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Ordinary Life

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Sacred and Scattered

It is Time to Change our Minds

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The Big Bang

“I don't know if it's good or bad that a Google search on "Big Bang Theory" lists the sitcom before the origin of the Universe” ~ Neil deGrasse Tyson

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It surprises me sometimes how at the largest and smallest, from the cosmic, to the cellular level there is familiarity, a form of continuity.

Just like with the beginning of space/time as we understand it, there was a Big Bang a collision, a scattering a reforming, a reshaping and transforming, there is the same process at every level down to what is too small for us to see.

At every level there is a force, seeking to unite, to pull along in evolution and transformation.

“Matter is spirit moving slowly enough to be seen.” ~Pierre Teilhard de Chardin.

Psychologically and socially, there Big Bang collisions, scattering, reforming, reshaping and transforming, there is the same process at every level. But in this realm, we can be trained to see. We can be part of the evolution and transformation.

We can choose to unite what has been scattered. One way is to understand and free ourselves from our thought patterns, judgments, and attachments.

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The Big (G)nab

Teilhard de Chardin asserts that as life becomes more complex and conscious, it becomes more integrally whole. He says that **“those who follow Jesus become wholemakers, uniting what is scattered, creating a deeper unity in love.”**

What do you do to train yourself to turn from comparison and competition to compassion and unity?

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Infinite

“If the doors of perception were cleansed, everything would appear to man as it is, infinite. For man has closed himself up, till he sees all things through narrow chinks of his cavern. ~William Blake, The Marriage of Heaven and Hell

In James Findley’s Book Christian Meditation, he refers to this quote as a description for how meditation works to help us be patient and realize the “lifelong learning process of becoming one seasoned in the meditative awareness of the divinity of daily living.”

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Moving Toward Freedom

Are we willing to mindfully choose growth and connection over consistency and attachment? **There is a reason we do things the way we do.** Our patterns are automatic, they give us some level of comfort and predictability.

Are we ready to change?

Do we need to suffer to certain degree before we are willing or pulled into awareness?

Are we comfortable enough with our attachments that we're willing to cruise along with them until something strips them from us?

Is uniting not our problem until it is made our problem by unforeseen circumstance?

Are you ok with that?

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Let's say we're not ok with that.

How do we become more conscious of our patterns so we can outgrow them?

Compassionate Communication asserts that we all have the same variety of values and that everyone has equal rights in meeting these needs. For example, we would all like to have our needs for Survival, Sustenance, Nurturance, Purpose, Meaning, Contribution, Freedom, Choice, Creativity, Clarity, Learning, Authenticity, Peace of Mind, Balance, Ease, Beauty, Harmony, Celebration, Mourning, Leisure, Play, Understanding, Connection, Acceptance, Love, Compassion, Cooperation, Community, Mutuality, Support, and many others. As we are well aware, we are among the very few in the world who have the luck to not spend a lot of our time and energy focusing on security and protection needs. As individuals, our level of satisfaction we sense in the fullness of each of these at any moment is a function of our perception. **In other words, we cannot assume for anyone else whether they have ample supply of any of them. This is why people in radically different circumstances have satisfaction or frustration over the same situation. I alone determine for myself if I have enough meaning and purpose, security, love, and so on.** The decisions we make and actions we take

are strategies to meet one or more of these needs. I choose to go out with my friends to meet my need for community, play, and leisure. I chose to give this talk this morning to meet my needs for meaning, purpose, contribution, and learning. These are strategies I employ to meet my needs/values. The strategies we use to meet our needs are what we get attached to. **We get attached to our actions, the people we're with, and our perceptions about our values. Our language can point to these attachments and our judgments - "I have to, I should, only if..., I can't, you always, I never."**

NVC shines light on this thinking. Rather than suppressing that we do this, NVC practice includes exercises to capture these thoughts, judgments, and beliefs. They can give us more understanding, acceptance and empathy with regards to our needs. Acknowledging them and letting them go to observe the facts gives us the freedom to see what is. We ask ourselves to **report like a camera**, not like a reporter that has been trained to sensationalize the situation. Practicing this part of the process is really opening my eyes and giving me a way to practice seeing what IS.

When we can do this in the present moment, we have the ability to interact, respond, and engage much differently. I see daily meditation as an avenue to engaging in what IS because it trains us to detach from these patterns, we practice letting them go when we're sitting in meditation. This practice helps us notice our thoughts, and be present to our reactions more often. **In combination with awareness, self understanding, and acceptance, we begin seeing and hearing in new ways, less defensively, less anxiously, and with more open-minds and hearts.**

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Why Meditate?

Is it about being in meditation?

Is it about meditation being in us because it changes us?

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Spiritual Growth

Our path to enlightenment includes a journey from

my story to

our story to

The story.

What practices help us transcend the patterns that keep us in my story, that create an unhealthy attachment to our tribe and keeps us stuck in our story? How do we understand and release ourselves from this web of thought, actions, and rigid personality traits so that we can be free to see and be with The Story?

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Jung's Iceberg Analogy

What other's see is above the water. Under the water are a variety of hidden patterns and interpretations of our experiences, our unconscious. Much of our automatic responses and unconscious motivations lay hidden in this realm.

Meditation helps us begin to notice these thoughts and patterns as they float by our consciousness and we learn to recognize them as well as practice not getting attached to them

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Enneagram

Certain effective defense mechanism that we employ as young children develop into recurring motivations and patterns of thinking and responding. The Enneagram points to these as 9 motivating points of view about life.

These can help us develop and navigate the ‘my story’ part of the journey, and can help us relate to the ‘our story’ part.

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Enneagram Types

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Enneagram associated thoughts

Our awareness and practice may release our grasp on thoughts and patterns we all experience at different points, regardless of our Root type.

“There is one right way to do things.”

“I help others that need my help.”

“I am at my best when others acknowledge my achievements and performances.”

“Something is missing. Others have it and I don’t. I need to know what it is...and how to get it.”

“I need to be alone to preserve and restore my energy.”

“What is going to happen next? How can I get prepared?”

“There are so many great opportunities. I don’t want to miss any of them.”

“Life is unfair. I need to protect those that can’t protect themselves.”

“I avoid conflict and will adjust to keep from making waves.”

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I'm Telling Myself

Have any thoughts come up in your practices that seem very familiar to you?

Are you able to identify the thoughts that are more regularly present or that are more difficult to let go during meditation?

Throughout your day, try to make yourself aware of when that thought is driving your perceptions and actions.

Take a step back from this automatic response and actively let it go by reframing it as, "I'm telling myself...." **Recognize that the thought may not be truth but a lens that may no longer serve your growth and development.**

Empower yourself to be more mindful of the tangible and observable truth.

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That May or May Not Be True

I'm telling myself "I have to go to work." that may or may not be true. I'm telling myself "I screwed up again." that may or may not be true. I'm telling myself who do you think you are? You don't have the wisdom necessary to teach this class."

That may or may not be true. I'm telling myself "No one is listening." that may or may not be true. I'm telling myself "The new manager has no respect for me."

That may or may not be true.

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Luke 10:38-42 Mary and Martha from The Message

As they continued their travel, Jesus entered a village. A woman by the name of Martha welcomed him and made him feel quite at home. She had a sister, Mary, who sat before the Master, hanging on every word he said. But Martha was pulled away by all she had to do in this kitchen. Later, she stepped in, interrupting them.

“Master, don’t you care that my sister has abandoned the kitchen to me? Tell her to lend a hand.”

the Master said, “Martha, dear Martha, you’re fussing far too much and getting yourself worked up over nothing. One thing only is essential, and Mary has chosen it - it’s the main course and won’t be taken from her.”

I’ve heard this verse used in a few different ways. **The author of the Cloud of Unknowing refers to it and uses Mary’s work as the work of contemplation vs. Martha’s action.** In most cases, I’ve heard this as a comparison or competition, pitting the two against each other. A couple of months ago, I was introduced to a new way of looking at it by **Father Philip Chircop. He said, imagine that what Jesus meant was that there is only one essential and that is doing your thing** and tending to that one thing without comparing yourself to another, without being distracted by what anyone else is saying or doing. What if you did that one thing you are called in the moment to do. That one essential thing that is yours alone. He went onto say that maybe Martha’s thing to do in that moment was precisely the work she was doing. Where she caused herself regret and anxiety was the moment she stopped engaging in her contribution and participation in the moment and began comparing and competing with another. What if Martha stopped and said, I’m telling myself that my sister abandoned me and that may or may not be true. I’m telling myself that Mary isn’t carrying her load of the work her and that may or may not be true. Let’s **suppose for a second that Martha was operating from her Type 2 Enneagram lens.** What if she was able to connect to the needs she was meeting in the moment and realized that her work in the kitchen not only met her needs for contribution, celebration, and support, but also meaning and purpose, and self-expression? If she had moved from looking at the me story, the our story, to The story, how would she have participated more fully in love, compassion, freedom, and unity?

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The Enneagram and Transformation

What stands between us and our relationship with sacred mystery in ourselves and others? We are called to move from my story to our story to the story. As we grow into a deeper understanding of our Enneagram types **rather than use the descriptions and patterns to rationalize our behavior, we use the wisdom to practice releasing ourselves from these patterns.** As we study the values we are attempting to satisfy as described in NVC, we can connect with ourselves, with others, even those we may have previously perceived as threats or even enemies, we can connect with what brings us all together and allow us to live into THE story. **I believe this shift from it being about me, about my tribe, to the ultimate Being, allows us to move from responding in sympathy to respond with Empathy.** Here Brene Brown describes the difference between sympathy and empathy.

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Brene Brown's description of Empathy vs Sympathy

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1Evwgu369Jw>

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Welcome Home

What happens when we open new doors? What new possibilities exist because we've transformed?

I mostly operate as a six, a fear motivated type on the Enneagram. Several years ago I was very frightened by the gang tags around our neighborhood. I made assumptions about the people I saw walking around our neighborhood. These thoughts gave way to anxious fantasies of dangerous encounters, I was borrowing

trouble. It is such a part of my family of origin that we have a name for it “unnecessary hysteria.”

In 2011, after practicing NVC and learning from the Enneagram how to engage my faith and release my fear by recognizing and letting go of these irrational thoughts, in the moment, **I challenged myself to stop fearing young men that walk around our neighborhood.** Surely some of them are gang members, where else would all the tagging come from? I could assume that every young man between 14 and 30 that I don't know is a gang member and wishes to hurt me or my family. Truly, what are the odds of that? Instead, I decided to recognize and transform these judgmental and fearful thoughts and view them as I do other strangers that I pass along my path. If the thought pops up in my head, I will say, **“I’m telling myself a story about this person that may or may not be true.” “I’m telling myself this person is going to hurt me. This may or may not be true.”**

Generally when I pass someone I don’t know, I tend to give the “I see you”, Namaste type recognition. What I needed to become aware of is that I had been choosing to single some souls by avoiding them completely. **I challenged myself to stop believing my own story. If our eyes met, I would smile and acknowledge them as an equal, I would deeply and honestly be able to see them, to honor their soul.**

At the end of the summer of 2011, the kids and I returned from a month long vacation. My husband picked us up from the airport in my car totally decked out in **shoe polish with welcoming messages for each of us.** We got right back into the routine of school and work and I had not yet washed the car. One morning, I pulled up to a busy intersection just down the road from our house. My car paused right next to the building that had spray painted gang tagging still faintly noticeable. A twenty something in a white tank and long blue gym shorts ambled in an uneven stride down the sidewalk toward me. There was a slot in between cars

that would allow me to safely pull out. **“I’m telling myself this guys may or may not be in a gang.”** What I know for sure is that he is a human and he has a soul. I realized that it could appear rude to zip out before he reached the intersection. I sat still, smiled, gave him a sincere ‘namaste’ nod and waved him across as he approached the road. As soon as we made eye contact, he smiled exuberantly and yelled, **"welcome home!"** He continued smiling and waving at me sincerely as he walked past. That moment of recognition, of play, support, connection has stayed with me and serves as a reminder that we make new possibilities with the awareness and response we make to our mind’s functioning. Life is connection. I love the message I received from him that day! I think being home is more than walking thru our front door. **It's opening to the possibility that home exists beyond our threshold.** We just need to be aware enough, and brave enough to step out. **Transformation of our thoughts and our patterns that hinder our growth is what allows us to step over the threshold.** I believe that there are countless ‘welcome home’ moments that exist just outside our filters and patterns.

We are given opportunities to truly be with others in empathy. Those we know, and those we’ve just met. Sometimes our lens shields us from the humanity of another, our fear and judgments cause us to objectify each other. Sometimes our lens acts as a shield and keeps us from being with someone in the reality of where they are in the moment.

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Psalm 27 rewrite

Love is the light and the way through patterns and prejudice.

Love is the strength and freedom from the way it has always been.

When thoughts and judgments attempt to inform my next move,

Each one will be met with the light of love and freedom.

In the throes of fear, doubt and shame and their pursuit of my attention,

I will remain assured and my soul will let love overcome them.

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Now Is The Time

“Now is the time to know that all that you do is sacred.

Now, why not consider A lasting truce with yourself and god?

Now is the time to understand

That all your ideas of right and wrong were just training wheels to be laid aside when you can finally live with veracity and love.

Now is the time for the world to know that every thought and action is sacred. That this is the time for you to compute the impossibility that there is nothing but grace.

Now is the season to know that everything you do is sacred.

~Hafiz (a Sufi Poet)