



The Dignity Project

Guiding the Way

Promoting awareness and understanding of dignity
through education, communication and spirit.

Navigating Chaos 14

Pattern Breakers

Today when I noticed I was resisting the events in the news, I remembered an experience thirty years ago when my relationship with my mother was agonizing. I headed out into the protection of the Ponderosa forest and the familiar deer path that wound along the mountainside to walk and talk out frustration and confusion. With my bow in hand and a quiver of arrows over my shoulder, I intended to hunt down what had been haunting me like an elusive enemy.

Through dialoguing with myself, and using trees as targets to emphasize emotion and determination to narrow in on the source of angst, I experienced a visceral liberation from my mother's lies that I could not separate from when I was a child. For the first time, I genuinely felt the rightness in my mother being my mother, and from then on I could embrace her as what I'd needed if I was to learn about freedoms and personal dignity. Having freedoms withheld and my wholeness not seen was the setup for someday returning to myself with awareness that I was not so much fighting my mother as I was struggling to hold onto the truth of my own goodness.

We all have a connection to that goodness through the memory of our birth and having chosen to come here to learn, to be pattern-breakers when the conditions are right, to become aware of and respect the nature of evolution and how lineages pass down strengths and weaknesses, wisdom and festering wounds. Today I don't regard anyone as innately 'evil' or unworthy of life, rather, we are all vulnerable to corrupt influence, married to generational wounds and connected to a deep reservoir of violence perpetuated by collective fear and immaturity.

When we align with the mind our actions reflect partial information, reactionary impulses, and stored misperceptions in our lineage. To be pattern-breakers we need to be guided to the heart, to see the object of our disdain from a larger perspective. I was freed from the mind when I considered my mother not as the perpetrator, but the one who agreed to birth me and to provide certain components of my curriculum and deprive other needs. I not only could accept that she belonged in my story, I saw that she, like any antagonist, contributed mightily to my experiencing the dynamics of containment and freedom, hardship and endurance.

Many times I have tried to imagine a life without friction or challenge, without the fire of

anger, and I always end up wondering how I would grow. Could I develop without contrast? How would I know the strength of my own legs if I didn't fall and get up again? Even feeling anguish shows me how deeply I love, or how strongly the mind resists the nature of Life. As humans we inherit that mind. Can we see that it is useless in discerning reality? Can we notice how it never settles, but lives in perpetual motion amongst all the loose-flying thoughts that convolute the experience of being human?

I came away from the forest that day feeling lighter. I no longer had to fight what was. I no longer had an enemy. I could live out my agreement with my mother: to witness her transgressions without judgement, and to free myself from the bondage of lies, then to guide others to similar freedom. Would I ever again wish for my mother to be other than she was? I could hold her in esteem, for the courage it took to be human and experience incest and the complications that arise from that. I would no longer fault her for the moments that she wavered in expressing love and succumbed to a nightmare she couldn't remember. And just as important, I could now respect myself for living alongside her woundedness, trusting that the experience would inform me and provoke exploration of my deep-seated sensitivity to being blamed as the problem. If I had continued to listen to thoughts that my relationship with her was 'wrong', I would remain in bondage to the mind and never discover the love and gratitude I now feel for her and the role she played in my life.

Animals don't question their existence. Thought, or mind, does not interrupt their participation with life. The deer taken down by a mountain lion outside my cottage last week didn't think she would die that night as she slept with her fawn. She lived, until she died. She was part of the orchestration of Life. We too wish to live and die without thought, without blame or resistance, do we not? When Death comes to prepare us to go with It, we will each have lived our story, within the larger story of humanity. The deer, the refugee, the soldier, the youth on the city street, live and die in the orchestration of Life that does not have the faculty to judge, or to act unilaterally. I find peace in this.

I don't expect peace on Earth, though I imagine evolution toward increased awareness of our actions and admission of our fears. What is most concerning to me is whether we are capable of embracing diversity. It is challenging to live alongside even one person who sees life differently, or requires patience on our part for habits different from ours! Then there is a further challenge to see that all humans are equal in terms of our right to be on Earth and to subsist or be sustained while we live our necessary stories. This may require us to see Life as being in service to each of us. When we see Life as against us and that we are here to suffer without restoration or even understanding, the mind is telling the story, not the heart. I am most encouraged by honest and open sharing that is happening between peoples all over the world, such as The Desmond Tutu Center for Peace, Reconciliation and Justice, Israeli journalist Yossi Halevi's letters to his Palestinian neighbors, or Zen Buddhist Bernie Glassman bearing witness at Auschwitz, and many others who are bravely facing sources of anguish.

We are an evolving species. I see Earth as a school for humanity. The key to our

redeeming a position on Earth, so to continue learning about the dynamics of the cosmos and the nature of God, to me, lies in fostering a collective viewpoint that includes accepting our baser actions as a lack of information about one another and not cultivating compassion and intuition - and seeing that this is natural, given that we are still learning about human nature and its potential.

Stating again and again that violence is wrong and should not be happening doesn't change anything. It is happening, and it has deep roots. Some of those roots may be weakening and break off. Some old ways may be ready to die because Life is evolving us, and we must come along. Distancing ourselves from violence, hatred, and the divisions that make us feel alone, will not work. This can increase a feeling of despair because it does not unite. Masking the issues with blame that doesn't consider history and evolution will keep us from ourselves, from the potential we each have to accept human imperfection and live each day for what it brings. Like my mother, there are billions of humans who haven't found the inner compass. I believe that they will, somewhere, sometime. Compassion innately includes potential to evolve. Flesh is vulnerable to violations within the domain that gave rise to it. Self/soul is not vulnerable to the same violations, but is bound to the laws of evolution, and consciousness must evolve one piece or one step at a time. Violations are part of the evolving themes that we live out and utilize as particular templates for growth. Challenging experiences involving violence are horrific to the soul, but are not 'wrong'. Most of us have horrific memories of people's behavior, from verbal attacks to betrayal of loyalties and agreements, but they are not wrong, as in 'they shouldn't be happening.' They are part of human behavior. They are part of this species. When we expect humans to act with full respect for one another we are forgetting the wounds, the generational 'holes' in awareness and understanding.

Can we bow to the chaos and insanity around us as the nature of the human experiment? Resisting it is insanity. The human race is evolving in terms of formal education, yet still unequipped to meet the global face of humanity in all its diversity and historical differences. We are prone to aggressiveness when threatened and fearful of what we do not understand. There are humans who seem commissioned to add perspective and love and kindness, but even these emissaries have challenges and missing aspects of awareness. These humans are pattern-breakers. The pattern-breaker is here to reset the potential, to initiate change that embraces the past but is not afraid to endorse what has been heretofore untried. The pattern breaker speaks from personal experience and does not judge what 'had to be'. Now, in this world, I sense that there are many people who do not disrespect their lineage or the path their ancestors had to tread, and they are positioned to contribute from a place of former seeming-brokenness, now whole.

*All around the world people are crying out for food, for safety, for justice.
My heart embraces their cries with love, not sadness.
They will all gain from this life.*

*And I will gain by being alive when so many perish,
for I will know, evermore clearly,
that I am to serve those who remain to dignify their human experience.*



