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# Living in the Balance

September 2011

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Tell me, what  
is it you plan to  
do with your  
one wild

precious life?

Mary Oliver

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Spend the  
afternoon.

You can't take  
it with you.

Annie Dillard

Acadia National Park in Maine started out like all our summer vacations, a trip to somewhere new and a good place to escape the South Carolina heat. But over the twenty-plus years we've been going, we have morphed from tourists to pilgrims. It was a transformation from sightseeing to insight seeing. We went from taking every tour and dining at every restaurant to seeking out the quietest trails and eating in our little cottage. The natural beauty and ruggedness of the coast reconnect my being to the universe in an intentional and healing way. Maine has become renewal and retreat. In short.....Maine is sacrosanct.

I know my interest in Acadia started as a little girl. My mother worked for the National Park Service for thirty years, and she'd bring home brochures of all the parks for my brother and me for our elementary school projects. The Acadia brochure was always in her stack, and she'd say, "Now, that's one place I really want to go." But she never did.

If my mother had a bucket list, I imagine Maine would be at the top of it. What else might be on that list, I haven't a clue. My mother was not one to pour out her soul, at least not to me. She was busy being my mother, and for her, being a mother did not include sharing her life's longings with her children. She kept her own counsel. She advised me to do the same; a piece of advice I sometimes followed and sometimes didn't. But keep her own counsel she did, so it was no surprise when she was diagnosed with lymphoma at sixty-three that she said little to me or anyone else about this part of her journey. Instead she talked to me at length about staying on my own path and living life to the fullest.

My mother's death was a wrenching watershed for me. I was there when she drew her last breath and I watched her spirit cross the thin place between this world and the who-knows-where-world-of-not-this world. Oh, I knew in my head that time on this earth does indeed run out. But now I knew it in my heart and my gut and every cell of my being. Nothing lasts forever. And the one person I thought would always be there was dead at sixty-seven. I had just turned forty-five.

This year as I sat on my pilgrim's perch in Maine, I wondered if our spirits get to live out our bucket list and do what we didn't finish on this side of the veil. How I want my mom to see Maine. To breathe in her cool air, feel her foggy mist, see her amazing granite walls, hear her crashing seas. And there is a part of me that feels my mom's presence there. And she is reading there on the bench as I wander the gardens at Thuya and Asticou, and she looks up occasionally to watch me photographing the rain filled blooms. And she is there at Jordan Pond, eating popovers and drinking lemonade. And there she is quietly resting on a rock at Otter Cliffs taking in the beauty she wouldn't need to put words to. She's always been a pilgrim at heart.

If my mother had a bucket list, she'd have kept it in her jewelry box. Under her "mad money" envelope and earrings and going-to-church necklaces and those little baby bracelets my brother and I wore home from the hospital. A little lined, folded up white piece of paper with Acadia at the top.

And even now, I think of my own bucket list, and I hear my mother's spirit telling me to live my life. She'd say, "Write your list of dreams in big bold magic marker and keep a copy on your bathroom mirror and in your car and on your computer. Grab hold. Don't miss any moment. Don't bury your dreams on a little piece of paper in your jewelry box. Today is all there is, and today is a good day to head for Maine."

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*Calendar considerations.....*

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**Remembering September 11: Looking Forward Toward Compassion,  
Peace and Reconciliation**

September 11 at 4:00 p.m.

Strom Thurmond Institute at Clemson University

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**From the Ground Up: Furman University's Interfaith Conversation**

Hosted by the Office of the Chaplain

September 11 at 5:00 p.m. Interfaith Service of Healing and Hope (Daniel Chapel)

September 12 at 7:00 p.m. When Religion Becomes Lethal (Daniel Chapel)

September 14 at 7:00 p.m. Clergy Beyond Borders (Daniel Chapel)

For more information [www.fromthegroundupfurman.com](http://www.fromthegroundupfurman.com)

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**Dr. Amy-Jill Levine lecturing September 10 and 11**

First Congregational Church, UCC

Hendersonville, NC

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**The Snail's Pace in Saluda, North Carolina**

Dreams: A Way to Listen to God, September 16 – 18, 2011

Introduction to Celtic Spirituality and Celtic Spirituality Weekend Retreat, October 27 and October 28 – 30

Advent Retreat, December 2 – 4

For more information go to [www.thesnailspace.org](http://www.thesnailspace.org)

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**Sometimes Words are Not Enough: Demystifying the Soulful Language of Creativity**

**A Dream Workshop**

Offered by First Baptist Greenville and NEXUS Center. Facilitated by Heidi Darr-Hope  
Friday evening, September 30 and all day Saturday, October 1, CEU's available for LPC's  
To register, contact Sandra Davis at First Baptist by September 16. 864-370-2522 ext 111

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**Southern Dharma Retreat Center in Hot Springs, North Carolina**

Wisdom: The Solution to all Human Problems, September 8 – 11

Lovingkindness: Cultivating the Open and Wise Heart, October 10 – 16

For more information [www.southerndharma.org](http://www.southerndharma.org)

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**John Philip Newell Conference: A New Harmony**

Saturday, October 8

The Cathedral of St. Philip, Atlanta

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

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**Holy Listening in a Circle of Trust – A Seasonal Retreat Series**

**based on the work of Parker Palmer**

September 2011 – July 2012 – Four sessions – Fall, Winter, Spring and Summer

Black Mountain, North Carolina

For more information, contact Karen Jackson at [karen@kljackson.net](mailto:karen@kljackson.net)

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**Anderson School of Theology for Laypersons**

Fall Lecture Series, Sunday, October 16 – lectures at 3:00 p.m. and 7:30 p.m.

“Becoming Who We Are Called to Be” and “Community Beyond Our Dreams”

Dr. Luther Smith, Professor of Church and Community, Chandler School of Divinity

St. John's United Methodist Church, Anderson, SC ([astl.update@gmail.com](mailto:astl.update@gmail.com))

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## *Other Events .....*

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### **Peace Conference – Poverty, Abundance, and Peace: Seeking Economic Justice for All God's Children**

Speakers include Senator George McGovern, Dr. David Beckman (president of Bread for the World),  
And Bishop Nkula Ntamblo of the Katanga Conference in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.  
November 13 – 15, 2011  
For more information, go to [www.lakejunaluska.com](http://www.lakejunaluska.com)

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### **Kanuga in Hendersonville, NC**

Krista Tippett host of NPR's "On Being" formerly "Speaking of Faith" will keynote  
Lansing Lee Conference Listening to Faith, December 4 – 6  
For more information see [www.kanuga.org](http://www.kanuga.org)

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### **Contemplative Wisdom School with Cynthia Bourgeault**

This is a Wisdom School being offered at Valle Crucis near Boone, NC  
You must attend both "schools" which are being offered on October 13 – 18, 2012  
and March 10 – 14, 2013. Even though these are more than a year away, if you have interest,  
I suggest contacting Robbin Whittington at 828-274-2681 or [robbin@thecsr.org](mailto:robbin@thecsr.org) soon!

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### **Awakening the Soul Advent 2011 – December 4 -8**

John Philip Newell is the featured presenter  
Lutheridge Retreat Center, Asheville NC  
<http://www.illmi.net/adult/advent2011.aspx>

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### **Spirituality and Practice E-Courses**

The Soul and Mussar Practice, September 5 – October 5  
Contemplative Discernment, October 10 – November 4  
Creating Your Life with James Hollis, October 10 – November 4  
Centering Prayer with Cynthia Bourgeault, November 7 – December 2  
[www.spiritualityandpractice.com/ecourses](http://www.spiritualityandpractice.com/ecourses)

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### **Women of Wisdom, Transforming our Lives, Transforming our World**

October 6 – 9  
Speakers include Barbara Marx Hubbard, Joan Borysenko and Carolyn Rivers  
The Sophia Institute in Charleston, SC <http://thesophiainstitute.org>

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### **The Order of Saint Helena Episcopal Convent**

Healing Back into God, September 16 – September 18  
Mindfulness and the Wheel of Health, October 1  
I Have Called You by Name: An Advent Retreat, December 9 – December 11  
For more information go to [www.osh.org](http://www.osh.org)

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### **Engaging Faith Conference featuring Brian McLaren and Yvette Flunder**

Friday evening, February 24 and all day Saturday, February 25, 2012  
Offered by NEXUS and to be held at Furman University.





## 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  
864-246-3960 or via email at [wmeade@meadellc.com](mailto:wmeade@meadellc.com)

Wanda Meade, M.Ed., Licensed Professional Counselor  
Completed Haden Institute in Spiritual Direction Program  
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*The photo on the first page is of me and my mom taken Thanksgiving 1993. It was our last together as she died in March 1994. The other photos are my work and were taken on Mt. Desert Island in the Bar Harbor area of Maine. The little cottage on this page is number 7A at Emery's on the Shore. Our retreat.*

