



Living in the Balance

October 2014

She stares at her coffee cup, “I wake many mornings having this conversation with my ex’s family. I want them to ‘get’ why I left. I want them to see my side. I want them to know his abusive behavior. I do. I do,” she looks away with sadness in her eyes. “Maybe I just want to be right.”

I know a lot of her story and its pain. “If this were my life,” I say, “It wouldn’t be a matter of my wanting to be right...I want to be heard. It’s me and Marvin Gaye singing, ‘Can I get a witness? Witness? Witness? Can I get a Wi-it-ness?’” I sing. “I hear you....you want his kids to punch your ticket and validate the story. And SEE!”

She sighs, “Why couldn’t I see him for who he was a long time ago? And why can’t his family and our friends see?!”

Kierkegaard tells us that, “Life must be lived forward, but can only be understood backwards.” A woman abused by her grandfather at five sees that experience through different eyes and understanding at 12 and 16 and 25 and 45. A newly hired executive sees the company’s corruption only in retrospect. The hopeful bride sees only a smiling husband on her wedding day and does not imagine the years of denigration ahead of her.

When I’m wringing my hands over my own lack of insight and wondering how I could ‘not see’ something I so plainly ‘now see,’ my husband calmly says, “You don’t know what you don’t know until you know it.” And while the pain of that knowing can be crushing at the same time I recall times when coming to consciousness freed me.

When the water clears and the mud settles, I think about “what now?” Whistleblowers and key witnesses to crimes usually receive some type of guarantee of protection and speaking truth to “power” can literally be deadly. Think domestic violence. And if not a literal death, then the death of relationships or financial security or status. True. But owning my truth has also given me the power to unshackle myself and walk away from situations and people and groups that had become unhealthy, unsafe or even toxic for me. And to not leave in anger, but in acknowledgement that my inner voice had spoken letting me change course...set new coordinates...trim the sails.

To be sure telling my truth sometimes scares the bejeebers out of me and my knees can knock, but the consequence of not speaking or acting can be death to my soul. I used to tell my high school students that if someone tells you over and over and over again that you are an onion, one day as much as you don’t want to, you will sniff your armpit to see if it is true. The subtle or blatant brainwashing of a truth denier demands that I be the one who is wrong or crazy or confused or to blame. But once I “see,” I cannot deny my own consciousness any more than I can jam toothpaste back into the tube. It’s out there.

Child abuse happens. Companies become corrupt. Women and men suffer great harm in relationships. Others want us to be who they want us to be and try to gag us for raising our voice. While there may be not ‘live’ witnesses to this suffering, I believe the Divine Spirit Witness is present in all situations, standing with me when I speak my soul voice even if only to myself in the mirror. And sometimes...even when I long for others to validate my ticket...that is enough.



Calendar considerations.....

The Sophia Institute

Jean Shinoda-Bolen, October 3 and 4
A Spirituality for the 21st Century, Matthew Fox, October 24 and 25
The Awakening Heart, the Contemplative Alliance, November 7 and 8
Charleston, SC
www.thesophiainstitute.org

Sister Joan Chittister

“Uncommon Search for Common Ground”

Tuesday evening, October 28 at 6:00

USC Law School Auditorium, Columbia, SC Free and open to the public

Southern Dharma Retreats, Hot Springs, North Carolina

Awakening the Bodhisattva Within, October 10 – 13

The Many Facets of Vipassana Practice, October 12 –24

For more information about retreats and the schedule

<http://www.southerndharma.org>

Upstate Interfaith Dinner Dialogues

Offered by Interfaith Forum, Greenville, SC

Thursday evening, October 30, 6:30 until 9:30 p.m.

Groups of 8 to 10 people of various faiths gather in homes to enjoy a simple meal and engage in a moderated discussion about the role of faith and spirituality in their lives.

Free! But you must register by October 23 www.interfaithforum-sc.org/register or contact Joel at 864-346-3107.

The Song of Songs

Lead by Cynthia Bourgeault and Rabbi Rami Shapiro, October 17 -19

St. Mary's Retreat Center, Sewanee, TN

www.stmaryssewanee.org

Diana Butler Bass

October 10 – 12 at First Congregational Church, Hendersonville, NC

Bass will present three lectures

For more information and to register www.fcchendersonville.org or 828-692-8630

Barbara Brown Taylor

October 17–19

Meyers Park Baptist Church, Charlotte NC

Contact Anne Clarke aclarke@mpbconline.org

Archetypal Dreams as Spiritual Journey

Lead by Dr. Jenny Yates

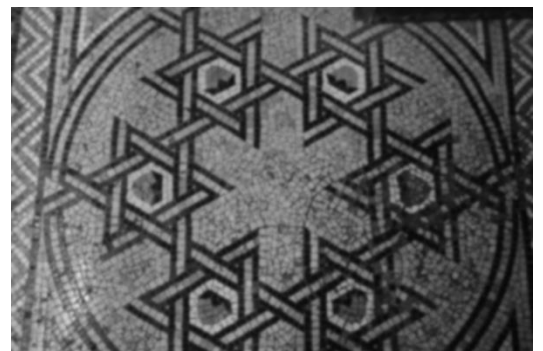
Friday, October 17 from 7:00 until 9:15 p.m.

Offered by Greenville Friends of Jung

St. James Episcopal Church, Greenville, SC

\$20 at the door. 2 CEU's available for additional \$15.

www.greenvillefriendsofjung.org





Calendar considerations.....

Kanuga

Lansing Lee Conference, Experiencing Eternity, Dr. Eden Alexander,
October 26 – 28
www.kanuga.org

Mountain Top Lectures

Rabbi Rami Shapiro, November 7 and 8
Davidsonville, GA
www/mountaintoplectures.org

A Day of Silence and Contemplative Prayer

Lead by Joan Ricci Thome
Saturday, November 1
The Oratory, Rock Hill, SC www.rockhilloratory.net

The Emergence Retreat

November 7 – 9
Outdoor Lab in Clemson, SC
Providing a space where LGBTQ young adults can come together with their families and supportive faith communities for the purpose of promoting love, acceptance and understanding.
Sponsored by Peace Congregational Church UCC Pendleton
<http://emergenceretreat.com>

The Cathedral of St. Philip

The New Emerging Spirituality with Dr. Lauren Artess, October 25
Atlanta, GA
www.stphilipscathedral.org

AwakeningSoul

Seeking the Sacred Thread – Celebrating the Heart of Life
John Philip Newell and Barbara Brown Taylor
November 6 – 9
Lutheridge Conference Center
Asheville, NC
<http://www.awakeningsoulpresents.org/>

Anderson School of Theology for Laypersons

Dr. John Philip Newell, November 9, 2014
Speaking at 3:00 and at 7:00 p.m.
For more information <http://astlonline.org>

Valle Crucis Conference Center

Advanced Intensive Centering Prayer Retreat
November 30 – December 7
Valle Crucis, NC
<http://www.highsouth.com/vallecrucis/events.php4>





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 in this month's journal are my work. They were taken in Prague, Czech Republic in September 2014.

