



Making Ends Meet

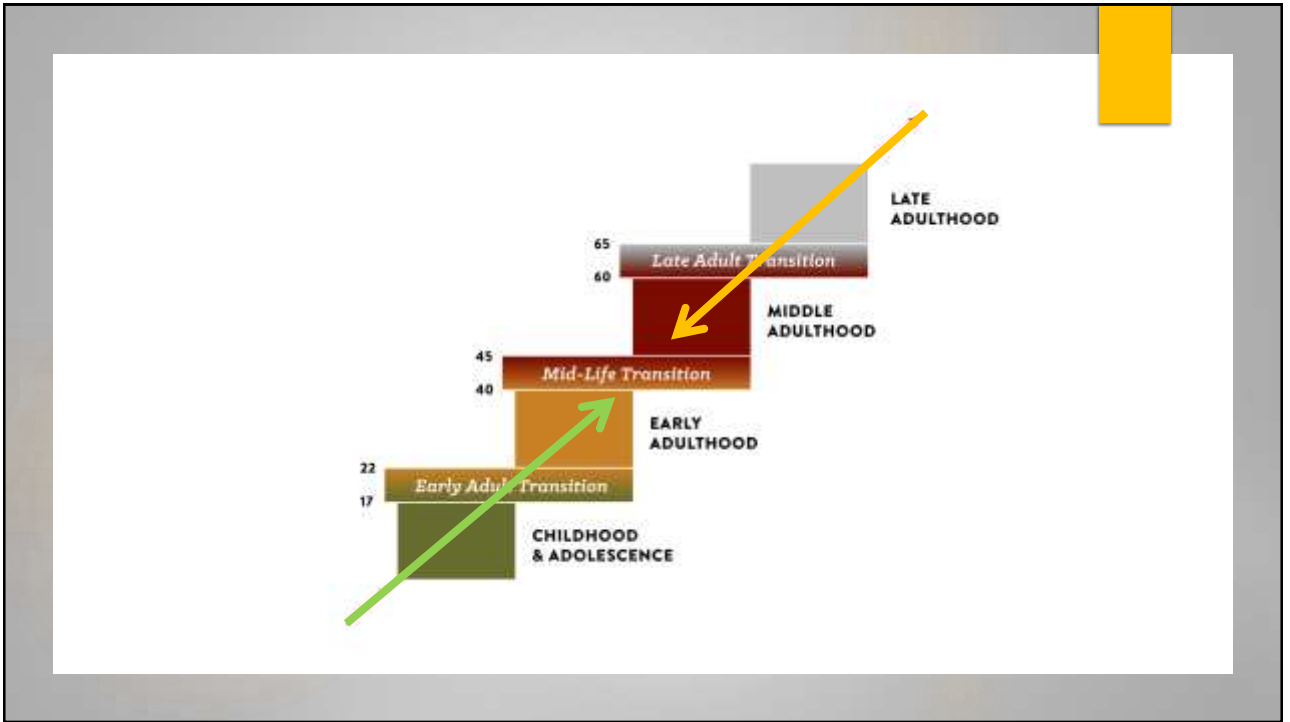
MIDLIFE A TIME OF INTEGRITY – THURSDAY JUNE 2 SESSION 1

1

How's Things for you?

**What are the most significant issues
for you
at this time of your life?**

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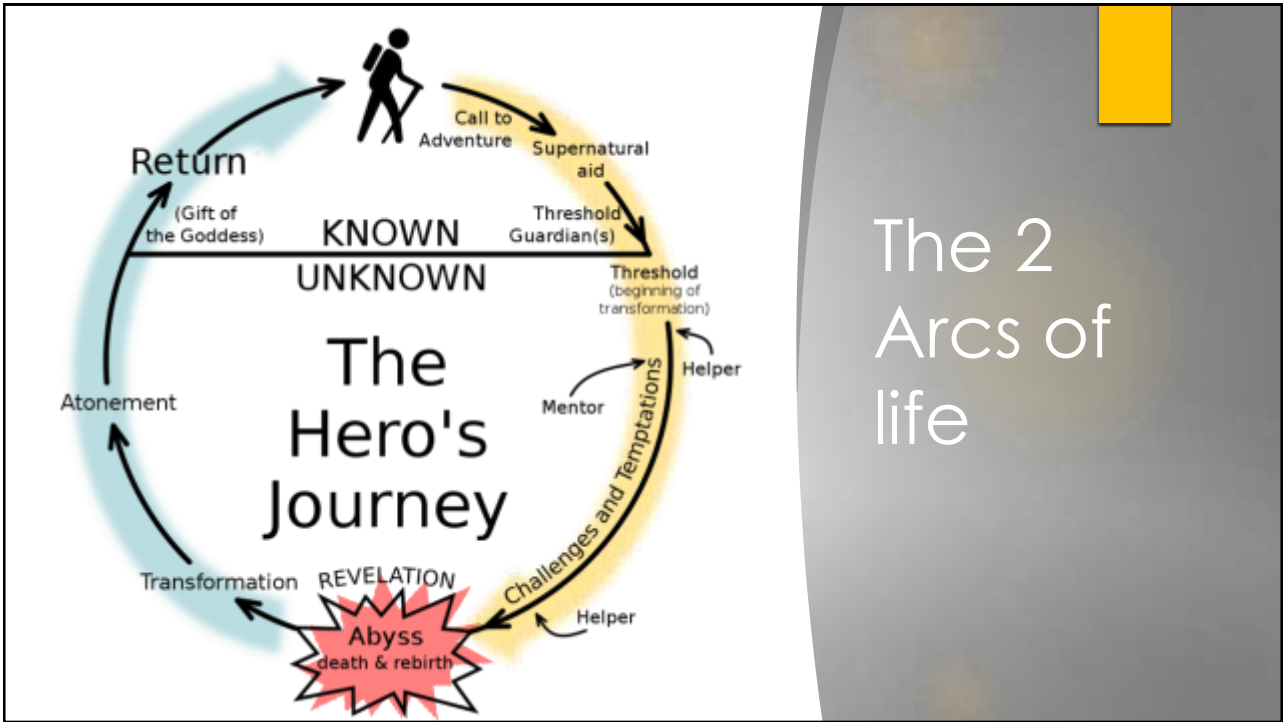
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Carl Jung

"Wholly unprepared, we embark upon the second half of life... we take the step into the afternoon of life; worse still we take this step with the false assumption that our truths and ideals will serve as before. But we cannot live the afternoon of life according to the program of life's morning for what was great in the morning will be little at evening, and what in the morning was true will at evening have become a lie."



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The 2 Arcs of life

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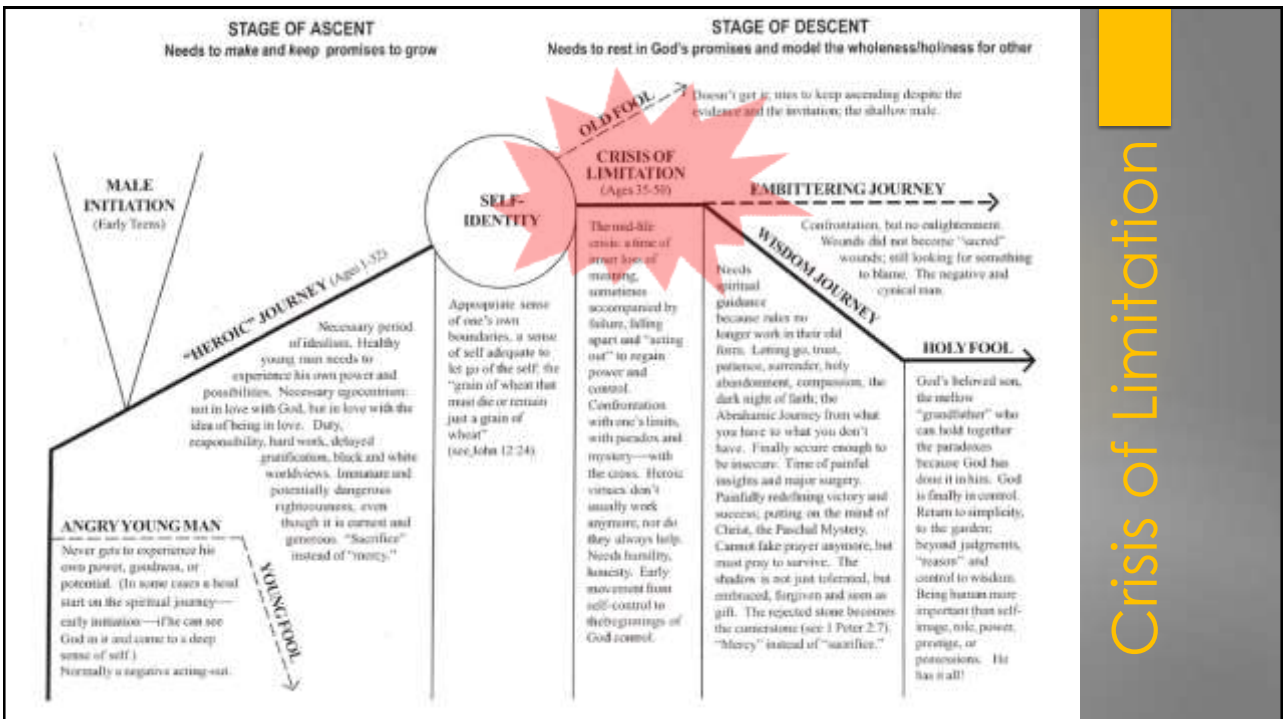
The Descent

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Decent – The Way of Midlife

- The path of descent is the path of transformation. Darkness, failure, relapse, death, and woundedness are our primary teachers, rather than ideas or doctrines.
- Western culture, and the clinging human ego, made the Gospel into a message of spiritual advancement— ascent rather than descent. We hopefully do advance in “wisdom, age, and grace” (Luke 2:40), but not at all in the way we thought. Jesus again got it right! He brilliantly and personally taught the way of the cross and not the way of climbing.
- We come to God much more by doing it wrong than by doing it right. God uses our sins and failures to bring us to divine union.
- This is surely the most counterintuitive message of the Gospels— so counterintuitive that it largely remains hidden in plain sight.

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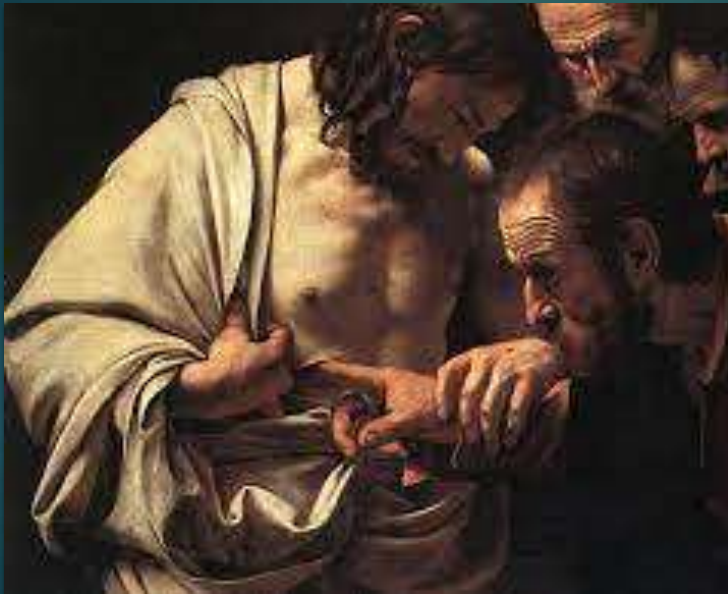
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Crisis of Limitation

Dante - The Inferno

"Midway on our life's journey,
I found myself in a dark woods,
the right road lost.
To tell about those woods is hard
- so tangled and rough..."

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Five Marks of the Initiated Man

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The Five Marks of Initiated Men

Adam's Return: The Five Promises Of Male Initiation by Richard Rohr, (2004).

1. Life is Hard

Be awake in it. Face it.

Suffering attunes us – Sacred Wounding.

Life is Paradox & Mystery.

Follow your True Self – Sacrifice your False self.

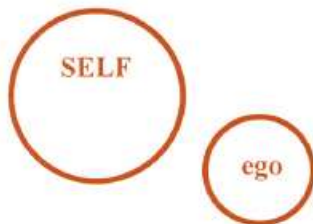
Naming & Marking – Consecration.

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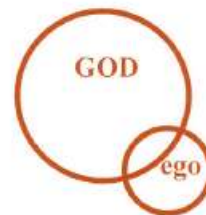
The Five Marks of Initiated Men

1. Life is Hard

False Self



True Self



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The Five Marks of Initiated Men

2. You are not that important

Be Humble.

Transformation – Rites of Passage.

True masters are both prophets and pastors.

Get out of your way.

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The Five Marks of Initiated Men

3. Your life is not about you

Copernican revolution of the mind.

Jesus wants to situate you in a larger life.

Jesus wanted you to experience the value of vulnerability.

“I live no longer...”

“be done unto me...”

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The Five Marks of Initiated Men

4. You are not in Control

You must admit you are powerless before you can find your true power.

Learning you are not in control means re-educating the will.

Holistic hierarchies.

Male Love Needs to be Earned – Father Hunger.

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The Five Marks of Initiated Men

5. You are going to Die

The mortality and impermanence of your own life must become very real to you.

Healthy religion finds God more in the present.

The initiate must be led to the edge.

Rituals of death and resurrection were the centrepiece of all male initiation.

The transformational journey of death and resurrection makes you indestructible.

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Midlife - a Place where Opposites meet

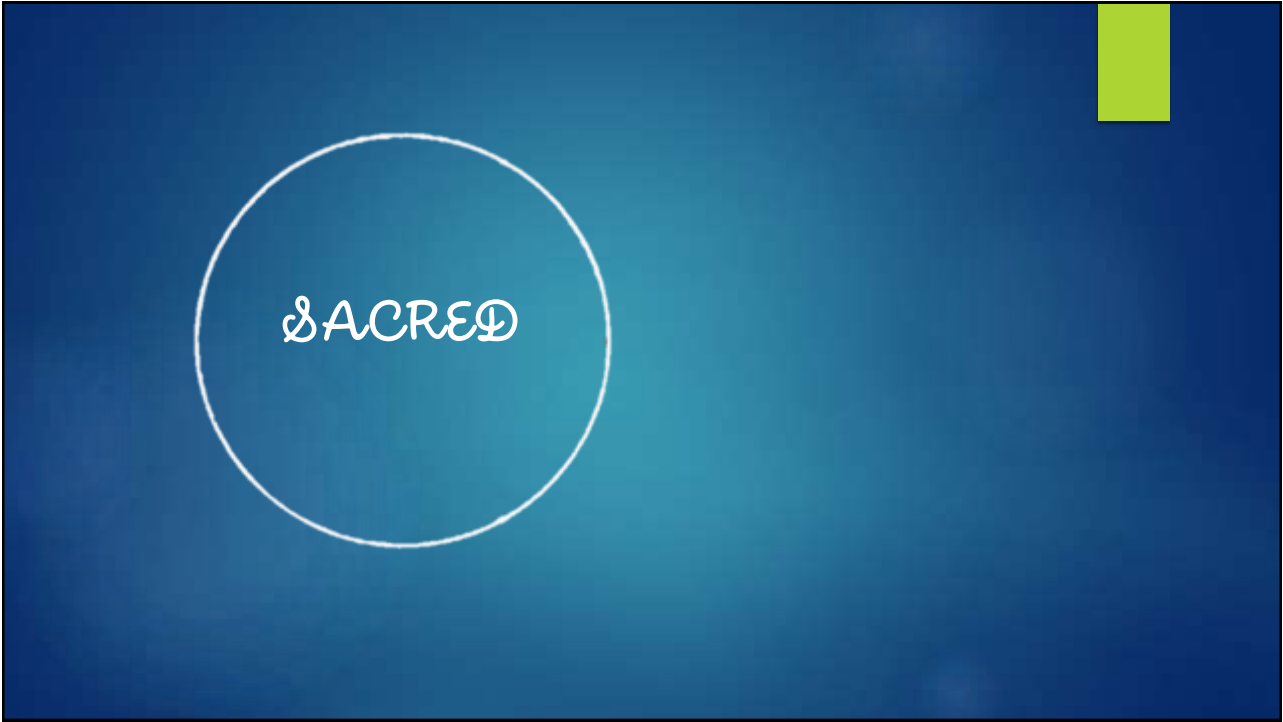
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VESICA PISCIS

The vesica piscis is a type of lens, a mathematical shape formed by the intersection of two disks with the same radius, intersecting in such a way that the centre of each disk lies on the perimeter of the other.

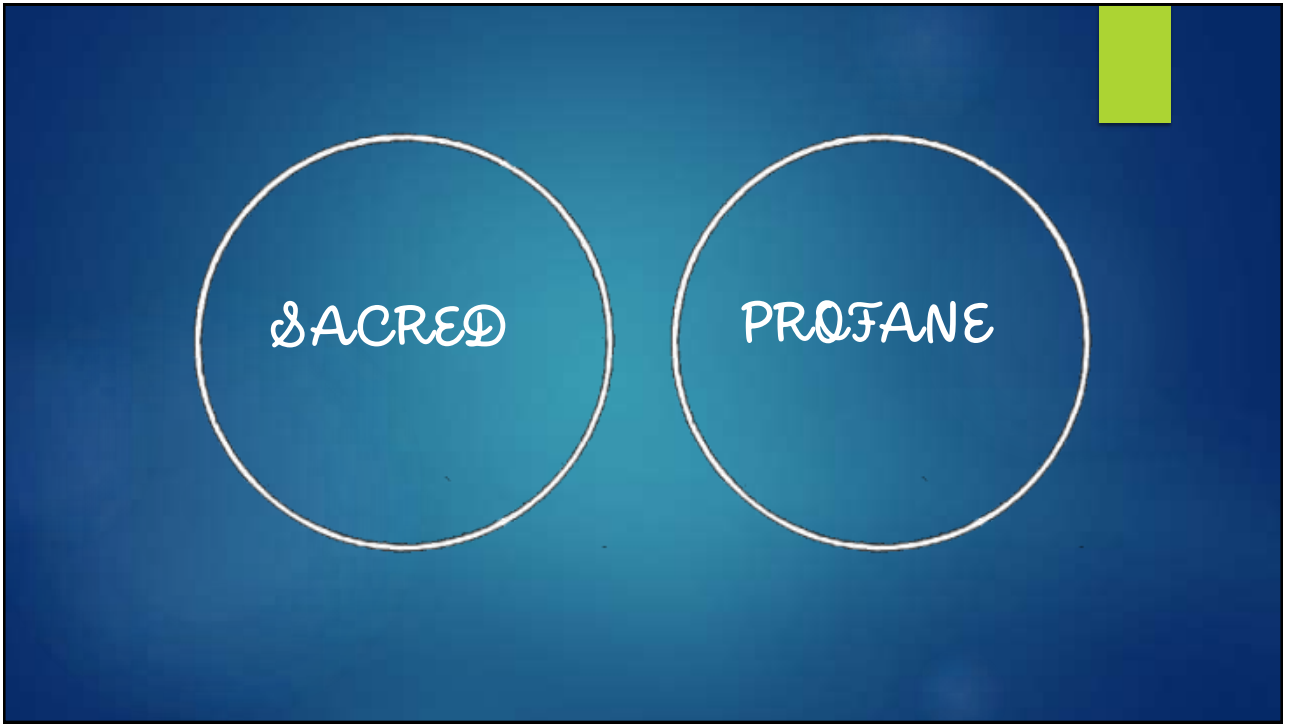
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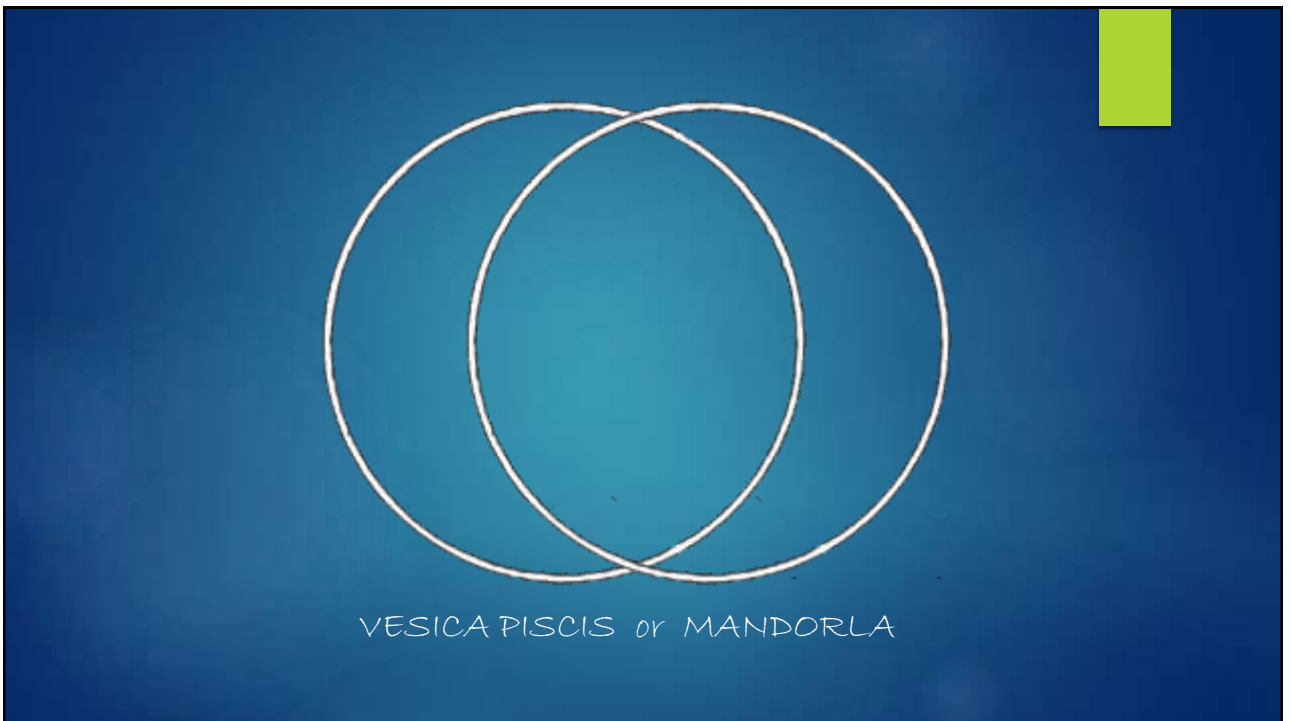
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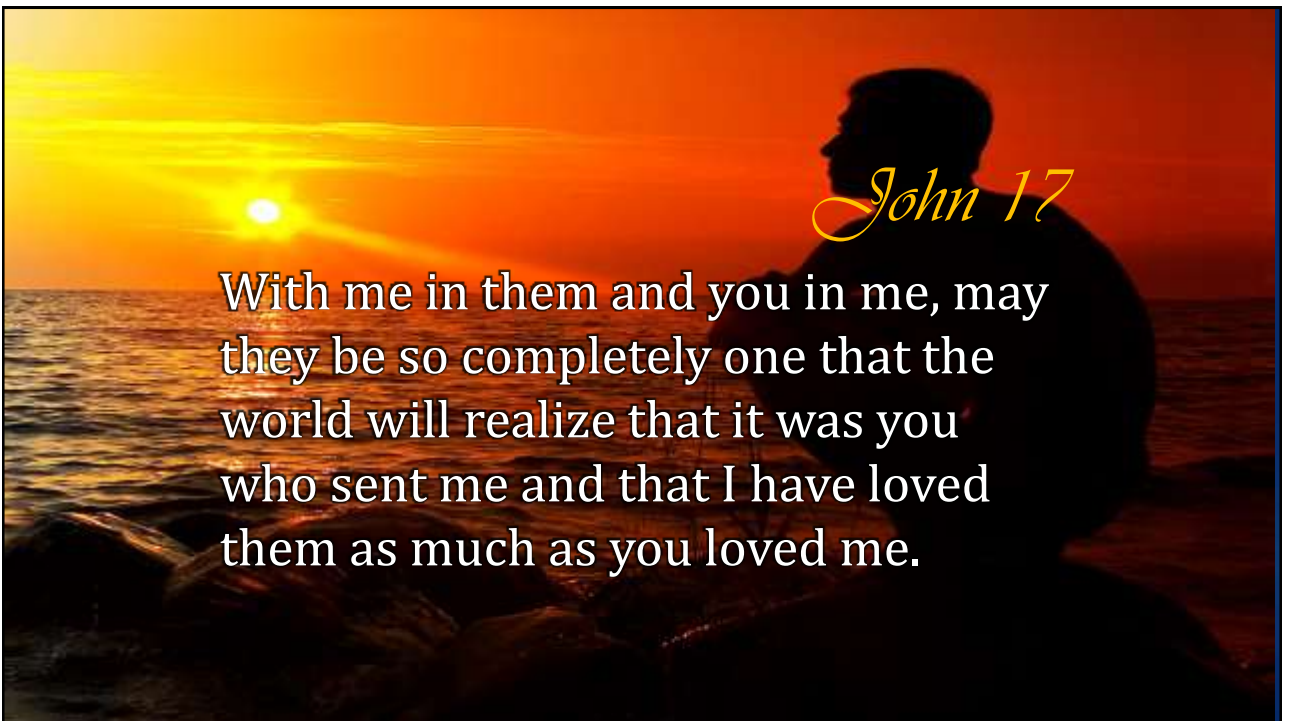
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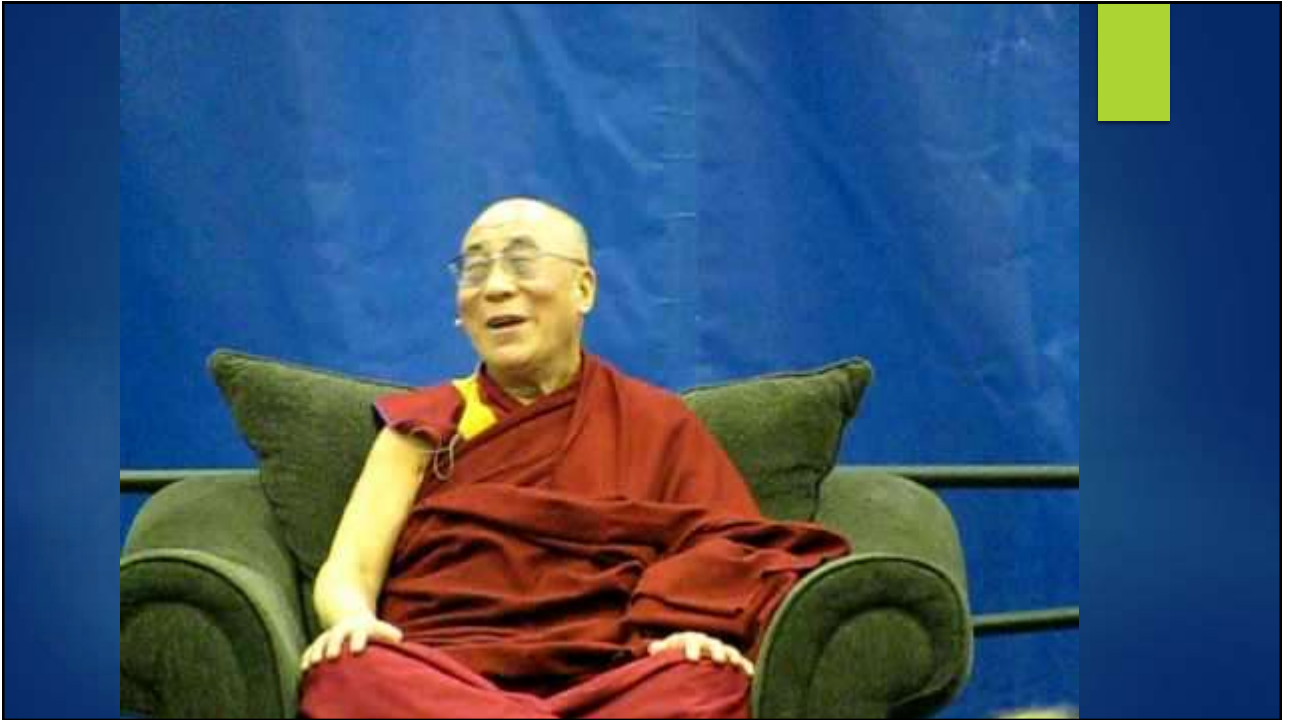
“Love alone can unite living beings, so as to complete and fulfil them... For it alone joins them by what is deepest in themselves. All we need is to imagine our ability to love developing until it embraces the totality of people and of the earth.”

Teilhard De Chardin

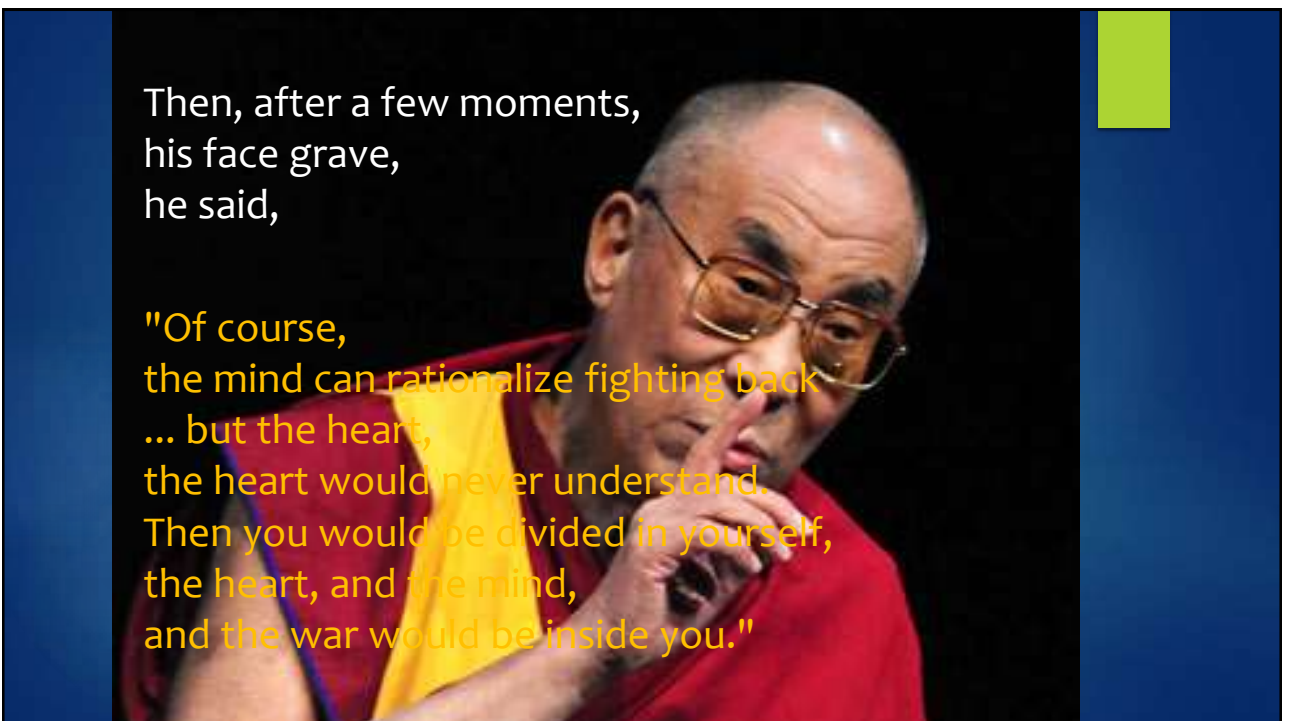
“The one who yearns to love God, will love him; such a person would not have this yearning if he had not already love. Love is something marvellous: simultaneously both the means and the ends; a way which leads to itself.”

St. Francis de Sales, *The Way to God*.

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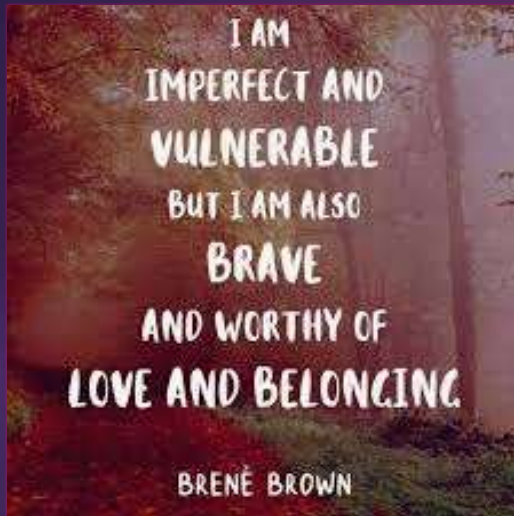
As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it. This is why it says: “When he ascended on high, he took many captives and gave gifts to his people.” What does “he ascended” mean except that he also descended to the lower, earthly regions? He who descended is the very one who ascended higher than all the heavens, in order to fill the whole universe.

Ephesians 4

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Vulnerability Exercise

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Vulnerability – A Midlife Spiritual Awakening

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FRIDAY JUNE 3 SESSION 4

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Where do you see yourself in this picture?
Explain why.



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Brené Brown

The Power of Vulnerability



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https://www.ted.com/talks/brene_brown_the_power_of_vulnerability?language=en

Connection

- Shame : the fear of Disconnection
- Excruciating Vulnerability –
“I’m not good enough.”
“I am not worthy of connection.”
“I am not enough.”

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Connection

- Those who believed they are worthy of love and belonging.
- They had Courage, Compassion, Connection.
- They fully embraced Vulnerability as necessary and believed it made them beautiful.

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Vulnerability – A spiritual awakening

- The birthplace of joy, creativity, belonging and love.

But we disconnect

- We numb our emotions – all of them
- with Addiction & Certainty
- With Blame – discharging our pain
- We perfect
- We pretend

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Learnings

- Let ourselves be seen, vulnerably seen.
- Practice gratitude and joy.
- To know that “I am enough”
- We start listening to ourselves and others.

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“The church does not have a mission — rather, God's mission has a church.”

“To live God's mission, the church must live in "prophetic dialogue" — "an openness in contemplation to discover the thirsts of the world and a determination in humility to work for the slaking of those thirsts.”

Stephen Bevens SVD

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CHOICEandTRUTH

I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.

Maya Angelou



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A Midlife Paradigm Shift

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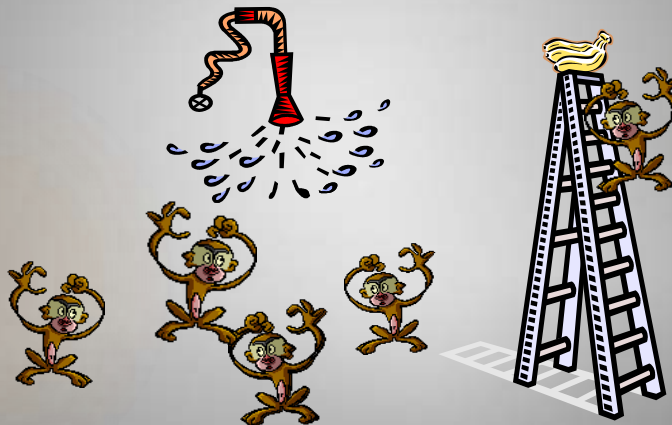
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A group of scientists placed 5 monkeys
in a cage and in the middle,
a ladder with bananas on the top.



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Every time a monkey went up the ladder,
the scientists soaked the rest of the
monkeys with cold water.



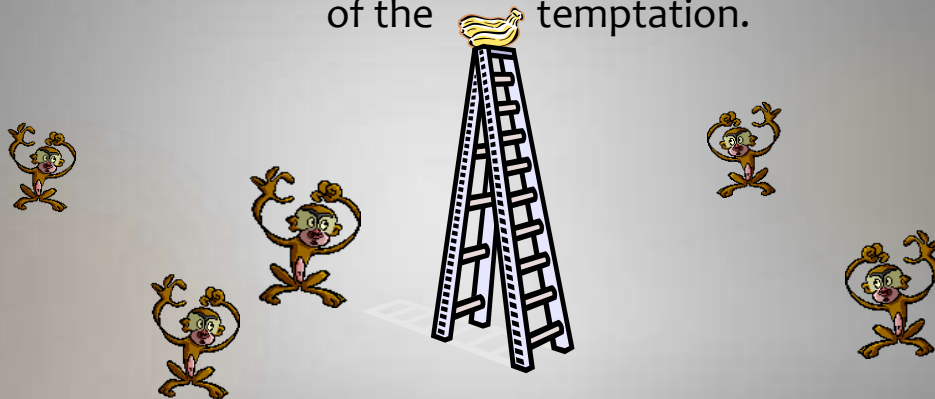
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After a while, every time a monkey went up the ladder, the others beat up the one on the ladder.



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After some time, no monkey dare to go up the ladder regardless of the temptation.



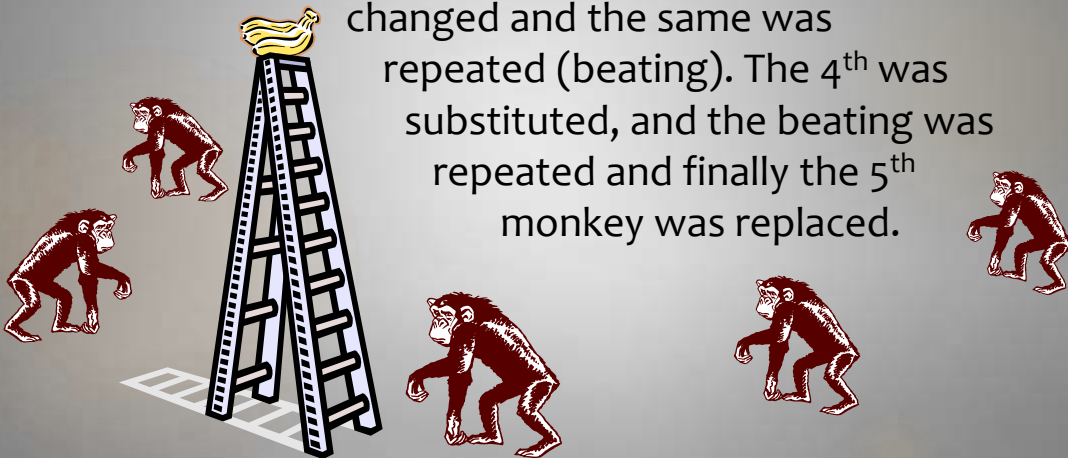
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Scientists then decided to substitute one of the monkeys. The 1st thing this new monkey did was to go up the ladder. Immediately the other monkeys beat him up. After several beatings, the new member learned not to climb the ladder even though it never knew why.



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A 2nd monkey was substituted and the same occurred. The 1st monkey participated on the beating for the 2nd monkey. A 3rd monkey was changed and the same was repeated (beating). The 4th was substituted, and the beating was repeated and finally the 5th monkey was replaced.



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What was left was a group of 5 monkeys that even though never received a cold shower, continued to beat up any monkey who attempted to climb the ladder.



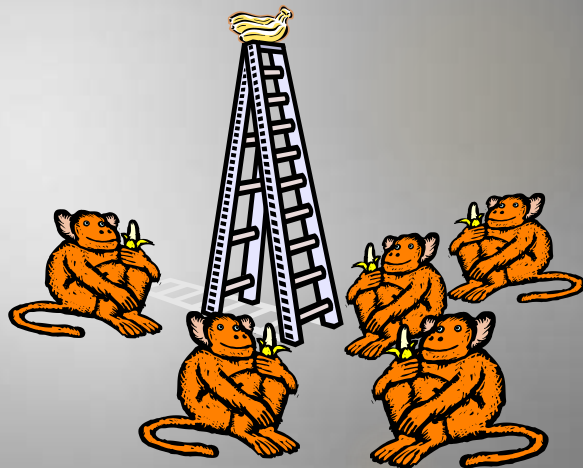
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If it was possible to ask the monkeys why they would beat up all those who attempted to go up the ladder.....

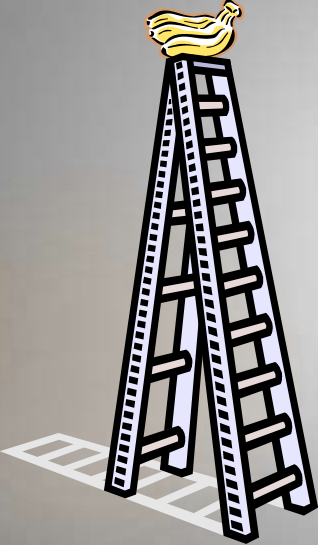
They might say....

*"I don't know –
that's just the way things
are done around here!"*

**Sound
familiar?**



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"Only two things are infinite:
the universe
And human stupidity.
And I am not so sure
about the former."

Albert Einstein

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A Cosmic Shift at a Personal Level
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Current Scientific Paradigm	Emerging Paradigm
Newtonian mechanics; reductionist and dichotomous thinking	Quantum physics and new sciences; self-organizing systems; chaos theory; complexity theory.
We search for a model or method of objectively perceiving the world.	We accept the complexity and subjectivity of the world.
We engage in complex planning for a world that we expect to be predictable.	Planning is thought to be a process of constant re-evaluation.
We understand language as the descriptor of reality: "I'll believe it When I see it."	We understand language as the creator of reality: "I'll see it when I believe it."
We see information as power.	We seek to understand wholeness and the interconnectedness of all things.
We believe in reductionism, i.e., things can be best understood When they are broken into parts.	We search for harmony and the common threads of our dialogue.
We engage in dichotomous thinking.	We understand truth to be dependent on the context and the current reality.
We believe that there is only one truth for which we must search.	We see information as a primal creative force.
We believe that influence occurs as a direct result of force exerted from one person to another, i.e., cause and effect.	We understand that influence occurs as a natural part of human interaction.
We live in a linear and hierarchical world.	We live in a circular world of relationships and cooperation.

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8 Key Principles of Appreciative Inquiry
The Constructionist Principle: we create our own reality.
The Principle of Simultaneity: change doesn't happen as the last step in a process, but happens throughout the process.
Poetic Principle: the organization is an open book – we can choose our focus.
The Anticipatory Principle: we create what we expect.
The Positive Principle: a positive image leads to positive action.
The Wholeness Principle: the experience of wholeness brings out the best in people, relationships, communities and organization.
The Enactment Principle: acting 'as if' is self fulfilling.
The Free Choice Principle: organizations thrive when people have the freedom to choose the nature and extent of their contribution.

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Kenosis – A Midlife Experience

Jean Marie Howe, "Cistercian Monastic Life/Vows: A Vision." p. 367, (7)

Transformation through immersion and consciousness depends on our capacity to be penetrated by the Mystery of Christ. Our being, our substance, must be porous in order for the Mystery to enter, to penetrate. That is the crux of the matter. It is not enough simply to be immersed in ... life. We must let ourselves be ploughed so that the furrows of our person become deeper and deeper, so that our earth becomes softer and softer. This is something our being craves, but this ploughing is *kenosis* [emptying, the death which must precede new life, rebirth] and kenosis is not easy. In the measure that our being becomes porous, open, grace can penetrate us. Depth is possible. Transformation is possible. Thus an ever deepening penetration by the Mystery can fill us with spiritual being.

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Coherence – A task of Midlife

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The Four Splits

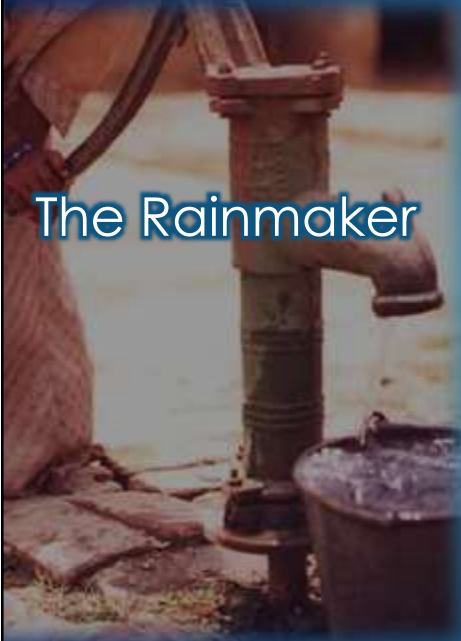


Richard Rohr

1. The first split is between my self and other selves - EGO VS. OTHER
2. The second split we separate our bodies from our minds
3. The third split we separate life from death
4. The third split is the acceptable self from the unacceptable self
5. Non-Dual Consciousness

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The Rainmaker



A village was in severe drought and if rain did not come soon, the village would die. The people did everything they knew. Finally they decided to summon a great rainmaker from a distance. When he arrived and saw the plight of the village, he said, "Build me a straw hut. Give me food and water for five days, and leave me alone." This they quickly did. The rainmaker went into the straw hut. At the end of four days it rained just in time to save the crops.

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The people of the village dragged the poor rainmaker blinking into the light and gave him his fee, showered gifts on him, and poured out their affection on the good man for saving their village and their lives.

Somebody took him aside and said, "How do you make it rain?"

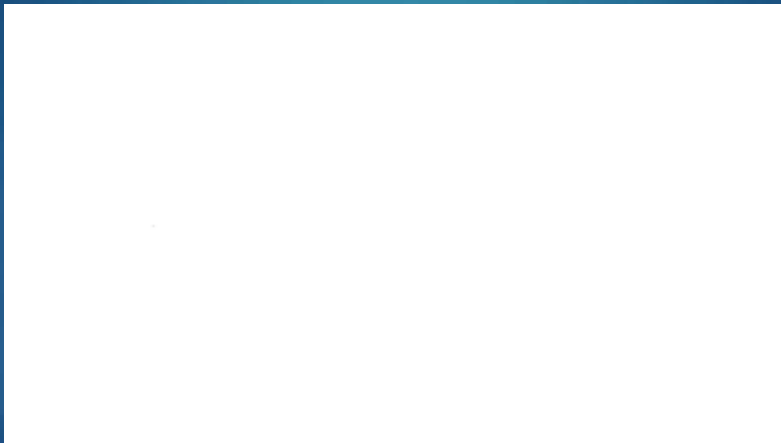
And he said, "Oh, please understand. I felt such discord inside myself when I came into your village, that I spent that time getting things straight inside myself.

I didn't even get as far as performing the rainmaking ceremonies."



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Social Coherence HeartMath Institute



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Social Coherence HeartMath Institute

▶ <https://youtu.be/F1EesqUtKyE>

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“Someday, after mastering the winds,
the waves, the tides and gravity,
we shall harness for God
the energies of love, and then,
for a second time
in the history of the world,
man will have discovered fire.”

Teilhard De Chardin

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