



Living in the Balance

February 2015

When I was a visiting instructor for Clemson University I watched my graduate students sit hunched and agonizing over their case notes. “What do you do for fun?” I queried. The six of them would look up and stare with furrowed brows. “You are looking at me like I just asked to you something in Chinese,” I responded to their perplexed faces. Most of these students were seasoned teachers with years of classroom experience. Completing their field work in my practicum, they were almost to the finish line of their graduate degrees in school counseling. Fun was a foreign concept unless you count juggling of work, family, graduate school. “If you don’t learn balance, this counseling work will eat you up,” I said. “Play is essential,” I remarked to their polite, but clearly closed ears and the query, “Ms. Meade, have you set the schedule for case presentations?”

I come from a long line of “doers” and “busy bee-ers.” My brother and I had daily chores and homework which came first above all. Play was “get out from under my feet and go play! And be back before the streetlights come on.” And we knew instinctively how to play. I rode my bike to nowhere in particular. Laid in the grass on my back and imagined creatures in the clouds. Drew pictures. Cut out shapes. Colored my designs. Applied very large quantities of glue to my creations. Held tea parties and played dress up. Climbed trees and built forts.

But at some point as an adult the “doer” gene kicked in and I became a very busy bee. And, with the exception of formally planned vacations, fun took a holiday for about 30 years.

Sr. Joan Chittister talks about Holy Leisure and laments, “We have managed to make most of our play simply a special kind of work. We organize ball teams...turn our running into races...our swimming into an exercise program!” Thanks for the heads up, Sr. Joan. God knows I am good at making something ... ok....everything... into a goal or product! In her sermon *Play as a Spiritual Practice*, Rev. Mary Katherine Morn states simply, “play by definition has no purpose but creativity.....it is about discovery.”

And the Muse of play began calling me. She started showing up when my mother became ill in her early sixties and in the packed days of work and never ending “to do” lists. I felt Her tug as an unidentified sadness and longing. I don’t remember exactly when, but I’d guess ten years ago, I picked up my camera one day and we went out together to see what we could see. At first I saw the usual sites. The flowers. The trees. The sky. Then I found fascination with a statue in a park. I photographed her face....her hands...her feet. Hours passed in a blink.

Now I *make* time to rediscover the joy of child’s play....free and open without expectations. And I have wandered through fields and junk yards with my camera. Drawn Zen circles with colored pencils. Ripped paper and collaged. And I recently took a class in encaustics, which is basically painting with or embedding objects into colored liquid waxes. Armed with a pile of my photos, tissue paper, dirt, twigs, and other “found objects,” I played. Our instructor taught us the basics and turned us loose in her studio. The time flew. I came home like a first grader full of excitement and creations. That evening, I recall the childhood smell of honeysuckle on the backyard fence and then smile at today’s fragrance of the beeswax still lingering in my hair. ©Wanda Meade



Calendar considerations.....

The Role of Religion in Peacemaking and Division

A panel discussion that includes different faith traditions
Tuesday, February 3, at 7:00p.m.
Pylar 126, Townes Science Center, Furman University
Greenville, SC

Natural Spirituality Regional Gathering

February 13 –15 or Saturday only
Held at Camp Mikell in the mountains of North Georgia
Program is being prepared
www.naturalspiritualityregionalgathering.com

Anderson School of Theology for Laypersons

Barbara Brown Taylor
Sunday, February 22, 2015
Speaking at 3:00 and at 7:00 p.m. Two different lectures
Topic: Holy Envy: An Antidote to Fearing the Religious Stranger
For more information <http://astlonline.org>

On-line retreat Lenten Retreat with Abbey of the Arts

The Soul's Slow Ripening: Monastic Wisdom for Discernment
February 16 until April 11
Many other on-line courses including the arts and photography.
<http://abbeyofthearts.com/classes/online-classes/>

The Sophia Institute, Charleston, SC

Writing Down the Light: A Conscious Retelling of your Life's Story with Joan Borysenko, February 20, 21 and 22
A Deep but Dazzling Darkness: Beauty and Courage to Harvest the Presence with David Whyte, March 27 and 28
Engaging Wholeheartedly as Women Leaders with Margaret Wheatley, May 8 and 9
The Endless Practice: Becoming Who You Were Born to Be with Mark Nepo, May 15, 16 and 17
www.thesophiainstitute.org

James Hollis

Hauntings: Dispelling the Ghosts who Run Our Lives
Friday evening, February 27 and Saturday, February 28 from 9:30 until 1:30
Jung Society of Atlanta
<http://www.jungatlanta.com/store/registration.html>

Oprah Super Soul Sundays

Beginning Sunday, February 8, Oprah will be interviewing Sr. Joan Chittister, Richard Rohr and Jon Kabat-Zinn as well as others. You can also view previous interview with Pema Chodron on line.





Calendar considerations.....

Southern Dharma Center

Knowing, Emptiness and Radiant Mind, March 12 – 15

Guided Metta Meditation, March 28 – April 2

In Nature, Our True Nature, April 8 – 12

For more information and the year schedule www.southerndharma.org

Offerings by **The Anchorage** in Greenville, SC

Spring Quiet Day: Merton's Quiet Place Within, Thursday, April 9 from 9:30 until 3:30

Mepkin Abbey Directed Retreats offered in April and July

For more information: <http://www.theanchorage.org/>

Iconography: The Gospel in Line and Color

February 21 – 27

Kanuga Retreat Center, Hendersonville, NC

www.kanuga.org

Montreat Retreat Center

Praying with Julian of Norwich

A Columbia Theological Seminary Spiritual Formation Program

April 23 – 26

www.montreat.org

Greenville SC Friends of Jung

The Red Book led by Randall Mishoe

Friday evening, March 20

www.greenvillefriendsofjung.org

The Haden Institute

Summer Dream Conference and Spirituality Conference

May 24 – 29

www.hadeninstitute.com

Intensive Centering Prayer Retreat

May 31 – June 6

St. Mary's Retreat Center, Sewanee, Tennessee

<https://copnc.org>





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

The photos are my work. The opening page photo is my great niece, Reece, playing in the sand in the park. The other photos were taken in Paris in 2012.

