



Living in the Balance

November 2016

In August, I waked from a dream. The clock blinked 2:00 a.m. For the next three hours I was flooded with memory of men who had betrayed, belittled or demeaned me. An angry rage welled up. My stomach clinched and I could not breathe. Tears wet the pillow. In the morning I railed about my waking nightmare. Rex asked, "What made you think about that?" "I don't know," I replied, "but I felt the wounds all over again."

And the waking nightmare I thought I'd hike off returned as I listened to a person running for President make fun of, shame and belittle women.....some whom he had sexually assaulted. I felt the same hot poker in my chest and the rise of fury. Remembering.

These last weeks, many women have come forward to talk about their own experiences. And I'm not talking about the nationally covered stories. These women live here in the Upstate and are known in the community. Stories of being groped. Ogled. Grabbed. Invaded. Objectified. Sexually harassed in school....the workplace....on the street. By strangers. By bosses. By friends. And defenders dismissively reply, "Well, boys will be boys" and "men will be men." Not so. At least not the men and the boys I know.

My story started as an 18-year-old fresh out of high school working as a summer employee for a government agency in DC. Shy. Naive. Blushed when spoken to. One of the men I worked with had been very nice to me and late in the summer he asked me to lunch. His casual "What are you doing in the fall" lunch conversation moved to my attractiveness and didn't I want to meet him after work? I was so confused. He was married. Showed me photos of his wife and children. Older than my own father! I remember feeling sick. What had I done to make him think I'd do that? His hand rubbing my knee in the car. I froze. I moved against the door. My introduction to the world of work. 1967. My eyes were opened. This Mad Men behavior came with the territory. Women were harassed. Fact. No recourse. Fact.

So why didn't I report it? Report it to whom? This is the good old boys club. The boss's boss harassed. And they held the power of your evaluation. Your duty and class assignments. And they could and did gossip about you. A little innuendo here. A little sly comment there. To your colleagues. To the district level people.

I've been grabbed, propositioned, demeaned, and threatened. And power and control come in many guises, not just sexual. When I was 28, my boss stole a grant proposal I had written and intended to turn it in as a final paper for his Ed D degree. When I confronted him, he sneered at me from across his desk, "I own YOU and all the work you do! Remember that!" Blood boiling, I leaned toward his desk, "You don't own me. You don't own my work and I will turn you in!" I was scared to death. I knew that he could crush me professionally, but I went to his professor and said I had reason to believe that someone in his class would turn in my grant as a final paper. Harassed and threatened is harassed and threatened. Sexual or not.

This must stop. I will stand my ground. I will speak out. And I will vote.

Roger Sterling to Don Draper, *"Remember Don...when God closes a window, he opens a dress."*
Season One, *Mad Men*



Calendar considerations.....

John Philip Newell

Mountain Top Lectures, Dawsonville, GA, November 11 –12
<http://www.mountaintoplectures.org/page-1108406>

The Sophia Institute, Charleston, SC

Mindful Living, Mindful Working, Friday evening, November 11 and Saturday, November 12
Mindful Advocacy for Personal and Community Resilience, November 18 and 19
The Divine Feminine: Spiritual Evolution for a Woman's Soul, December 1
www.thesophiainstitute.org

Kanuga Conference Center

Icon Writing, November 13 – 19
Iconography with Suzanne Schleck, February 11 – February 17, 2017
www.kanuga.org

Awakening Soul 2016

Tending the Fire with Brian McLaren and Becca Stephens
November 10 – 13
Lutheridge, Asheville, NC
www.awakeningsoulpresents.org

Southern Dharma Center

Seeing Clearly, Opening Up: The Heart of Vipassana Practice, November 17 – 21
Shining the Light of Awareness on Fear: A Vipassana Retreat, December 8 – 12
For more information www.southerndharma.org

Valle Crucis Conference Center

Advanced Centering Prayer Retreat, November 27 – December 4
<http://www.vconferences.org/programs>





Calendar considerations.....

Wild Women Weekends!

Offered at Lutheridge in Asheville, NC
February 3 – 5, February 10 – 12, March 10 –12, March 17 – 19, March 24 – 26, 2017
<http://www.novusway.com/our-programs/adult/lutheridge/>

The Interfaith Peace Conference

The Climate Crisis and Peace
November 10 –13
Lake Junaluska Conference Center, Lake Junaluska, NC
http://www.lakejunaluska.com/events/spiritual_enrichment/peace/

The Anchorage in Greenville, SC

The Anchorage is offering a number of “desert days” now and in 2017
and their beach retreat and Mepkin retreat in 2017
<http://theanchorage.org/events.htm>

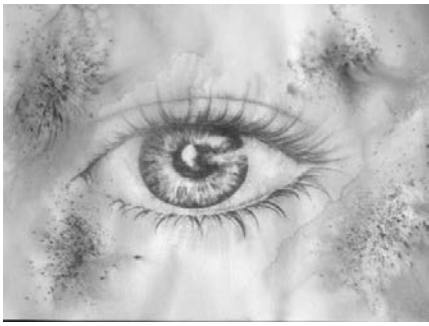
Spirituality and Practice e-courses

Offering a variety of e-courses on demand in many different traditions
<http://www.spiritualityandpractice.com/ecourses/>

“But there is, also, the summoning world, the admirable energies of the world, better than anger, better than bitterness and, because more interesting, more alleviating. And there is the thing that one does, the needle one plies, the work, and within that work a chance to take thoughts that are hot and formless and to place them slowly and with meticulous effort into some shapely heat-retaining form, even as the gods, or nature, or the soundless wheels of time have made forms all across the soft, curved universe - that is to say, having chosen to claim my life, I have made for myself, out of work and love, a handsome life.”

— Mary Oliver, *Upstream: Selected Essays*





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
864-246-3960 or via email at wmeade@meadellc.com

Wanda Meade, M.Ed., Licensed Professional Counselor
Completed Haden Institute in Spiritual Direction Program
PO Box 14940
Greenville, SC 29610



All of the photos in this month's journal are my work. The opening page has my hiking boots. Sturdy and steady and grounded.