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# Living in the Balance

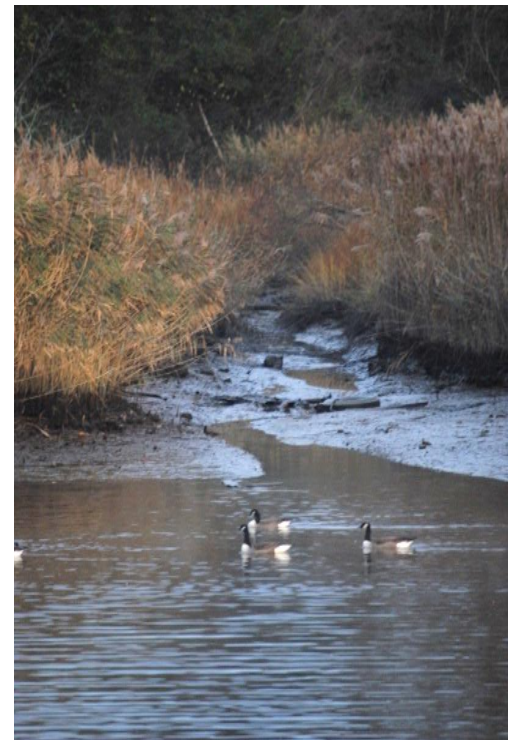
January 2016

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Just after the San Bernardino shootings, Ann and I were sharing lunch and our heavy hearts. We had great sorrow at the loss of more innocent lives on the heels of Paris. We talked about the fear that was gripping our country and the resulting polarization. “I think there is so much fear of the ‘other’ and when we need deep conversations that seek understanding so difficult to get any traction for dialogue,” I lamented.

Ann said she had attended a small gathering by a local group who was offering dialogue between people of different faiths. She was sitting with two Muslim graduate students from a large local university. She queried them about their experiences with the university. “Did you feel accepted?” One of the students said that his supervising professor had told him that she understood that his faith asked him to pray five times a day and that he was free to go as he needed to for prayer. He went on to say that he was washing beakers in the lab on a Friday evening when she came by the lab. “Aren’t you to be at services now?” He told her he thought he’d finish in time to go. She looked at him and said, “You go now. I will finish up here in the lab.” Such a simple gesture saying volumes.

When Ann finished the story, I said, “We *all* need to wash more beakers.”



Owning our story can be hard but not nearly as difficult as spending our lives running from it. Embracing our vulnerabilities is risky but not nearly as dangerous as giving up on love and belonging and joy—the experiences that make us the most vulnerable. Only when we are brave enough to explore the darkness will we discover the infinite power of our light.

*Brené Brown*



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## *Calendar considerations.....*

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### **The Anchorage**

Praying the Scriptures, January 18 – 22, Mepkin Abbey  
January Beach Retreat, January 29 – 31 and February 1  
For more information see [www.theanchorage.org](http://www.theanchorage.org)

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### **The Sophia Institute, Charleston, SC**

Liberate your Creative Life and Soar, January 8 and 9, 2016  
Sacred Crossroads, Connecting with your next Yes! Joan Borysenko, February 19 – 21  
A Day with David Whyte, March 19, 2016  
The Art of Living the Contemplative Life, Kathleen Norris, April 1, 2016  
Journey with No End: Writing and Spiritual Growth, Mark Nepo, May 13 – 15  
[www.thesophiainstitute.org](http://www.thesophiainstitute.org)

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### **Kanuga Conference Center**

Iconography: The Gospel in Line and Color, February 13 – 19, 2016  
2016 Christian Formation Conference, June 13 – 17, 2016  
[www.kanuga.org](http://www.kanuga.org)

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### **8-Day Centering Prayer Retreat**

January 3 – January 10, 2016  
St. Mary's Retreat Center  
Sewanee, Tennessee  
<http://www.stmaryssewanee.org/about/events/2016/01/03/eight-day-centering-prayer-workshop.686155>

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### **Wisdom of the Christian Mystics**

Columbia Theological Seminary Spiritual Formation Program  
April 21 – 24, 2016  
Montreat Retreat Center  
Montreat, NC  
<http://www.montreat.org/event/wisdom-of-the-christian-mystics/>

So, I close  
my eyes  
to old ends  
and open  
my heart to  
new  
beginnings.

*Nick Frederickson*





**Consider adding your name to these websites for latest updates.**

**The Sophia Institute, Charleston, SC**

[www.thesophia institute.org](http://www.thesophia institute.org)

**The Southern Dharma Retreat Center**

<https://www.southerndharma.org>

**Kanuga Conferences, Hendersonville, SC**

<http://www.kanuga.org>

**Greenville Friends of Jung, Greenville, SC**

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

**The Montreat Center**

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

**Anderson School of Theology for Lay Persons, Anderson SC**

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

**Lake Junaluska Retreat Center**

<http://www.lakejunaluska.com>

**The Anchorage, Greenville, SC**

<http://www.theanchorage.org>

**Spirituality and Practice e-courses**

<http://www.spiritualityandpractice.com/ecourses>

**Contemplative Outreach chapters for centering prayer**

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

For last year's words belong to last year's language  
and next year's words await another voice.  
And to make an end is to make a beginning.

*T. S. Elliot*





## 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 are my work. The Great Dismal Swamp, the Pea Island Refuge on Hatteras National Seashore, Corolla ponies, a cemetery in Suffolk, Virginia, Kitty Hawk and Lake Mattamuskeet.*