



Living in the Balance

October 2012

Several years ago, I heard former Democratic Senator George McGovern speak at Furman University. He told of visiting an elementary school at lunch time a number of years before and finding some youngsters standing around the perimeter of a cafeteria while other children sat eating. He asked a young boy why he was standing rather than sitting. "We can't sit at the table unless we are eating." When McGovern queried him as to why he wasn't eating, the child responded that he had no money to eat. He was deeply troubled as he recounted the story to his family and said, "George McGovern may not be able to do much about some things, but he can do something about this." McGovern talked to his friend, Republican Senator Robert Dole and with bi-partisan support the McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition program began. The program "helps support education, child development and food security for some of the world's poorest children."

That's a bi-partisan, across-the-aisle, hook I can hang my hat on.

This week someone on Facebook posted a quote from Thomas Jefferson: "I never considered a difference of opinion in politics, in religion, in philosophy, as a cause for withdrawing from a friend." A friend that knows his history told me that Jefferson and John Adams had a falling out that lasted years, but that they finally reconciled. He finished my history lesson by saying, "when Jefferson was elected in 1800, it was the worst political fighting in history...much worse than now...and two other prominent leaders, Hamilton and Burr, were heavily involved in creating the general turmoil of the time. Four years after the election Burr would kill Hamilton in a duel." I guess that's one way to sort things out.

In the early 1970's, I worked at a large junior high school. One of my co-workers was a Citadel graduate with a degree in history. We shared lively lunch time discussions and agreed on almost nothing politically. Our exchanges were sometimes very heated, but we left the table as friends. We were willing to look at the other's view without the need to convert. Several decades have passed since we worked together. The last time I ran into him he laughed and I recall him saying, "Wando. I read your letter to the editor. Didn't agree with a damn thing you said, but you made your case. And I like your writing." Still disagreeing. Still friends.

Right now, I am having a very hard time separating the person...personal and collective...from the religion, the politics and the philosophy. Recently, I posted a response comment to a Facebook post. I said, "The first amendment separated church and state." In response I got a fiery, condescending, judging lecture about Jesus, God, and the Constitution. Boy howdy, I thought. I did not sign on for this.

I'm open to dialogue and conversation. Nothing gets me going like a good debate. But personal attacks on me and my beliefs cross all lines of civility. At first I tried to keep my distance on Facebook and in emails. But just pressing delete or "hide" isn't working for me anymore. So if the tenor of conversations, on-line posts, or emails is consistently toxic and I'm personally demeaned, I'm done. I'm not hitting "hide" or "delete," I'm pulling the plug. I'm "unfriending." I'm sending emails with the reply line, "Don't send me anymore emails." That may seem harsh, but I am not going to hold a tension that is noxious and damaging to my core.

And from my side...I'm opinionated and outspoken. I own it. I also own that I have crossed the civility line before. I seek mindfulness in this regard. If I cross over the line, call me on it.

When I see my one of my husband's cousins, he greets me like this... "And how's my favorite tree-hugging, anti-gun, hybrid driving, liberal, bleeding heart cousin-in-law?" I reply in kind... "Good! And how's my favorite gun totting, truck driving, lock 'em up, right wing, good ole boy cousin-in-law?" We hug and we laugh. Then we sit down at the table to converse and to find a hook we can hang our NRA and Nature Conservancy hats on. That's what I'm looking for.

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Words are powerful. They have the ability to create a moment and the strength to destroy it.

Susan Gale



Calendar considerations.....

The Freedom to Choose Something Different with Pema Chodron

An on-line course beginning October 1
Offered by Sounds True

For more information: <http://www.soundstrue.com/shop/productdetails?p=4071&component=courseevents>

Southern Dharma Retreats, Hot Springs, North Carolina

The Power of Presence: A Metta Retreat, October 5 – 10

The Practice of Conscious Compassionate Awareness October 17 – 21

Fearless Love: Engaging our Hearts October 25—28

Transforming the Judgmental Mind November 2 – 7

Buddhism and the Twelve Steps November 14 – 18

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

A Mini Course on Wisdom with Cynthia Bourgeault

Saturday, October 13

Cathedral of All Souls, Asheville, NC

For more information, contact Robbin Whittington at robbin@allsoulscathedral.org
<http://thecsr.org/event/2012-zabriskie-learning-series-presents-a-mini-course-on-wisdom/>

Cynthia Bourgeault

October 19 –21

Guest Lecturer for the 2012 Jesus the Christ in the 21st Century

Theme for the weekend is “Jesus, Mary Magdalene and the Wisdom Path”

Meyers Park Baptist Church, Charlotte, NC

For more information go to www.mpbconline.org or call 704-334-7232

From Quantum to Consciousness...What (If Anything) does Emergent Complexity Tell Us about God?

Dr. Philip Clayton, presenter

Faith and Reason Lecture Series at Furman University

Tuesday evening, October 16 at 7:00 in the Younts Center

Dreams as Windows to the Soul: A Personal Journey

A dream workshop with Hardy Clemmons

Friday Evening, November 9, from 6:30 until 9:00 and Saturday, November 10 from 8:30 until 12:45

First Baptist Church, Greenville, SC

For more information contact Michelle McClendon at m.mclendon@firstbaptistgreenville.com

Complete details are available on the flyer attached to this journal. THIS IS EVENT IS AVAILABLE FOR CEU's

The Power of Opposite Strengths

A workshop with Hardy Clemmons

Thursday, November 8, from 8:45 until 4:00 at First Baptist Church, Greenville, SC

For information contact Michelle McClendon at m.mclendon@firstbaptistgreenville.com

Complete details are available on the flyer attached to this journal.

THIS EVENT IS AVAILABLE FOR CEU's.

Mountain Top Lectures

Dr. Brian McLaren

November 9 and 10

Amicalola Falls Lodge, Dawsonville, Georgia

<http://mountaintoplectures.org>





Calendar considerations.....

The Lure of Divine Love

Six Monthly Half-Day retreats beginning Saturday, November 3

For deepening and sustaining a life of contemplative prayer

Offered by Oasis of Wisdom, Asheville, NC

For more information, contact Emily Wilmer at info@oasisofwisdom.net

Rabbi Rami Shapiro

"Biblical Wisdom for Post-Biblical Times: Learning to Read the Bible like a Mystic"

October 12 – 14

The Episcopal Convent of Saint Helena, Augusta, Georgia

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

(Rabbi Shapiro writes a monthly column for Spirituality and Health Magazine and is the author of numerous books.)

Lansing Lee Conference with Eric Metaxas

October 28 – 30

Kanuga, Hendersonville SC

For more information www.kanuga.org

2012 Lake Junaluska Peace Conference, Love in Action: The Transformative Power of Nonviolence

November 8 – 11, 2012

2011 Nobel Peace Prize winner, Ms. Leymah Gbowee will headline the conference.

www.lakejunaluska.com

Advanced Centering Prayer Retreat

Becky Hannah, facilitating

Sunday, November 25 – Sunday, December 2

Valle Crucis Retreat Center, Valle Crucis, NC

www.highsouth.com/vallecrucis/

Lillian Daniels preaching at Peace Congregational Church – Clemson

Sunday evening, November 25 at 5:00

Looking into 2013!

Engaging Faith – Brene Brown and Yvette Flunder

Offered by Nexus and held at Furman University

Friday evening, February 22 and Saturday, February 23

CEU's available for this event

www.engagingfaith.org

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>





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

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All of the photos in this month's journal are my work. The photo on page one is taken of my computer screen. The other photos are of signs. I am fascinated by signs. I have taken photos of many on my travels. The signs in this month's journal are from Maine and Baltimore.