



Living in the Balance

September and October 2019

Sometimes my soul acts like she's got ants in her pants. She gets stuck on fidget and will not be soothed. I try to console her. Do you want to meditate? No. Do you want to walk outside? No....too hot....too cold. Do you want to draw or write or listen to music? No, no, no. What's wrong with you? She shrugs her shoulders and continues to pace the floor unable to calm a deeply disquieting disquiet. She gets weary from the continual fray of the world. In our culture, the universe frequently comes filtered through a lens of constant uproar and she feels the depth of the unrest.

My soul goes through these periods of dis-ease and gets totally out of sorts. She does not like this unsettledness. She doesn't. And when she is overwhelmed by it, she works hard to get my attention by continually swinging her leg and kicking the back of my chair and sometimes eating a pint of ice cream. I am learning that when my soul gets "the fidgets" the seat of her unrest lies in feeling as if she's lost the Divine connection. She longs to be held and comforted by the presence of the Eternal.....or at least given some reassurance. But let's face it....sometimes it is a desert of dryness.

Several years ago, I had a dream about a camel. She was securely in my garage and then when I looked again, she was gone. I went up and down the streets in my neighborhood calling and looking for her and thinking, "How can you lose your camel!!??" Those who study dreams say that our dreams come in service to healing and wholeness and to tell us something we don't know and are getting ready to live into. Within three weeks of that dream, I found myself very unexpectedly in a spiritual desert when I had to separate from a group that nurtured my spirit. I entered a period of great sadness. And as I moved through that year, I found it to be one of both blinding sand storms and nourishing oases. What I came to see was that I am constantly called to live in the tension of the opposites. I long for the oases, but am frequently in a sandstorm. What I want.....my expectation.....is often very different from what I get....reality. I have realized that my task is to learn to live in the middle of those opposites without falling apart or being swallowed by despair or distraction.

The camel continues to be the symbol for my journey and knows that Wisdom is provisioning me with what I need to get through the sand storms and long distances between watering holes. I also discovered that it was not the camel that was lost and uncomfortable in the desert....it was me. It is me who must trust that all I need is there even when I feel like I've lost my connection to Her. The camel remains.... waits..... carries what we need for this moment. She and I can hunker down in the desert and wait.....the storm....the sand....will pass.

She teaches me to see and appreciate the oases deeply. She opens my eyes to see them where I did not see them before....the breath of air in my body....the sun on my face...the rain on the earth. The moments of softness are here to embrace and to be present to. These sweet oases will disappear, too. It is all impermanence. Sometimes the sand blinds my eyes. I cannot see where I am going. Then the sky clears. I see the stars. The desert blooms. The Camel Spirit is steadfast in every second. Sand storm....dark night....bright sky.... And my soul...she gently sighs and leans deeply into this moment....this now, present, and only one we have.



Calendar considerations.....

Silent Retreat Weekends

December 6 – 8

Order of Saint Helena, North Augusta, South Carolina

<https://www.osh.org/events.html>

Valle Crucis Conference Center

Centering Prayer Retreat, December 1 – 8, 2019

<https://vcconferences.org/programs>

Information is also available now for registering for one of the hermitages for personal retreat.

Southern Dharma Center

Meditation through the art of Movement, September 28 – October 1

Guardians of the Heart: A Vipassana and Brahma Vihara Retreat, October 5 – 12

Taking Refuge and Trusting our Buddhanature: A Retreat for the LGBTIQ Community, October 17 – 20

Concentration and Insight: Their Development and Integration, October 27 – November 7

Jhanas, Metta, and Dependent Origination, November 9 – 22

These retreats fill quickly. Check the website for wait list.

www.southerndharma.org

Lake Junaluska

Interfaith Peace Conference, November 21 – 24

Lake Junaluska, North Carolina

<http://www.firstlightproductions.org/new-events/>

The Anchorage

Offering local “desert days” and retreats

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

Kanuga Conference Center

Enneagram, October 31 – November 3

Icon Writing, November 16 – 22

Iconography, February 8 – 14, 2020

Lansing Lee Conference, March 13 – 15, 2020

www.kanuga.org

Awakening Soul

Barbara Brown Taylor, Jacqui Lewis, and Larry Maze

November 7 – 10

Lutheridge Conference Center, Asheville, NC

<https://www.awakeningsoulpresents.org/>





Calendar considerations.....

The Sophia Institute, Charleston, SC

A View from your Soul, Caroline Myss, October 18 – 19

Walking Each Other Home: Love and Resilience in Difficulty Times, Mirabai Starr

November 1 – 2

See the website for these and other one day events.

www.thesophiainstitute.org

St. Mary's Sewanee

Clear and Calm Meditation, September 13 -- 17

Celtic Christianity, November 8 – 10

Eight-Day Centering Prayer Retreat, January 5 – 12, 2020

St. Mary's Retreat Center, Sewanee, TN

<http://www.stmaryssewanee.org/about/events>

Anderson Forum for Progressive Theology

John Pavlovitz, October 6, 2019

Brian McClaren, June 14, 2020

Anderson, SC

www.afptonline.org

Montreat

Colnspire, A conference addressing systemic racism in the church

October 7 –10

Montreat Retreat Center, Montreat, NC

<https://montreat.org/events/micl-2019>

2019 Spirituality Conference – Cathedral of St. Philip – Atlanta

From Contemplation to Compassionate Social Action:

The Creative Encounter of Howard Thurman

Lerita Coleman Brown, Ph.D.

Saturday, October 26, 2019

https://www.cathedralatl.org/worship/spirituality/spirituality-conference/?mc_cid=532e01c18b&mc_eid=336a7f55f4





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.
Completed Haden Institute in Spiritual Direction Program
PO Box 14940
Greenville, SC 29610

The photos are my work and were taken in Northern Spain several years ago.

