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# Living in the Balance

August 2013

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“Miz Meade! Miz Meade! Miz Meade!!” I look up as five boys tussle and elbow each other flinging themselves toward my desk. “Miz Meade! Wegotsomethingtoaskyoudon’tsaynopleasedon’tsay nopleasedon’tsayno! PLEASE! Wewillbegoodwewillbegoodwewillbegoodjustsayyes! PLEASE!” Jamie takes charge. “Shut up, guys! Let me talk! Sorry, Miz Meade. The field trip to Columbia and Charleston. Dr. S says we have to have a chaperone. One teacher for five students. Here we are! Onetwothreefourfive. See? We want you to be our chaperone. Please! Please! We will be good. We will be *really* good. We will not smoke. We will not cuss and we will not fight. PLEASE say yes!”

It is April in the alternative school. We are a public school with about 100 middle school students who came to us bringing baggage from learning issues, to truancy, to disorderly conduct. They came trusting no one and, frankly, with almost no one trusting them. In this year I watched as they built relationships with each other, their teachers, and me....their school counselor.

“Yes. I will be your chaperone on the trip. We’ll talk about details later, but I’ll tell Dr. S that you have recruited me and I have accepted.” Woops of happy follow them as they elbow each other back out the door.

And they kept their promises. Followed the rules. Stayed close. Didn’t have cross words with me or each other. The photos I took capture them smiling and happy on the steps of the state capital, playfully threatening to hang each other in the dungeons of Charleston, and talking over each other at lunch as they recounted scenes a seasoned traveler would have marked as ordinary. Their fresh eyes on old territory gave me a clean view.

But there is another memory with a different view. I recall the glares of strangers as I walked down the street with the boys. At first I was puzzled, but then I saw the look of judgment. Of dismissal. The silent humph. People cutting us a wide berth while they cut their eyes to me and then to the boys. I could hear the unsaid words, “What is that nice woman doing with those juvenile delinquents? Is she a hostage? Look at the hair on those kids. Look at those clothes. Is that a chain hanging from his belt? Is that a skull on his shirt?” I felt the prejudice. I saw the profiling.

I like to think I can spot the muggers, the rapists, the child abusers, the wife beaters, the thieves, and the swindlers. And it is very seductive to project “me” on to thee and feel safe with what I see. White. Middle class. Matched ensembles. Speaking English. Worshipping on Sunday. Members of civic organizations. It’s “them” not like us, we need to worry about. Right? Them of color. Them with the chains on their belts. Them of youth. Them with drooped pants. Them with tattoos. Them with skulls on their t-shirts. Pull my purse closer. Check the car door lock switch.

I grew up right outside Washington, DC. I was raised on “stranger danger.” “Never trust anyone you don’t know” was drummed into my head. “Black. White. Male. Female. Don’t judge people by how they look. Danger wears guises,” my parents preached their warnings. But when I was ten, I was walking to the bowling alley to meet my Brownie troop for Saturday morning duck pin when a nice white man in a sleek, shiny car pulled up beside me asking for directions. He looked like the people at my church. Like my dad. Like my second grade teacher. So I let my guard down. I pointed and talked easily as I gave him directions. Then he said he didn’t really understand and how about I get in the car and show him. My heart stopped. I met evil and he was “just like me.” Evil that was hoping that I couldn’t....that I wouldn’t...see.

The human profile contains both darkness and light. We are each and all a hundred shades of shadow and light. Evil and goodness come embodied in many guises. I want to see others as they are and I have to first be willing to look without judgment and assumption. And that begins as I clear the wedge from my own eye.

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## *Calendar considerations.....*

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### **Southern Dharma Retreats, Hot Springs, North Carolina**

Seeing Clearly, Opening Up, The Heart of Vipassana Practice, Aug 28 – Sept 2  
Nourishing Ourselves with Meditation, Mindfulness and Yoga, September 12 – 15  
For more information about retreats and the schedule <http://www.southerndharma.org>

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### **Greenville Friends of Jung**

Inaugural event! “Jungian Psychology and the Spiritual Journey” with Dr. Jerry Wright  
Friday evening, October 25, 7:00 until 9:15 (CEU’s approved for LPC and MFT. Additional CEU’s applied for)  
<http://greenvillefriendsofjung.com> for more information.

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### **The Year of Altruism Greenville, SC**

The mission of the Year of Altruism is to encourage and celebrate altruism in thought, speech and deed, focusing the community on fostering acts of kindness in its organizations and individuals, thus creating a better future, one life at a time.

Events are scheduled throughout the year.

Opening event, Monday, August 19

For details and schedules to go <http://yearofaltruism.org>

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### **Spirituality and Practice On-line courses**

The Wisdom of a Course in Miracles with Diane Berke, August 4 – August 31, 2013  
Welcoming Prayer: Consent on the Go, August 5 – August 30  
Other on-line courses are available on demand and represent many different traditions.  
<http://www.spiritualityandpractice.com/ecourses/#current>

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### **Abbey of the Arts**

On-Line and on demand

Creative Flourishing in the Heart of the Desert: A Self-study on line retreat with Hildegard of Bingen  
<http://abbeyofthearts.com/classes/self-study-online-classes/hildegard-of-bingen>

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### **Wildgoose Festival**

Wild Goose is a community gathered at the intersection of justice, spirituality, music and art. Our main annual event is a 4-day, outdoor festival hosted each summer in North Carolina. A wide range of interesting speakers.  
August 8 – 11, 2013 in Hot Springs, NC  
<http://wildgoosefestival.org>

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### **Fr. Carl Arico: The Gift of Life: Death and Dying, Life and Living**

Offered by Centering Prayer of Charlotte, NC  
Saturday, September 21, 2013, 9:30 until 3:30  
St. Gabriel Catholic Church, Charlotte, NC  
<http://cpcharlotte.org/events.php>

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### **Asheville Jung Center**

Offering a variety of on-demand courses.  
These courses offer CEU’s for therapists, counselors and MSW.  
<http://ashevillejungcenter.org>





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## *Calendar considerations.....*

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### **Anderson School of Theology for Laypersons**

Rev. Michael Dowd, October 13, 2013

Dr. Walter Brueggemann, February 16, 2014

Dr. John Philip Newell, November 9, 2014

For more information <http://astlonline.org>

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### **Lansing Lee Conference**

Blue Ridge Tales: Stories of Survival, Healing and Faith featuring Rev. Becca Stevens

October 20 – 22, 2013

Kanuga Conference Center, Hendersonville, NC

[www.kanuga.org](http://www.kanuga.org)

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### **The Cathedral of St. Philip in Atlanta, Georgia**

A Day with Cynthia Bourgeault: The Holy Trinity Reconsidered – Harnessing the Power of Three

Saturday, October 26

Contact Jeannie Mahood for more information [jmahood@stphilipscathedral.org](mailto:jmahood@stphilipscathedral.org)

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### **His Holiness the Dalai Lama**

Emory University, Atlanta, Georgia

October 8 – 10, 2013

Tickets and information at [dalailama.emory.edu](http://dalailama.emory.edu)

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### **Kanuga Conference Center**

Icon Writing, November 16 – 22

Enneagram Conference, December 5 – 8

Kanuga Conference Center, Hendersonville, NC

[www.kanuga.org](http://www.kanuga.org)

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### **Modern Mind ~ Ancient Soul**

Thursday evening, November 7 – lunch Sunday, November 10

Offered by AwakeningSoul

Presenters: Lauren Winner and Jungian analyst, Jerry Wright

Lutheridge Conference Center, Asheville, NC

For more information <http://www.awakeningsoulpresents.org/awakeningsoul-events>

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Take time to sit. To be.

Ground yourself in the earth.

Walk.

Smell the rain.

Be present to yourself.

Breathe.





## 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

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For more information about Spiritual Direction, please feel free to contact me by phone  
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*The photos in this month's journal are my work and were taken in various locations in the Upstate of SC where I live.*