



Living in the Balance

March 2013

We noticed no one as we shared lunch in the noisy restaurant. She moved the salad greens around on her plate. "How much do I help my ailing in-laws? Do I start a graduate program? Is that where I will find my voice? Then I have to take the GRE! Oh my god! I haven't done that kind of math in 20 years! And then there is my job. Do I stay/go? I'm good at it, but am I really making any difference?" She sighed and spoke of soulful longing. "The real question is....what if I just stopped worrying, Wanda? What if I just trusted the Universe to take me to the next place? I worry about everything and once I start, I worry it to death." We sat and let the questions be the questions.

In my lizard brain, I believe that if I worry X amount about something, disaster will be averted. I know this is magical thinking. But I worried about something and it didn't happen. Woohoo! Worry worked this time. The next time, I don't worry about something and crash! I think, "Oops! Didn't worry enough. Should have worried more. I shall worry more next time!" And I do. Sometimes the lottery of lunacy "pays" and sometimes not, but I find myself hedging my bets.

The heart of it is that I don't want to be caught off guard. I want to keep my disaster pack ready at all times. Worrying and wringing my hands. What if I'm wrong or fail to anticipate?

Do I have toilet paper? Flares? Updates to my obituary?

Buddhist monk Pema Chodron talks about the groundlessness of being human. She says that when I try to control everything fear is completely in charge. And fear feeds fear. Eventually fear keeps my life contracted in a little tiny space where I think I can see it all. Know it all. Control it all. Pema asks me to *lean* into life. All of it. Just let go and jump. And I respond to her, "I will, if you will hold the net." "Cling to that thought," she says gently, "and you will never be free."

Will I free fall into the vastness or will I hide in a self-imposed cell of smallness?

I love to watch someone else *lean* and be open and vulnerable. Sometimes she chooses and takes the chances. She starts a graduate program or writes a book or goes off into the mountains to be alone for three months. And sometimes circumstances put him in between the rock and the hard place. He loses his job. There's a bad diagnosis. Someone dies. What now? What next?

I am startled into consciousness. Today is all there is, girl. Be a spectator or a participant in this moment that is my life.

Recently, I had a dream that literally spoke to me and said, "Get off the bench! Stop denying that you have skills and talents and get out there. Take that camera and your words and make something happen. Be an activist for the kids and teens that have been abused! You've heard hundreds of stories!" I woke up, got out of bed and began writing the outline for an advocacy project.

Of course, the next night I had the "ohmygodwhatareyouthinkingyoudon'tknowhowtodothis!!" gremlin dream. But this project feels like a luscious lean, and I am going to trust and move toward it. It will stretch me beyond anything I've done in my life. I'm scared and elated at the same time. I'm letting the energy come to me. I'm taking it one minute at a time. I want this to be a lotus unfolding.

Jungian analyst Robert Johnson talks about "knowing the next right thing" when you get there. Trust. I will tend this lotus, knowing there will be bugs or drought or too much rain or not enough sun, but I don't care. I've got what I need for this moment. I'm going for it, trusting that no matter what is out there I will figure it out.

© Wanda Meade

Dare
greatly!

Brené Brown



Calendar considerations.....

Southern Dharma Retreats, Hot Springs, North Carolina

Peeling the Proverbial Onion (Zen), March 7 – 10

Eternal Spring: Finding Freshness in Each Moment (Zen), March 22 – 26

In Nature Our True Nature (Buddhism), April 3 – 7

For more information contact Carol Meyer at southerndharma@earthlink.net

Winter/Spring Sacred Studies Weekend

Friday evening, March 1 and all day Saturday, March 2

Jungian Psychology and the Future of Religion

Presenter: Jungian analyst, Jerry Wright

Offered by the Church of the Good Shepherd

Lookout Mountain, TN www.goodshepherdlookout.com

The Sophia Institute in Charleston, South Carolina

The Pilgrim Way: Setting the Direction for a Future Life, March 8 and 9, 2013

Seven Thousand Ways to Listen, May 17, 2013

<http://www.thesophiainstitute.org>

Introduction to Centering Prayer Workshop

All day Saturday, March 16

Quail Hollow Presbyterian Church, Charlotte, NC

<http://qhpc.org>

Whirling Dervishes of Rumi

Thursday evening, March 14

Furman University, Greenville, SC

http://scdialogue.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=category&layout=blog&id=52&Itemid=299

The Potter's Place

Saturday, March 9

Offering a place to encourage people to seek and follow God by providing an atmosphere for personal solitude and spiritual growth.

The Way of Pilgrimage: Walking the Labyrinth

Saturday, March 23

For more information on either or both of these Lenten events, contact Susie Smith (Peace Congregational Church) susiebsmith@bellsouth.net

Transforming Trauma: Contemplative Approaches to Spiritual Healing

Friday, April 12, 9:30 – 12:30 p.m.

Led by James Finley at St. Michael Archangel Catholic Church, Cary, NC

Through the Narrow Gate

A silent retreat led by James Finley who will let the mystic teachings from Christianity, Buddhism and other traditions be the guides.

Friday, April 12 at 5:00 p.m. until Sunday, April 14 at noon.

St. Francis Springs Prayer Center, Stoneville, NC.

<http://jamesfinleynorthcarolina.org>





Calendar considerations.....

Caring for God's Creation

Dr. James Hansen will be featured at the conference via SKYPE.

April 4 –7, 2013

Lake Junaluska Conference Center

For more information www.lakejunaluska.com/caring

Mountain Top Lectures

Bishop John Spong

May 3 and 4, 2013

Amicalola Falls Lodge, Dawsonville, Georgia

<http://mountaintoplectures.org>

Five-Day Academy for Spiritual Formation

May 13 – 18 offered at White Oak Conference Center, Winnsboro, SC

Speakers include Marjorie Thompson and Rabbi Rami Shapiro

For more information <http://academy.cs-staging.com/events/five-day-academies>

Or contact Pat Hansen at pat.hansen@juno.com

Imagine: Montreat's Spring Conference

May 24 – 27, 2013

Presenters include Marcus Borg and Tom Currie

Montreat Retreat Center, Montreat, NC

<http://www.montreat.org>

Summer Dream and Spirituality Conference

Offered by the Haden Institute at Kanuga Conference Center, Hendersonville, NC

May 26 –31, 2013

For more information: <http://www.hadeninstitute.com/summer-dream-conference>

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>

Iona Pilgrimage with Jungian analyst Jerry Wright

September 20 through October 1, 2013

For more information contact Jerry at jwright@morrisbb.net

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>





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

All of the photos in this month's journal are my work. I like to drive around west Greenville and see what I can see. These photos were taken on several different "drive arounds."

