

Possibilities

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Gary Vollbracht

As we meet today, my friend Heidi enters lung surgery in Columbus. Specifically, at 3:00 PM. the doctors are removing two active cancer nodules that lit up in yesterdays pre-op PET scan. This is the 18th month of her brave and trying ordeal with cancer. One of the initial entries on her CaringBridge blog from July of 2009 reads, “Heidi had a hysterectomy on Friday, July 24. The doctors found a fast growing malignant form of cancer in her uterus. They removed the uterus.” And today’s entry reads, “PLAN: Surgery this Saturday 1/22 at 3 p.m. Resecting spots in both lungs.” As I pause and take Heidi in, there is not much to say. But Heidi’s situation brings today’s topic into perspective. What are Heidi’s possibilities? What are life’s possibilities? Answer: “Anything.” Life is what life is. An unfolding, an experience, moment by moment, living one NOW to the next NOW. Tick Tock Tick Tock...

At first the word “possibilities” as a topic for our writing group seemed full of hope, a looking forward to some beautiful future state. But during my workout at the gym yesterday, I found myself listening to my most recent download – an audio of Eckhart Tolle’s 2008 *The Journey Into Yourself*. He speaks on questions, big questions, such as, “What existed before the Big Bang?” His answer; “The un-manifest,” or that sometimes-triggering word, “God.” God existed before the Big Bang. And, faithful to his title, he goes on to point out that this un-manifest, or God, lives within *all of life* as Essence. But, he points out, in us humans, this Divine Essence is blocked in many ways by what we have come to call ego, that part of us which would make us separate from the Whole. The purpose of life? Tolle would say, I think, the purpose of life is “To release God from within, to witness the unfolding of our own Essence in our being part of the ongoing Big Bang, leading from un-manifest to manifest, from formless to form, playing our role, as part of the One, continuing to ‘Bang’ forth through each and every moment of our lives.” Our challenge? Tolle would again say, “To get beyond ego, that part of us that, having served us so well up until now, seems too often to focus on our past or future rather than surrendering to the NOW.” And I, too, can see where I get caught up in possibilities as “a looking forward to some beautiful future state.” Tolle would bring me back to NOW. What are the NOW possibilities?

As Spirit would arrange my life, last week a Pathwork friend of mine sent me off on Pathwork Lecture 162, titled obscurely as *Three Levels of Reality for Inner Guidance*. This pithy piece builds on the ideas that, through psychological work, we grow through three stages of personal growth – from pre-reality (a space where we are in the fog, not even knowing what we think exists in life), to a stage where we are caught up in what we *think* exists in life (a place where we are at least conscious of what we think exists), and then on to a higher stage of consciousness where our illusions of what we think exists drop away and we discover what *really does exist*. But then, the lecture goes on, after this psychological work that helps us get functional, we enter the realm of our spiritual growth that focuses on *what could* exist in life. I like this distinction between psychological and spiritual work, and, as the lecture reminds the reader, it is always a both/and, not an either/or, not a “we get done with our psychological work and then go on to our spiritual work.” No, the deep spiritual work also

uncovers the need for more and often much deeper psychological work as we face more unfamiliar pieces of our psyche.

But what struck me in this lecture was exploring “what could exist.” To me “what could exist” pointed to our topic of possibilities. Entering the world of possibilities takes us beyond the psychological tools for coping and “making it” in the world “that is” to an awareness of what could unfold, or rather, awareness of what is unfolding in and through us as our ego surrenders to the Divine Essence we are within, or doesn’t. Just another take on Tolle, it seems. And that all these spiritual sources these days seem to be saying the same thing in the end makes me smile. But of course I realize that I am just now getting to the point where I can begin to realize that they are, in fact, all saying the same thing. I am the one that is changing here. I smile a still wider smile.

But neither Pathwork nor Tolle or others say that our unfolding is painless, for pain is part of what is. These teachings seem to point to an accepting of what is, a surrendering to what is, and even a “living into” what is. Again moment to moment, one NOW to the next NOW.

Can this living in the NOW be practical? I look out at my next week. What fills my calendar? Conference calls to discuss what is up with our workshop offerings at Sevenoaks Pathwork Center, our financial state and our possible future financial at Sevenoaks (worrisome to me as Treasurer), discernment as to where we are going with our Pathwork school, what are we going to teach at our next Pathwork student session in March, and so on. I can feel my heart rate quickening. Oh my! What are we going to do? How am I supposed to help lead this organization? What is our vision? What should we be doing? Oh my! Oh my! And then, ... Tick Tock, Tick Tock... will we have time to get it all straightened out? What will happen? What is possible, if only we would...?

Breathe, Gary, breathe. You are not in the NOW but in the future. What is the NOW? I pause to reflect on some mirroring that my lead Pathwork teacher did for me earlier in the week. I had gotten involved in misunderstandings with several of our students via some apparently confusing emails I had sent out. But I worked it out, and my lead teacher reflected, “You handled all this well with your patience, humor, and groundedness.” In that mirroring I could see the truth of what I brought to the table in this situation. I wrote these three words out on a five by seven piece of paper and framed the paper so I would be reminded of what I bring to the party – the Sevenoaks party or any other party in which I am involved – patience, humor, and groundedness. Consciously bringing these and other qualities that arise within me to the table of my life perhaps *is* living in the NOW. It is manifesting who I am from the un-manifest, or God, within. And when I realize this, there is nothing else to do. From here what wants to happen is free to happen. A grand unfoldment that involves all of us.

And I go back to Heidi. Can I feel my oneness with her in her life this day? Probably not very well. But can I be me in her presence? Can I slow down and feel what I feel in this being present to Heidi? Perhaps somewhere in all this is living the NOW. God bless you Heidi, I love you. ... Tick Tock, Tick Tock...