

Awakening to Love

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A few weeks ago during morning coffee time with Pat, I unexpectedly found myself in a moment of deep peace. Why? A sense of my Work on the planet had arisen with such great clarity. It seemed my Work is:

Organizing and communicating a framework for Pathwork Finances (role as Treasurer)

Appreciated by other Board Members

Developing meaningful homework assignments for Pathwork students (role as Teacher)

Appreciated by students and other faculty

Leading the development of Pathwork School and Workshop Programs (role as Chair of Council)

Appreciated by others in Pathwork leadership

Recording Pathwork Lectures (role in service to the International Pathwork Foundation)

Appreciated by many across the country and abroad

Doing my own Pathwork

Appreciated by me

It was one of those “aha” moments when the dots connect in a new way in life’s unfolding awareness.

By evening I was struggling in several of my newly identified Work arenas. The dots fragmented, leaving me puzzled. So after my moments of clarity I was again asking, “What exactly is my Work on the planet?”

The next weeks offered more-truthful insights. Then on last Friday at a journal writing class I was led to work with the topic of Love. I chose love for my brother Paul. The exercises included two sets of dialog – made-up dialog from my unconscious – one dialog with my brother, and one, a deeper one, with my *relationship* with my brother. I was trying to unpack the love between us – love that Paul freely expresses and which I vigorously deny. Paul loves kids, doesn’t hesitate to play peek-a-boo with a cute five-year-old stranger in a restaurant, and loves his grandkids to death. I confess that I do not hold that energy. Paul, in my made up dialog, retorts, “You pick them up in their 20s!” I argue back, “Yes, I am more comfortable with adult conversation, but that is not the same love that you express when they are five.” Paul responds, “Maybe yes, maybe no. But you engage them there, and that is certainly an aspect of love: engagement.”

The dialog with “my *relationship* with Paul” revealed more of my unconscious. It went like this: G: “Hi Relationship, glad you are here.” Relationship: “Me too. I’m glad you value me enough to engage me.” G: “Value’ you. You seem to question that I value you.” R: “Well at times you seem to dismiss me, deny me, what am I to think?” ... “What exactly do you miss when you’re not able to have your weekly coffee with Paul?” G: “The engagement. Well it’s more than that. He comes from a place I have been – solid home, solid marriage, solid Lutheran spirituality – a place I have left, and yet he sees me and accepts me where I am.” R: “And you see and accept him where he is.” G: “Oh yes. He, like me, is, deep down, a seeker and a wrestler for the truth. That makes our relationship work for me. He is open, not ‘stuck’ in some ‘indisputable’ dogma.” R: And he sees and respects you the same way. You are both wrestlers with truth, each in your own way. I would say you are good for each other.” G: But where does *love* come in? Are YOU our experience of love,” I say half mockingly? R: “Love has many facets, many colors. Don’t paint love in black and white. Take two fishermen who enjoy fishing together. They may or may not call it ‘love,’ but I’m here to say it is love.” The Journaling session ended. Helpful. Leading me to accept “what is” in this mystery of love. But still, I was resisting the idea that I in fact love and that I in fact can take in love.

Then came Tuesday, four days after my Friday journaling experience. Coffee time with Pat after meditation. Then meeting my brother Paul at Panera’s on Route 32 for our regular coffee time. Two hours, including my reading my journal writing, and both of us tearing up during parts of it. So rich. Then off to lunch with a dear friend Patty, who is recovering from brain surgery and tackling some pretty

awesome problems on many fronts, but she feeling very supported in her own spirituality. It was a most enjoyable time for both of us as we dove deeply into our respective lives. Then Tuesday afternoon a 2-hour Finance Committee meeting, also engaging but in a different way. Tuesday night was yoga. That night, for whatever reason, the teacher, Julie, struck me as so free to be herself. My experience with her was like having a perfect kindergarten teacher, one who celebrated whatever arose in the students. I missed that in my kindergarten, and found I was aware of its presence and drinking it in tonight. Afterwards I mirrored back to Julie how much I appreciated her being so free in being who she is with us. We talked deeply for twenty minutes or so. So Tuesday was, yes, an oh-so-enjoyable day! From morning to night, rich, connecting conversations. But love? I did not make that connection in these conversations.

Then came Wednesday morning. After another rich coffee time with Pat I wrote a blog entry about my experiences of love. I titled it: *Facing my Denial of Love, Within and Without*. It summarized my Friday journal writing, my Tuesday experiences, and integrated a piece of Pathwork I was doing on all this. It closed with: "I am, for whatever reason, at a deeper peace just having come to face this life-issue of denying love and now having written it out here in my blog for others to witness. I am at least *no longer denying my denial!*"

Later on Wednesday I took all of these experiences of the journal writing, my Tuesday oh-so-wonderful day, and my blog entry to my Hakomi body session with Ed. He, as always, listened intently and with curiosity. He reflected on my Tuesday and my remark about it, "I could do these deep conversations all day long every day." He mirrored back, "You are actively, engagingly involved in these conversations. And you have a feeling response in addition to being the observer, say with your yoga teacher." I responded, "Yes, and with Paul, both of us were tearing up. This is just Good Stuff!" Ed picked up on this, "Yes, Good Stuff. Feel how you get this meaning that is going on here when you recognize that this is Good Stuff happening with Paul and the others." He went on, "The thing I am really struck by in this is these qualities of depth, of deepness, these qualities of goodness, the quality of exploration of things that strike me as the Mysteries of Life, and how open you are to pursuing your curiosity with these Mysteries."

I felt seen and heard. "That's really true, Ed." He responded, "It strikes me that you enter realms of profoundness. And do these realms not have some sort of transcendent quality about them? That's the curiosity I have ... So what if you would just feel that transcendence for a moment. Notice the power that all these encounters have for you – and this just in this one day alone! Notice what happens when you simply recognize the profound, perhaps mysterious nature of your engagement with individuals in this fashion and in this capacity. What do you notice in your mood?" I answered immediately, "Enjoyment. Fulfillment. Warmth. Energy. Aliveness! ... And the same thing happens when I write a blog entry."

"So the words that keep floating through my awareness as you talk about all these experiences, and when you are in touch with the value of this kind of engagement with people, are the words: Sacred, Holy, maybe even Grace. ... If I am "getting" your experience in all this, these experiences are as special and as precious and as heart-felt in many ways as any experiences you have had in life. I invite you to another experiment with language. When you hold these really wonderful experiences that you have just described, what happens if you just let the word 'LOVE' float around? ... Perhaps you could take that out and experiment with it. See if you bump into LOVE amidst all these other interesting things that you do."

Whew! Pause. ... As I shared all of this with Pat at the next morning's coffee, she could respond only with, "Kind of leaves one in a speechless place." I added, "Yes, and it speaks to what you do in deep conversations with your special friends as well." Pat shared, "I'm most struck with the word transcendent in describing these experiences."

So what is my Work, Pat's Work? Perhaps I could say our Work is "Finding Love In Sacred Conversation." Pat would express it more poetically, "May we dance and play in Mystery." So may this continue to be our Work. And may we celebrate the joy we experience in living our Work. Amen!