



Living in the Balance

May and June 2020

The pandemic mantra for many is, "When this is over, I just want things to go back to normal." While I want to say something reassuring, I know that "over" and "normal" have never been reality and those imaginary ships sailed. Change will come....sometimes as I hope and sometimes not....and I must continually find my sea legs. To trim my sails, I have to let go of the illusion that I control my life and that my plans should move forward in a calm sea. The rough and unknown seas are a constant and my sextant needs frequent adjusting.

In light of this pandemic....I hope

- *That we will all stay vertical and remember that we are each a unique, adorable, and annoying human version of "the One."*
- *That our biggest issues continue to be inconveniences like not getting a haircut or searching for toilet paper....remembering and advocating for those who don't have running water, safe drinking water or good sanitation.*
- *That people will truly have a deep appreciation for those who are "helpers." There is a long, long list of them....many of whom feel invisible. Can we make policies that at the very least guarantee them a living wage and safe working conditions?*
- *That we will wake up to the fact that people of color have been dying disproportionately to their percentage of the population and that they were dying disproportionately before this pandemic.*
- *That we recognize the hundreds of ways that our policies and laws systematically cut off access to health care, affordable housing, and a living wage for a large segment of our population.*
- *That we "follow the money" and see who benefits and who suffers by our actions.*
- *That there is recognition that this pandemic has been global, and that pandemics, tornados, hurricanes, and droughts don't care about our wealth or our status or our gates.*
- *That while pouring billions of dollars into the economy now, we focus efforts on restoring communities devastated by both economic and natural disasters before this pandemic swamped them.*
- *That we see the inequities in our educational system that continue to punish generations of kids because they do not have access to many things that we take for granted and that grinding poverty is a root cause.*
- *That we appreciate the hard-working, dedicated teachers, administrators and support staff working tirelessly to ensure that quality learning continues and that kids are fed. And when budgets are on the table, we will support salaries that demonstrate respect for their knowledge and profession.*
- *That we see the food deserts in our community with the only grocery store being a quickie gas station filled with salt and sugar and recognize that food insecurity is real and must be addressed.*
- *That we understand that domestic violence and child abuse are ever present and spike during periods of stress. "Home" is sometimes the least safe place to be.*
- *That this planet is ours to care for and that we are charged to do everything we can to be wise stewards far beyond today. We must look through the lens of what it means to be very best "ancestors" we can for the generations and generations ahead of us.*

My deepest hope is that we will not sink back into our pretend, unconscious world of "normal." We have choice. We have the possibility for deep awareness. This pandemic is another in a long line of wake-up calls. If we don't wake up to this one, there will be others. We must find our sea legs together and believe the deep truth of Ram Dass.... "We are all just walking each other home," and in that walk may we each and all find our way consciously with our collective eyes wide open.



Calendar considerations.....

Given the current “unknown” of many centers and programs, I am listing just the links for those I have no information about. You can check these websites for updates.

Order of Saint Helena,

North Augusta, South Carolina
<https://www.osh.org/calendar/>

Valle Crucis Conference Center

Women Writers Weekend 1 – June 4 – 7 (check the center to see if this in “on”)

Women Writers Weekend 2 – August 27 – 30

Advanced Centering Prayer Retreat – November/December (check center later for exact dates)

<https://vcconferences.org/programs>

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

Southern Dharma Center

Check Center website to see which programs are open.
www.southerndharma.org

The Anchorage

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

Kanuga Conference Center

Currently closed. Check the website for updates
www.kanuga.org

Awakening Soul 2020

Jennifer Bailey, Serene Jones, and Brian McLaren

November 5 – 8, 2020

Lutheridge Conference Center, Asheville, NC

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

The Cathedral of St. Philip

Amy-Jill Levine

12th Annual Spirituality Conference

October 24, 2020

Atlanta, Georgia

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





Calendar considerations.....

The Sophia Institute, Charleston, SC

Events are being offered on-line. Check the website for details

Joan Borysenko, The Mystic Heart – May 1 – 2

Mark Nepo – The Book of the Soul: 52 paths to Living What Matters, May 15 – 17

See the website for these and other one day events.

www.thesophiainstitute.org

St. Mary's Sewanee

Currently closed. Check the website for updates.

St. Mary's Retreat Center, Sewanee, TN

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

Anderson Forum for Progressive Theology

Brian McLaren, June 14, 2020 (check the website to see if this event is going to be held)

Matthew Fox, October 11, 2020

Anderson, SC

www.afptonline.org

Montreat Retreat Center

Montreat, NC

<https://montreat.org/events>

Haden Summer Dream and Spirituality Conference

This event will be on-line!

Judith Orloff, MD, Keynote

May 24 – May 29

Kanuga Conference Center

Hendersonville, NC

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

“It is important to expect nothing, to take every experience, including the negative ones, as merely steps on the path, and to proceed.” Ram Dass





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 on a North Atlantic crossing in September 2019. Hurricane Dorian and the time of the year created rough and high seas. Forced by the weather, the captain changed our course and itinerary seven times in the crossing. It was an adventure and we saw places planned and not. A pilgrimage. The kindness of the people who were and weren't expecting us was amazing. One town brought school buses to get us to our destination. Some drove those buses 8 hours to make that happen!

