you have a newsworthy item that you would like added to the e-newsletter, please forward your submission to rmeagher@servingyourjourney.com.

SPIRITUAL GUIDANCE OFFERINGS:

1. Personal Story of Spiritual Lessons



Are You Experiencing Suffering? Or Are You Suffering Your Experience?

So...here we are! Smack dab in the middle (a metaphorical expression) of what has been labelled a global pandemic. This surely must be fertile soil for suffering! Or is it? The currently evolving situation reminds me of the somewhat-whimsical Buddhist parable about suffering:

The student runs to the spiritual teacher. "Teacher, teacher," says the student. "I am experiencing suffering." After listening to the student's tales of woe, the teacher responds, "You are not experiencing suffering. You are suffering your experience."

The first change I experienced in my life was that my local recreation center closed. I would faithfully go to the center on Monday, Wednesday and Friday for a noon-hour swim. I had been swimming laps for more than 40 years. Now, all of a sudden, I couldn't. What was I to do?! After a couple of days I adjusted to this new state of being with an acceptance that, for some reason that has not been revealed to me yet, life (my name for God) does not want me swimming at this time. I dusted off my yoga mat, resurrected some of my Yin, Hatha, and Ashtanga flows, and designed some brand new cross-training workouts I could easily enjoy from the comfort of my home and that would keep my healthy and fit.



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The next change to my lifestyle was I could no longer go to the grocery store and simply walk in to the grocery store. I now had to wait in line to get in. Public health authorities were limiting the number of people allowed in the grocery store at any one time, and this meant I would sometimes be faced with having to wait to get into the grocery store, if the store capacity had already been reached. After a couple of occurrences of waiting in line, I accepted this new experience as an opportunity to welcome a new meditation session in my day. I would often wait for 15-30 minutes to get in the store. What better way to pass the illusion of time than to ground myself, get peaceful, and meditate—yes, while standing, waiting in line to get in the grocery store.

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The next change to my lifestyle was caused when our neighboring province closed its borders to our city. I live in a city that is situated on the shores of a river. On the other side of the river is another province. The river is only a few hundred meters across and is spanned by several bridges. Police had set up posts on each bridge and were stopping all pedestrians, cyclists and motorists from crossing the bridges and entering the other province. This situation was initially quite a jolt for me. I am an avid cyclist and the terrain on the other side of the river is outstanding for cycling. I quickly accepted that given the predicted trajectory of the evolving pandemic, I would not likely be cycling on the other side of the river for the upcoming season. I turned my attention to other options to enjoy cycling for the season. I realized that I had never explored the towns and villages south of the city. When I researched cycling options south of the city, I was very pleasantly surprised to discover that there were many hundreds of kilometers of dedicated cycling paths that offered the cyclist many options for short-, medium-, and long-distance cycling rides. I am looking forward to discovering all the new pathways this upcoming season.

The preceding anecdotes are only three examples of how I was able to look at a situation differently and transcend suffering. In each situation, I did initially feel sadness, frustration, and even anger. I felt like something was being taken away from me. In each situation I asked myself "How is my sadness, frustration and/or anger helping me?" In each situation the answer was "It's not!" And I proceeded to look for others ways to get physical exercise or adjust to a new way of living.

Adjustment was key for me. I needed to change. In the case of my recreation center being closed and not being able to go swimming, I needed to change the form of exercise I did in order to stay physically healthy. My ability to adjust to the change was only possible through an acceptance of life on its terms. If I resisted the change, then I suffered. But if I accepted the change, I opened the door to opportunities for peace.

As the Buddhist teacher imparted to the student in the parable that started this article, it wasn't about experiencing suffering. It was about choosing, or not, to suffer my experience. I chose not to. And that choice allowed me to accept what life was offering me. And the acceptance of what life was offering me, removed suffering and offered peace.

In love, gratitude, compassion and forgiveness...

Rev. Robert Meagher



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2. Poem

Each of Us Can Make A Difference

Each of us can make a difference
When we put an end to *indifference* and
When we let go of our selfish desires.

Each of us makes a difference
When we awaken each day
By showing each other the way.

Each of us makes a difference
When we commit ourselves to have a heart
That beats only with compassion,
Where caring for one another becomes
Our only passion.

Each of us makes a difference
When giving, kindness, patience, and tenderness
Is the way that we pray,
When Love and Forgiveness become
Our song of the day.

Each of us can make a difference
When everything we think, say, or do
Becomes a gift of Love to God.

Each of us makes a difference
When we commit ourselves
To Peace, to Love, to Happiness;
When we commit our lives to God.

Gerald G. Jampolsky

3. Quote or Question

“Peace we achieve when we do not expect anything from the world but only give,
give and give unconditionally what we have and what we are.”

~ Sri Chinmoy ~

CONTRIBUTING SPIRITUAL GUIDES AND TEACHERS:

Spiritual Guidance is honored to collaborate with other Spiritual Guides and Teachers to serve your personal journey toward enlightenment. If you would like to be a contributing Spiritual Guide and Teacher to this e-newsletter, please contact Spiritual Guidance (our contact information is at the very bottom of this e-newsletter).

4. Regiena Heringa – Message From Regiena May 2020

Hello to the Family of Light!

Today I am sending you all a personal message.

The most important step to take now is to unify ourselves within ourselves. Everything in the universe comes down to one point of light. It is the same point of light for everyone, whether you are a flower, or a medical doctor, or a worker in the factory. We are being asked to all connect to the one point of light.

When we go into that one point of light, we are all connected to the same thing—the same Source. The field of frequency and resonance of that point of light is the same for everyone on planet. We all hold the same point of light, the same frequency of that point and the same resonance.

When we connect to God, the Creator of all life—this we do every moment we are conscious of love—we are in that point of light. If we pray to Jesus, or to Allah or to other expressions of divinity, we are all in the same point of light, the same love, the same frequency.

Among other characteristics, the physical world is made up of electricity, magnetism and hundreds of millions of tiny particles which spin, which disappear and reappear from one dimension to another. Our physical bodies do the same. In each atom, in each tiny particle in our bodies, there is again this point of light. It follows us everywhere, whether we live on the earth or elsewhere. Whether we are in body or in spirit. This point of light can expand to bring us into higher dimensions, to meet and exchange with our star neighbours, to commune with angels and guides.

Light is communication through love. All life is held together in this manner. Even life in other planets, worlds, galaxies, dimensions and places beyond our understanding.

It is important that we set up strong, perfect fields of energy of divine energy. Divine energy fields which are established through sincere prayer and deep meditation, are extremely powerful and override the energy fields of the planet. Creating and living constantly in divine energy fields will neutralize the distorted energy fields of electricity and magnetism which now saturate the planet and all living things on it.

No matter how rigorous the physical distortion is upon our earth, this point of light will never go away. It remains “solid” and true within each one of us. It is there to be awakened and to be used. It is our witness and guarantee that we are first light and grounded in this light. Here lie our origin and foundation. And everyone on earth holds this same point of light. And all beings in all dimensions also hold this same point of light. So all of us are asked to connect with and expand this light within us.

How can we do this?

By quieting the body and mind so that there is a space created to become aware of this point of light. Once you are aware of this light, begin to become friends with it. You will feel love, for that is the language of light. You will experience moments of joy, of quiet delight. You will begin to truly realize, that every person in the world has this same light. This will make you very happy. Then, perhaps without even realizing it, you will create tremendous fields of divine energy—open fields of divine energy, not closed ones—open ones which automatically will attract other open fields of divine expression that will connect to yours: fields from earth, fields from space, fields from beyond our dimension. This is the beginning of unity, of a great, magnificent field of divine unity which extends into space and far beyond it into infinity.

This is our future. We will become more proficient in mind communication, more proficient in stabilizing and sending love and *being* love. We will become more talented. Our minds will be able to understand greater concepts in science, language, the arts, and so many other domains. We will become a different people as this new race of humankind emerges. And it all starts with a point of light, the same point of light that is found in all existence.

In divine fellowship,

Regiena



ABOUT THE SPIRITUAL GUIDE AND TEACHER: Regiena Heringa is a spiritual teacher, counselor and messenger and co-founder of the Institute for Spiritual Unfoldment and Interworld Studies (ISUIS). Through her writings, meditations groups, teaching, music and painting, and in concert with those beings of higher vibrational dimensions, Regiena facilitates the expansion of mind and heart in all who wish to participate in the creation of the sacred new world. For more information, kindly visit ISUIS at www.nextagemission.com or write Regiena at rheringa@bell.net.

OTHER GIFTS AND E-NEWSWORTHY ITEMS:

5. Good News Of The Day

The stories below are reprinted from www.dailygood.org.

"To be human is to be a miracle of evolution conscious of its own miraculousness -- a consciousness beautiful and bittersweet, for we have paid for it with a parallel awareness not only of our fundamental improbability but of our staggering fragility, of how physiologically precarious our survival is and how psychologically vulnerable our sanity. To make that awareness bearable, we have evolved a singular faculty that might just be the crowning miracle of our consciousness: hope." <http://www.dailygood.org/story/2482/erich-fromm-the-antidote-to-helplessness-and-disorientation-maria-popova/> **Be The Change:** For another thought-provoking perspective on hope, read Margaret Wheatley's case for "Finding Hope in Hopelessness." <http://www.dailygood.org/story/2171/finding-hope-in-hopelessness-margaret-wheatley/>

"I have heard it all my life. A voice calling a name I recognized as my own. Sometimes it comes as a soft-bellied whisper. Sometimes it holds an edge of urgency. But always it says: Wake up, my love. You are walking asleep. There's no safety in that! Remember what you are, and let a deeper knowing color the shape of your humanness. There is nowhere to go. What you are looking for is right here." Oriah Mountain Dreamer shares more in this beautiful poem. <https://www.awakin.org/read/view.php?tid=909> **Be The Change:** What are you waking up to in this time? What is the call you are hearing?

Writing in his journal, nine year old Abeer speaks of his frustrations with having to always prove himself at school and at home, never being allowed to be himself. His heartfelt and eye-opening words remind us that each child really is unique and should be cherished as such. The poignant message is, "Don't look at who your child could be, but who your child is." As Abeer points out, if children truly are the best gift, "you're not supposed to fix the best gift." <http://www.karmatube.org/videos.php?id=7472> **Be The Change:** Make a conscious effort to affirm the children in your life for who they are.. For more inspiration reflect on Khalil Gibran's advice to parents. <http://www.dailygood.org/story/2411/parenting-advice-from-kahlil-gibran-maria-popova/>

"In my role as director of the nonprofit Mercy Beyond Borders, I am frequently in South Sudan visiting our education projects for girls and our micro-enterprise projects with women and our leadership training of young women for advocacy. Keeping girls in school protects them from early marriages, allows them to develop their gifts, sets them on the path to pursue professional careers. The small loans we provide to women in refugee camps enable them to create sustainable futures for their families, a path upward from extreme poverty. It is easy to believe that we are the ones filling their coffers with coins. But wait. Perhaps that, too, is backwards. It is these widows, orphans, refugees and displaced persons who enrich us. They stand undefended, "the least among us," often with apparently empty hands. [...] With no material wealth to give, such women connect on a deeper level. They share their struggles, their stories, their hard work, their daily living and dying, their dreams. They know nothing of the rugged independence so cherished by Westerners. They need one another, and they know it. And when some small abundance does unexpectedly come their way, they share it." Sr. Marilyn Lacey shares more in this timely and moving essay about those of slender means who give magnificently. <http://www.dailygood.org/story/2484/even-if-you-ve-not-been-fed-be-bread-sr-marilyn-lacey/> **Be The Change:** In this time when our interconnected realities have never been more evident, how can we show up such that 'blessing shifts to the one who needs it most.'?"

"A lot is being said these days. Clarity can be hard to come by, silence even more so. Overwhelmed by the cacophony of voices, I sat down to synthesize some perspectives that shine light on the corona crisis. Most of you will already have come across some of those ideas. They show us what we can learn from the current situation. Corona holds a mirror that reflects our relationship with ourselves, with the Earth, with each other and with the broader systems we live in. Some of the points might seem contradictory to each other. The invitation lies in not trying to resolve those opposites, not even looking for any coherence. Instead let's expand so we become able to hold all the different facets of truth. Whichever of the conflicting narratives around corona you choose to believe, there is one thing we probably all agree on: As a human family, we are faced with a unique moment in history that -- like any crisis -- holds tremendous gifts." Marian Brehmer shares more in this post. <http://www.dailygood.org/story/2485/16-teachings-from-covid-19-marian-brehmer/> **Be The Change:** Reflect on the teachings the current context is bringing into your own life. Do you find yourself changing in this process? If yes, how so?

"In every crisis of my life, learning has helped me find my way through. That means paying attention, allowing myself to feel as well as think, looking at things from different angles, gathering the best info available, trying to connect the dots, and 'living the questions' when the answers elude me." For more than five decades, Parker Palmer has written and spoken about subjects ranging from contemplation to community, the inner life to public life, education to social change. He is known as one of the nation's most thoughtful voices, calling us all to ways of being in the world that honor the human heart and promote a humane society. More in this thought-provoking post. <http://www.dailygood.org/story/2486/courage-and-vulnerability-corona-and-the-wisdom-of-elders-parker-palmer/>

"Time is the substance I am made of," Borges wrote in his spectacular confrontation with time, "Time is a river which sweeps me along, but I am the river; it is a tiger which destroys me, but I am the tiger; it is a fire which consumes me, but I am the fire." We are indeed creatures of time who live with it and in it, on the picketed patch of spacetime we have each been allotted. But if time is the foundational baseboard of our being, what happens to the structure of our lives in a culture of doing? That is what Jason Farman explores in *Delayed Response: The Art of Waiting*." Maria Popova shares more in this post. <http://www.dailygood.org/story/2488/the-art-of-waiting-maria-popova/> **Be The Change:** During this period where much of the world is sheltering at home, how might you shift your relationship to waiting?

"As human beings we are hardwired to search for stability, security, certainty and a sense of control in our lives. And yet, life by definition is perpetually in flux, it is famously unpredictable, riddled with uncertainty and fundamentally uncontrollable. These realities are the ground on which we practice. And practicing on this ground invites us into the heart of paradox. The paradox of finding joy in the midst of relentless change, the paradox of discovering balance in the midst of uncertainty and of finding our true agency in the midst of a surrender." This piece explores what somatic practices like yoga can offer as we navigate the realities of existence. <http://www.dailygood.org/story/2489/yoga-and-our-relationship-to-reality-pavithra-mehta/> **Be The Change:** For more inspiration read Kelly McGonigal's piece about "How to Transform Stress Into Courage and Connection." <http://www.dailygood.org/story/1074/how-to-transform-stress-into-courage-and-connection/>

"Self-quarantined and isolated in her apartment in Brooklyn, Hala Alyan is more aware than ever of humanity's interdependence--suddenly exposed as a raw, pulsing nerve. With all of us inescapably together as we move through this pandemic, how, she asks, can we make room for grief, empathy, and hope?" <http://www.dailygood.org/story/2492/this-is-not-a-rehearsal-hala-alyan/> **Be The Change:** For more inspiration read, "This is a Love Story: Thinking Globally During COVID-19" <http://www.dailygood.org/more.php?n=8406a>

"I think what is being asked of each of us right now [is to become] really fully who we are so that we can be of use. And it is scary. But I think the risk is worth it. And what do we lose and what do we sacrifice if we are not fully present, fully engaged, fully embracing who we are?" Tami Simon speaks with Terry Tempest Williams, a writer, naturalist, environmental activist, and author of several books including, 'Finding Beauty in a Broken World.' <http://www.dailygood.org/story/2493/finding-beauty-in-a-broken-world-terry-tempest-williams/> **Be The Change:** Karuna is a Sanskrit word that means compassion. For more inspiration, check out the KarunaVirus website -- a platform dedicated to finding and amplifying the stories of light, generosity and extraordinary humanity that are surfacing in the midst of the current pandemic. <https://www.karunavirus.org/>

"By the time we're 60, we will have been alive for almost 22,000 days on this planet, rarely, if ever, stopping to watch just one. By immersion into nature in solitude, we allow the natural human to become entrained to the nature of the planet we are part of. I had been camping in solitude in nature -- on a hill over the ocean on the coast of California -- as I have done twice a year for the past 20+ years. I jokingly call it my "People Fast", which I have always assumed I needed since, as a meditation teacher and an actress, what I do in the world involves intense and intimate interactions with people, and I figured that we always need an opportunity to "clear out" and refresh or reground ourselves. But there is more to it than that -- at least for me." Meditation teacher Stephanie Nash shares more. <http://www.dailygood.org/story/2494/seeking-solitude-in-nature-a-meditation-teacher-s-story-stephanie-nash/>

"For years, normality has been stretched nearly to its breaking point, a rope pulled tighter and tighter, waiting for a nip of the black swans beak to snap it in two. Now that the rope has snapped, do we tie its ends back together, or shall we undo its dangling braids still further, to see what we might weave from them? Covid-19 is showing us that when humanity is united in common cause, phenomenally rapid change is possible. None of the world's problems are technically difficult to solve; they originate in human disagreement. In coherency, humanity's creative powers are boundless. A few months ago, a proposal to halt commercial air travel would have seemed preposterous. Likewise for the radical changes we are making in our social behavior, economy, and the role of government in our lives. Covid demonstrates the power of our collective will when we agree on what is important. What else might we achieve, in coherency? What do we want to achieve, and what world shall we create? That is always the next question when anyone awakens to their power." Charles Eisenstein shares more in this in-depth essay. <http://www.dailygood.org/story/2487/charles-eisenstein-the-coronation-charles-eisenstein/> **Be The Change:** For more inspiration check out Charles Eisenstein's podcast series, "A New and Ancient Story." <http://www.dailygood.org/more.php?n=8401a>

"There is a worldview that has come to dominate every aspect of global reality affecting human civilization, the natural world and planetary climate conditions. It can be summarized as the quantitative worldview. The quantitative worldview is in a crisis so deep it is leading, in an interconnected and interdependent world, to deep systemic disruptions, chaotic conditions and signs of complete failure. If this worldview were a patient receiving care it would be in intensive care on life support. There is another emerging worldview that is, from a whole world-whole systems perspective, in the natal unit being born into the world exactly as the quantitative worldview is on life support: this worldview, constituting a universal paradigm shift, can be summarized as the qualitative worldview." James O'Dea shares more. <http://www.dailygood.org/story/2496/powered-by-love-an-emerging-worldview-james-o-dea/> **Be The Change:** For more inspiration, read this piece on "How to Live a More Courageous Life." Put one or more of its suggestions into action this week. <http://www.dailygood.org/story/2158/how-to-live-a-more-courageous-life-kate-swoboda/>

When confronted with fear, the brain will seek relief in the form of old coping habits if left to its own devices. However, there are things we can do to help it change course. If we set the stage for courage, our awareness of what happens to us becomes our greatest ally. "The more you interrupt the old fear-based habits and replace fear-based responses with responses to boost courage, the more you create a 'courage habit.' By living your life with courage, you'll be more likely to make the changes that will lead to greater fulfillment -- whether that's embarking on a new relationship or job, or helping to save the world." In this article from Greater Good, five tips for changes in your life that will make you aware of how you experience fear, and <http://www.dailygood.org/story/2158/how-to-live-a-more-courageous-life-kate-swoboda/> **Be The Change:** Notice how you experience fear in the body. Try practicing with one or more of the suggestions in the article.

"Times of chaos and challenge can be the most spiritually powerful... if we are brave enough to rest in their space of uncertainty. Pema Chodron describes three ways to use our problems as the path to awakening and joy: go to the places that scare you, use poison as medicine, and regard what arises as awakened energy." <http://www.dailygood.org/more.php?n=8413> **Be The Change:** What are your methods for working with chaos? Which of the approaches in the article, if any, resonates most deeply for you. Which one, if any do you feel called to experiment with? For more inspiration, check out this passage on "Cool Loneliness" by Pema Chodron. <https://www.awakin.org/read/view.php?tid=588>

For the fiftieth anniversary of Earth Day, Orion Magazine asked ten authors-- including E.O. Wilson, Krista Tippett, Pico Iyer, and Amy Tan-- one question: "What earthly thing gives you hope at this point in history?" <http://www.dailygood.org/more.php?n=8416> **Be The Change:** What does cherishing the Earth look like in your own life? For more food for thought, check out "7 Things We've Learned About Earth Since Last Earth Day" <http://www.dailygood.org/more.php?n=8416a>

"We live in a rural farm in India, don't have a TV at home, and have bought our son a total of two toys. Most of his clothes are gifted by family and friends. He doesn't eat cookies, chocolates, carbonated drinks, or fast food. He must be one miserable kid, right? If I say, 'No,' one might respond with, 'Well, he doesn't know what he is missing and he is being brought up in an extremely protective environment.' Not true either. He knows the reasons and has willingly embraced them. His secret seems to be that everything has meaning for him. He is not chasing after anything and has no plans for tomorrow. He goes around as if he has an unlimited reserve of energy, curiosity, time, faith and willingness to be engaged with whatever and whoever comes his way. And he doesn't seem to be bothered by being alone." In a time of mandatory self-isolation and disrupted school-based education, this lovely piece by a homeschooling parent offers much to reflect on. <http://www.dailygood.org/story/162/our-5-yr-old-alone-but-not-lonely-ragunath-padmanabhan/> **Be The Change:** For more inspiration, check out, "The Value of Solitude", by William Deresiewicz. It begins with these intriguing lines: "Loneliness is not the absence of company, it is grief over that absence. The lost sheep is lonely; the shepherd is not lonely." <https://www.awakin.org/read/view.php?tid=2148>

Milan Rai is a self-taught Nepalese contemporary visual artist. A self-described failure in school, he now sees the world as his studio. A moment of serendipity set him on his path. Inspired by a butterfly that alighted on his paintbrush in the middle of a challenging project in 2013, Rai began cutting out simple white butterfly shapes from paper and thoughtfully arranging and affixing them to surfaces in his hometown of Kathmandu -- including on trees, bridge pillars, walls, and dilapidated buildings. His signature work, the White Butterfly, started as a simple project in his studio and has evolved into a powerful symbol of global expression, inviting change and interaction in more than 40 different countries across the globe. He shares more from his stunning journey in this interview. <http://www.conversations.org/story.php?sid=637> **Be The Change:** Take a little time to think back. What things did you love doing when you were a child. Have you overlooked these things in your life? Carve out time to return to them now, even if in a very small way. For more inspiration check out "Portrait of an Artist", a short video interview with Rai. <http://www.karmatube.org/videos.php?id=7640>

6. Into The Chrysalis

Reprinted from www.awakin.org.

Chris Corrigan

Chrysalises both inspire and baffle me. The thought that a caterpillar can crawl into a sac made of its own body and dissolve its form and come out as a butterfly is a cliched image of transformation, but holy crap. Stop for a moment and really think about that. Does the caterpillar know this is going to happen? If it does that shows some tremendous trust. If it doesn't, then that shows some incredible courage. It just hangs out there, isolating itself from the rest of the world and changing in ways it can never understand.

Does a caterpillar see a butterfly and go "that will be me one day?"

So yes, we are all heading into our chrysalises. We have all climbed into our cocoons and are waiting for the imaginal discs to come into play and elongate and grow into our new ways of being. We might be here for a long time, and learn some things. We are entering an interregnum that will be as big a challenge as any that humanity has faced.

Have some empathy for the caterpillar who creates its chrysalis and becomes a pupa. It may believe that this is now how things are, and meanwhile, at an unconscious level, the imaginal discs are swirling about in its corporeal soup, with a different idea about what it is to become.

Inside the chrysalis, your ideas about yourself dissolve and life itself takes over. Watch for the small signals, watch for what happens at the edges. Amplify the acts of kindness and possibility that you see in your community and your personal life. Document and grow the new practices you discover be they helpfulness, attention, curiosity, or competence. Stifle the urge to seek cortisol hits from triggering events and social media that make you angry, or the outrage merchants that still crave a hold on your consciousness. Instead, cocoon yourself and study your imagination.

Into the goo, friends.



7. Turning Ourselves Toward Stability And Hospitality

Reprinted from www.awakin.org.

David Mckee

The Benedictine-Camaldolese monk, Bruno Barnhart says it very well: “We humans prefer a manageable complexity to an unmanageable simplicity.”

A complex instability is our typical default setting. Restless with where and how and who we are, we think we need to be somewhere else, or live some other way, or be someone else. We dream up all sorts of alternative versions of our lives and of our selves, and pursue them, without paying real attention to where and how and who we actually are. We expend great effort in trying to get “there,” while what we most need to work at is trying to get “here”...feeling safe and secure in the simple, unmanageable, groundless depths of our own hearts.

And then there is that complex inhospitality that we so often busy ourselves with. In our efforts to control our experience, we put up all manner of complicated walls, visible and invisible shields, subtle barriers and defenses, all in the effort to guard ourselves; to protect ourselves against the unpredictable, ever-changing flow of life, both within and without. Instead of relaxing and welcoming the ceaseless stream of unexpected opportunities that flows around and through us every moment, we exhaust ourselves in vain efforts to bring the stream under our control; we try to make life predictable, manageable, controllable. As a contemporary Zen teacher puts it with wonderful concreteness: we stand in the shower under an open umbrella!

The puzzling thing about all this is that we know it. We all know that things are never anything other than what they are; that how we wish things to be is not how they are. We all know that we are never anyone other than who we are. Also, we all know that our life, our experience, is beyond our control; that rarely do we make good things happen the way we plan, and we almost never are successful in preventing bad things from happening. The umbrella leaks, no matter what we do. We pretty much know all of this to be true, but, alas, we forget it. Carried away by our desires, our fears, our ignorance, we forget these simple truths and press on with our programs for improvement and control. What would help us remember? The perennial answer is prayer and good works. Sounds pretty simple and pretty wise to me. I see no reason to depart from an answer that has been voiced for millennia by our Christian ancestors and by the ancestors in all the great world religions.

The answer is, in other words, PRACTICE. Like a basketball player every day practicing free-throws, or a musician every day practicing scales, over and over, we try to act consciously and mindfully, usually against the grain of our desires and fears. Returning to this intention, over and over, we gradually, little by little, turn ourselves naturally toward stability and hospitality. Yes, we inevitably fall asleep in forgetting, but we also eventually wake up to moments of loving awareness of ourselves and others. Our humility (another key Benedictine value) is in accepting this reality and continuing, however imperfectly. When they were asked what they did all day out there in the desert, the desert fathers and mothers used to say: Well, we fall down and get up...we fall down and get up. In the end, there is nothing special about it.



8. Why We Listen Better To Strangers Than Family

Reprinted from www.awakin.org.

Kate Murphy

Once you know people well enough to feel close, there's an unconscious tendency to tune them out because you think you already know what they are going to say. It's kind of like when you've traveled a certain route several times and no longer notice signposts and scenery.

But people are always changing. The sum of daily interactions and activities continually shapes us, so none of us are the same as we were last month, last week or even yesterday.

The closeness-communication bias is at work when romantic partners feel they don't know each other anymore or when parents discover their children are up to things they never imagined.

It can occur even when two people spend all their time together and have many of the same experiences.

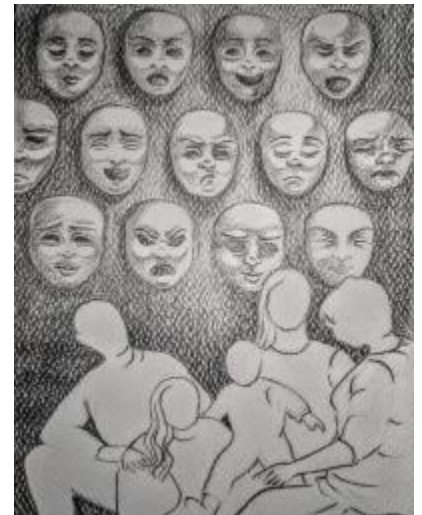
Social science researchers have repeatedly demonstrated that people often understand close relationships no better than strangers, and often worse.

The closeness-communication bias not only keeps us from listening to those we love, it can also keep us from allowing our loved ones to listen to us. It may explain why people in close relationships sometimes withhold information or keep secrets from one another.

So what can you do about it? The British anthropologist and evolutionary psychologist Robin Dunbar said the primary way to maintain close relationships is through "everyday talk." That means asking, "How are you?" and actually listening to the answer.

Too often spouses, and also parents with their children, reduce conversations to logistics such as what to have for dinner, whose turn it is to do the laundry, or when to leave for soccer practice. Friends might run down their latest accomplishments and activities. What often gets left out is what is really on people's minds — their joys, struggles, hopes and fears. Sometimes people keep conversation light with friends and family because they assume they already know what's going on, but also, they may be afraid of what they might learn.

But what is love if not a willingness to listen to and be a part of another person's evolving story? A lack of listening is a primary contributor to feelings of loneliness.



9. Opposite Of Meditation Is Not Action, It's Reaction

Reprinted from www.awakin.org.

Richard Rohr

It seems like our society is at a low point in terms of how we talk about challenging, controversial topics within our political discourse and even our spiritual reflections. I believe the only way through this polarization is a re-appreciation for silence.

Silence has a life of its own. It is not just that which is around words and underneath images and events. It is a being in itself to which we can relate and become intimately familiar. Philosophically, we would say being is that foundational quality which precedes all other attributes. Silence is at the very foundation of all reality—naked being, if you will. Pure being is that out of which all else comes and to which all things return. Or as I like to say, Reality is the closest ally of God.



When we connect with silence as a living, primordial presence, we can then see all other things—and experience them deeply—inside that container. Silence is not just an absence, but a primal presence. Silence surrounds every “I know” with a humble and patient “I don’t know.” It protects the autonomy and dignity of events, persons, animals, and all created things.

To be clear, the kind of silence I’m describing does not ignore injustice. As Barbara Holmes explains: “Some of us allow [silence] to fully envelop and nurture our seeking; others who have been silenced by oppression seek to voice the joy of spiritual reunion in an evocative counterpoint. As frightening as it may be to “center down,” we must find the stillness at the core of the shout, the pause in the middle of the “amen,” as first steps toward restoration.”

We must find a way to return to this place, live in this place, abide in this place of inner silence. Outer silence means very little if there is not a deeper inner silence. Everything else appears much clearer when it appears or emerges out of silence.

Without silence, we do not really experience our experiences. We are here, but not in the depth of here. We have many experiences, but they do not have the power to change us, awaken us, or give us the joy and peace that the world cannot give, as Jesus says (John 14:27).

Without some degree of inner and even outer silence, we are never living, never tasting the moment. The opposite of contemplation is not action, it is reaction. We must wait for pure action, which proceeds from deep silence.

10. The Lost Gift

Reprinted from www.KarmaTube.org.

Writing in his journal, nine year old Abeer speaks of his frustrations with having to always prove himself at school and at home, never being allowed to be himself. His heartfelt and eye-opening words remind us that each child really is unique and should be cherished as such. The poignant message is, "Don't look at who your child could be, but who your child is." As Abeer points out, if children truly are the best gift, "you're not supposed to fix the best gift." <http://www.karmatube.org/videos.php?id=7472>

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11. Sacred Attention Therapy

Sacred Attention Therapy (SAT) references the etymological meaning of therapy: "attending to soul". SAT is a new paradigm of psychological and spiritual growth and development and is based on Richard Harvey's ground-breaking approach to depth psychotherapy, and on his 3-stage model of human awakening (<http://www.therapyandspirituality.com/>). This new paradigm of psychotherapy / counselling is an approach that takes into account the ego-based individual and the desire of the individual to grow spiritually. SAT recognizes the fundamental, true, spiritual nature of humanity and the intense longing for the truth about our real, divine state. SAT involves listening with the whole self to the soul of the other. This is what therapy should always be, or at least always aim at, because this is the profound depth of healing and reverence which two gathered together in search of truth can bring about. For more information about SAT, visit these websites:

<http://www.servingyourjourney.com/Sacred-Attention-Therapy.html>

Sessions can be offered in person, by phone, or via Skype. For more information about booking appointments, please visit <http://www.servingyourjourney.com/Booking-Appointments.html>. To schedule an appointment, please contact me by phone (613-204-0299) or email (rmeagher@servingyourjourney.com).

12. A Course in Miracles Global Community Centre

Spiritual Guidance is honored to host the 'A Course in Miracles (ACIM) Global Community Centre.' This Centre is a meeting place for ACIM students and teachers from around the world to access coaching counselling, therapy, study and discussion groups, courses, a community café for you to communicate with other students and teachers, and helpful resources and links. Visit the ACIM Global Community Centre at <http://www.servingyourjourney.com/ACIM.html>.

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In love, gratitude, compassion and forgiveness...

Rev. Robert Meagher

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