



Living in the Balance

May and June 2016

The Buddhist monk Pema Chodron tells me that those who most annoy me are my greatest teachers. The trick, of course, is in figuring out why they annoy me and what I am supposed to learn. For weeks, I had a number of minor “under my skin” experiences. They seemed to have no relationship to one another; just the randomness of the daily in life. But in the telling of the story to my friend I had a moment of clarity.

I was stumped about why I was so irritated about an email exchange I had had with a woman. I had said clearly in the first four emails that I was not going to do what she asked to which she replied in email number five, “Tell them you’ll be glad to do that!” I continued huffing the story to my friend, “It’s not like I didn’t say clearly in the first four emails that I wasn’t going to do this. It’s like I never said it! She just plowed forward with her agenda.” Then the epiphany. This was deeper than, “Just be a dear and do what I want so I’m not inconvenienced.” She wanted me to accept her view of reality as THE view. Suddenly I was flooded with a dozen times this had happened in the last six months. “You know you’ve got such a way with words. I know you won’t mind writing that piece. And since you’re retired, tomorrow’s deadline won’t be a problem.” “Seriously, I know that medicine did not make you sick. Let’s not blame the medicine.” “You don’t want that entre, you want this one.” “Oh, just be a dear. Tell them you’ll be glad to print those off.” “You don’t honestly believe *that* do you?!”

In teaching mediation, I used perception exercises to help students understand how people see things differently. In one exercise it was possible to see either a duck or a rabbit. In another an old hag or a young woman. It was sometimes very difficult to “see” the duck if one first saw the rabbit; or to see the young woman if one first saw the hag. And students would get annoyed and sometimes indignant if their partner could not “see” the other image.

And I realized that I was living in that perception exercise! Look here, Wanda Meade.....here’s the view I want you to have. No, no, no.....don’t tell me your view. Just see *my* view. And it was more than just “see their view.” I understood that their realities counted and mine did not and they were asking me to *deny* my own. In my Road to Emmaus moment, I became completely conscious that others wanted to thrust their worldview on me. I tripped over a major thread in my life and now that I saw it, I couldn’t understand how I hadn’t seen it before. Right on the heels of that “aha” was the realization that when I’d try to speak my own truth...my own worldview..... to others, the cost had been quite high. If they were not willing to hear my truth or see my point of view, several times the relationship....individual or institutional.....was over.

So wouldn’t it just be easier to suck it up and keep the peace? Around this same time, I had a dream where I part of my heart was being cut out. I realized in my waking life that I was not being true to my own truth and it was cutting away at the heart of who I am. In *The Barn at the End of the World*, Mary Rose O’Reilly says, “few communities can stand an individual’s most pitiful, amateur truth telling. So the soul must stand in her own meager feathers and learn to fly....or simply take hopeful jumps into the wind.” Choice. I stand on the edge. Breathing deep. Wings spread.

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Calendar considerations.....

Eight Day Intensive and Post Intensive Centering Prayer Retreat

May 29 – June 5

St. Mary's Retreat Center, Sewanee, TN
www.stmaryssewanee.org/about/events

The Sophia Institute, Charleston, SC

Journey with No End – Writing and Spiritual Growth, Mark Nepo, May 13 – 15, 2016

The Art of Letting Go – Connie Numbers, June 24 and June 25

The One Life We are Given – Finding the Wisdom that Waits in Your Heart, Mark Nepo September 16 – 18

www.thesophia institute.org

Valle Crucis Conference Center

Women Writers Workshop Session 1, May 26 – 29

Women Writer Workshop Session 2, September 2 – 4

Advanced Centering Prayer Retreat, November 27 – December 4

<http://www.vcconferences.org/programs>

Southern Dharma Center

Spiritual Bypassing, Sand Traps along the Way, May 5 – 8

The Marriage of Yoga and Meditation, May 17 – 22

Zen Mind/Body Zen, May 26 – 29

Unfettering the Natural Mind, June 4 – 11

Developing Insight into Power, June 15 – 19

Developing the Heart of Practice, July 5 – 10

For more information www.southerndharma.org

The Anchorage

Praying Scriptures at Mepkin Abbey

June 13 – June 20 flexible times available

October 3 – 7

<http://www.theanchorage.org/events.htm#Event5>

Summer Dream and Spirituality Conference

May 29 – June 3

Kanuga Conference Center, Hendersonville, NC

Offered by the Haden Institute

<http://www.hadeninstitute.com/summer-dream-conference>





Calendar considerations.....

The Underground Church: Reclaiming the Subversive Way of Jesus

The Rev. Dr. Robin Meyers

June 17 – 19

First Congregational United Church of Christ, Hendersonville, NC

www.fcchendersonville.org

John Philip Newell

Spirituality Conference, St. Philip's Cathedral, Atlanta, GA, Saturday October 29

Mountain Top Lectures, Dawsonville, GA, November 11 –12

Kanuga Conference Center

2016 Christian Formation Conference, June 13 – 17

Faith, Art and Creative Expression, August 21 – 26

Lansing Lee Conference with New York Times writer, Mark Oppenheimer, October 16 – 18

Enneagram Conference, October 27 – 30

Icon Writing, November 13 – 19

www.kanuga.org

Awakening Soul 2016

Tending the Fire with Brian McLaren and Becca Stephens

November 10 – 13

Lutheridge, Asheville, NC

www.awakeningsoulpresents.org

Many offerings for on-line retreats

Spirituality and Practice

<http://www.spiritualityandpractice.com/ecourses>

Abbey of the Arts

<http://abbeyofthearts.com/programs/self-study-online-classes>

Sounds True

Many recorded programs for purchase from all traditions and teachers





About Spiritual Direction —

- Offers a space and time for you to explore, reflect upon, and deepen your relationship with God.
- Provides a haven from the daily busyness of the outer world and opens a time to be still and to reflect on your inner journey.
- Is a companioning relationship grounded in dialogue and discernment.
- Explores ways you may integrate spirituality into your daily life.
- Is not limited to any one spiritual practice or tradition.
- May involve one or two meetings or multiple meetings over time.

You may wish to consider spiritual companioning if you are —

- Longing for a deeper relationship with the Divine
- Looking for a place to dialogue about spiritual questions
- Seeking ways to connect with the Spirit in a more intentional way
- Discerning ways to live in a more integrated and whole way
- Standing at a crossroads in your life
- Exploring new or fresh ways to be in relationship with God

For more information about Spiritual Direction, please feel free to contact me by phone
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All of the photos this month are my work. The heron was at a nature preserve in eastern NC and the other photos were taken at the Eastern State Penitentiary in Philadelphia which is an historic preserved ruin.