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Weaving Together The Spiritual and Psychological :

One Person's Tapestry

I became a spiritual director “by accident.” For me, therapy was the favored process because of a transformative experience in my 30s that tilted my perceptions in favor of its life-changing power. Yet even in therapy, I was anchored by a strong spiritual connection causing me to interpret the change in terms of God’s overarching guidance and presence.

This began a decades-long search for weaving these two powerful forces together—the psychological and spiritual—in the various Christian ministries in which I was involved. The lines got blurry, and increasingly, I found it difficult to separate the two strands. The purpose and content of my interactions with people I served seemed similar.

I was heartened recently when I read Lynette Harborne’s book, *Psychotherapy and Spiritual Direction: Two Languages, One Voice?*¹ She made a detailed examination of the two languages in these disciplines, and drew a satisfying conclusion, that the process in therapy and spiritual direction are “essentially the same.” She elaborated the way those

processes coalesce and support each other, verifying my own observations and experience.

This stimulates me to survey the route I have traveled to arrive at this same conviction.

This is the story I am telling here—of my formation as a spiritual director in the context of these interwoven psychological and spiritual forces. How did my own life events lead me inexorably to the moment-by-moment experience I have today in a spiritual direction session where the psychological and spiritual are joined in fluid grace?

My story is not isolated. It mirrors that of others who have been influenced by trends in the larger culture and times. I was raised in a strong Christian tradition at a time and in an environment where neither therapy or spiritual direction were common; in the 1970s, I joined others in the gravitational pull toward therapy popular at the time, resulting in a life-giving challenge to my somewhat constricted version of faith; and twenty years later I “fell into” the work of spiritual direction beginning to gain ascendancy in some communities, simply by responding to others’ spontaneous requests to meet with me.

Seeing the Pattern

I want to unveil the tapestry of my life with its mysterious intertwining of spiritual and psychological influences over time. Since I cannot separate the threads, I look for an underlying *pattern*. I know that the character of my personal life with God became substantively different, changing my sense of calling and affecting the way I approach spiritual direction. In addition to external forces in the changing culture that influenced

the direction of my life, I looked for deeper internal processes at work in changing my sense of self in relationship to God. Beatrice Bruteau's description of growth in prayer ("Insight and Manifestation: A Way of Prayer in a Christian Context²), gave me a lens through which to view the changing tapestry of my relation to self and to God: the way that my *prayer* changed over time. It was God penetrating my sense of self, a *Divine therapeutic intervention!* God was the weaver.

Bruteau sees prayer as uniting us to our true selves and to God, and outlines a five-stage process. We begin with the *prayer of petition*—where we come to Jesus and simply ask for what we need, focused more on the outcome we desire than on the One who gives. Gradually, this may produce curiosity and a more “serious interest in Jesus” leading to the *prayer of appreciation*, where we are looking intently at Jesus, seeking to emulate and follow him. Over time we are drawn into face-to-face communication with Jesus—the *prayer of dialogue*. Now the energy is moving between us in both directions—toward Jesus and from him. At this point, we begin experiencing our own *being* in a new way; we feel as though we are finding our true self, “a more rounded and secure personality.” The next stage presses us deeper into the *prayer of intimacy* where we are no longer looking *at Jesus*; we are looking *into* Jesus, and thus to God the Father and out on the world through the eyes of Jesus. Our point of viewing has changed.

Simplicity of Childhood Faith

In an utterly natural and unconscious way, psychological and spiritual elements blended in my journey, beginning in childhood. I was well taught in the scriptures, and prayer was

part of daily family life. In teen years, I was intrigued with the romantic love imagery of Song of Songs, interpreted as a picture of Christ wedded to the Church, his bride. As a young woman, I was praying for an earthly wedding, a possibility that seemed as though it would be denied me. I reached the ripe age of thirty-seven without a ripple or sign that any male wanted me. I hid my misery, burying myself in a bright and promising career in Christian youth ministry. I had no psychological insight into my dilemma. The only outlet I knew was in the spiritual realm, where I was stuck at the simple level of the *prayer of petition*. The problem with the prayer of petition, writes Bruteau, is that “the one who prays is more interested in getting the job done than interested in Jesus.”² For me, the simplicity of “asking in order to receive” became simplistic, because I passively waited for God to act. When he did not give me my heart’s desire, I felt I must suppress my desire. I was not yet hungry for intimacy with this God. I praised *agape*, but longed for *eros*.

The form of religion I had espoused in my childhood was constrictive in its treatment of sexuality. Such a religion “must also preserve immaturity,” writes Kenneth Leech.

“Religious doctrines and forms may become instruments of fear, of defense against the experience of reality, instead of signals of enriched experience. Religion and sex are inextricably linked, and the honest facing of human sexuality is vital to spirituality. The sexually immature person cannot bypass the quest for sexual integrity in his search for spirituality.”³ My parents and other spiritual mentors had inadvertently and unfortunately disparaged sexuality and the body in subtle ways.

Born Again in Therapy

This created confusion in me during my thirties. As my unhappiness deepened, I finally became willing to seek therapy, a modality beginning to gain ascendancy as a way to solve personal problems. It was a life-saving decision and I was an apt client. Three months into my therapy, a crucial shift occurred at home one day after a critical session. I experienced a mystical moment of transformation, a coming home to my body, my sexuality, and to my Self. I remember crying out, "I'm glad I'm a girl!" then running to the mirror and seeing someone I did not recognize—a quality of inner radiance and energy that cannot be fully explained by human intervention. I loved the person I saw. A cry of gratitude to God welled up within me. In Bruteau's terms, this was akin to the "*prayer of appreciation*," coming from a "gradually increasing penetration into the interiority of Jesus in its dynamic and personal reality."² I was looking into the face of Christ and knew I was totally loved.

Bruteau suggests that "those who have their petitions granted find that their attention moves from their private concern to a sense of awe in the presence of anyone who can do such great deeds."² I had not yet been granted my petition (for marriage), but I had just experienced a much deeper gift – the gift of total transformation. My interpretation needed radical terms to express it. I told others, "I was born again in therapy." I felt vibrantly alive. My physical appearance and my behavior with men reflected this.

My idea of *who God was* changed radically, and a new freedom emerged in our relationship. I was loved, not judged. Old neurotic habit patterns had to die, and I flung

them off like outworn garments. It was the classic break from an inherited restrictive religious tradition and a move to a personal connection where I made a conscious choice to embrace God who loved me *as I was*. Over the next eighteen months, I came into my own, a true self in companionship with God. Exactly two years after my rebirth experience, I walked down the aisle to enter into a joyful marriage that became another pathway to knowing my self and God.

Dialogue With The Other

Inevitably, my prayer began to move toward the *prayer of dialogue* Bruteau describes as “experiencing *being* in a new way.”

The one who prays sees deeper into Jesus. This is quite different from looking at his picture, studying reports about him, analyzing his qualities, reasoning about them, and trying to draw lessons from them. In a person-to-person relationship, the intercommunication itself is a living reality. . . One becomes larger, and there is a release of new energy.... We feel that our individual selfhood has somehow matured and come into its own. Our description of ourself has changed. We feel forgiven, “saved.” We are very aware of the duality in the relationship and we enjoy it. The pleasure comes from the sense of the other being other and affirming us from his position of otherness.²

I was enjoying the “otherness” in my life and in my marriage. The presence of an “other” in my life opened me to God, the holy Other, a person with whom I was in dialogue. The energy flowed in both directions. I felt known, attended to.

A piercing question arises, in the context of my present life and work: *What if I had gone for spiritual direction when I was in my 30s*—those years so full of misery and anguish? I have wrestled with this question in the light of what I am being taught about the listening process. Suppose someone had asked me to talk about my prayer? About how I expected God to meet my thwarted hungers for love and fulfillment? Spiritual direction may have been going on under many guises, but the discipline was unknown in my subcultural environment in the 1950s. I also did not think of going to see a pastor for counsel because I felt a pastor's spiritual framework was identical to my own and that he offered nothing beyond that. I needed to be touched at the core of my soul where unspoken and unknown wounds lay festering.

Kenneth Leech says that “spiritual direction necessarily involves the psyche. It concerns itself with issues of distress, inner conflict and upheaval, and mental pain. The Christian mystics tell us that...self-awareness is the necessary prelude to the knowledge of God.”⁴

A wise spiritual guide should not have been deceived by my competent façade. She might have seen that my angst and torment indicated unresolved emotional needs, and a failure to have done the basic work of separating from my parents and from the tentacles of a version of religious faith that kept me bound to self-hatred and that bolstered a false self. She might have raised questions that opened me to seeing God and my faith in fresh ways, and helped me see my need to come to terms with my aborted psychosexual development.

Yet, my entire experience in therapy was immersed in a sense of God's presence and work. Yes, my therapist deserves some credit (and he had previously been a pastor), but in hindsight, I see how firmly I was held in God's palm. Despite the narrowness of the religious faith I had been taught, my firmly rooted relationship with God gave me an anchor. Thus therapy sent me into God's arms for a deeper reassurance and guidance than the therapist could give me. I was listening to God – through the therapist's words and demeanor. And my therapist had no power to give me the deliverance from self-hatred and opening to God's love that occurred on that April day in 1967. I called it a miracle, and miracles are God's domain.

Balancing Action and Contemplation

Our first ten years of marriage were spent in Chicago in a ministry together. We helped found the Urban Life Center, a program for young college students, who were eager to leave their suburban campuses and come to the inner city to experience the urban scene. They were making primitive attempts to live out altruistic ideals of their faith in the turbulent environment of Chicago in the 1970s. They needed discerning guidance in navigating the inevitable clashes that occurred in confronting the disillusioning realities of urban life.

It was during this period of time that I engaged in the plethora of psychological venues rife in the 1970s, sampling various therapies, encounter groups, and enrolling in

professional training for group leaders. I was naturally attuned to creative processes that invited inner change, and my work life mirrored those interests and abilities.

At the end of the decade, my husband and I were feeling restless for change, and took a three month sabbatical to assess our life work direction. While away, I met a pastor who casually remarked to me one day that he was going to see his “spiritual director.” The term was new to me, and I was shocked. “Spiritual *director?*” I exclaimed. *Why would a person allow anyone else tell them what to do?* I thought. That was my naive interpretation. “Spiritual direction” did not sound as enlivening as the exciting psychological work with which I was familiar. Yet I was yearning for something I could not name.

We moved to Boston to begin a new chapter in our lives. It was a classic midlife transition, a movement toward the contemplative dimension of my spiritual life to balance my immersion in activism. I was hungry for still pools of quiet, and found rich sources to feed that hunger. I encountered Anglo- and Roman Catholic traditions that are comfortable with contemplative silence. I began going on annual silent retreats where I received spiritual direction for the first time. I remember one retreat in particular that culminated in a deep realization of my vocation. I titled my retreat photo journal, “My Vocation is Love.” Reading the Song of Songs awakened in me a wistful longing for intimacy with the Divine Lover.

“I slept, but my heart was awake. Hark, my beloved is knocking..I opened to my beloved, but my beloved had turned and gone. . I sought him, but found him not; I called, but he gave no answer.”⁵

I had intimations of a possible “dark night” awaiting me, if I followed the Beloved. I wrote:

I stand at a threshold. God beckons me across it, and out into the night. I had hoped for a happier ending to the story—to fall into the embrace of the Beloved at the door. But I am beckoned to a different search. I feel the reluctance of which Merton speaks—in leaving old consolations: the use of the imagination and the experience of affection and emotion. Yet the beloved draws me out into the night and I follow.

It was always Merton who spoke to me on retreats. His book on *Contemplative Prayer* is worn threadbare from many repeat readings. I was being inexorably drawn into the Beloved’s arms, and, all unawares, slowly into a dark night. I was getting glimpses of the *prayer of intimacy* that Bruteau describes as the stage of prayer following naturally from the prayer of dialogue. This is where “what Jesus *is* communes directly with what one is. . .One can no longer be said to be ‘looking at’ Jesus [but] one has looked right *into* him as he has looked into oneself.”²

Finding a Life Work

In Boston, my husband and I founded a ministry called Life/Work Direction. Its stated purpose was “to provide spiritual direction for persons wishing to integrate their faith and work.” The use of the words *spiritual direction* was generic to me at the time, and not yet tied to historical meaning. I put heart and soul into this embryonic venture and created an in-depth vocational process that spoke to needs of young people, thrust onto a depressed labor market in the early 1980s and groping to find their way to meaningful work where they could live out their faith.

It was not hard to find people to respond to what we offered. A steady stream of persons came into our storefront in an obscure corner of the city. Then, early in its existence, something unexpected happened. Participants began approaching me at the end of the vocational process and asked me to continue meeting with them individually. Their goals were not clear, and it did not occur to me to become their spiritual director. My first instinct was to refer them to a therapist. After all, therapy had been life-changing for me. Then one day a young woman approached me saying, “I don’t know what you do, but *whatever it is, I want to do it with you.*” Shortly after that, my colleagues took me aside and told me pointedly, “Eunice, these persons are asking to work with *you.*” I was not to refer them. An embryonic sense of calling was emerging. Being at a loss to define my work with others, since I was not a therapist, but knowing I needed to be under supervision, I joined a “spiritual direction supervision group” at the retreat center I had frequented. No one in the group questioned my presence. I felt accepted, and started seeing a spiritual director regularly.

When a special “dream retreat workshop” was offered the next summer, I eagerly signed up. Dreams had been the catalyst for so much of my change. My journal was full of dreams I had been recording ever since my therapy. At the end of the workshop, I knew I needed to see someone for supervision of my work since I wanted to continue my work with dreams—my own, and those of others to whom I was companion. I was referred to Russell Holmes, a Carmelite priest who was currently director of training at the local Jung Institute. I was totally unaware that this would eventually morph into my own analysis, leading me on a long and arduous journey into the depths of my unconscious, and ultimately to “breakdown and breakthrough.”

Dreams Lead the Way Deeper

The valley I was entering contained a “slough of despond” beyond my imagining. Over the next three years, dreams tracked my way into a Jobean abyss where I had to let go of my presumptions and willfulness, and surrender to complete dependence on a God I did not fully know. My body responded by breaking down with a series of perplexing and undiagnosable physical symptoms. I felt tormented by God; my desolation felt total. My inner process came to a head in an encounter with God at the foot of the cross during one annual retreat. God was stripping my soul bare of hubris and willful effort, an essential development if I was to companion others in utter dependence on God to do the work. I found St. John of the Cross’s poetry immensely comforting in expressing the cry of my soul:

Why, since you wounded this heart, don't you heal it?

And why, since you stole it from me, do you leave it so,

*and fail to carry off what you have stolen?
Extinguish these miseries, since no one else can stamp them out;
and may my eyes behold you, because you are their light,
and I would open them to you alone.
O spring like crystal! If only, on your silvered-over faces,
you would suddenly form the eyes I have desired,
that I bear sketched deep within my heart.⁶*

During my ordeal in analysis, my work with people deepened, for I was no longer afraid of anyone's pain. I did not need to fix anyone; after all, I could not fix myself. My analyst's perspective as a Carmelite was in synch with his Jungian training. As Leech suggests, "we can derive a great deal from Jung's work about the character of spiritual direction."⁷ Russell's spirit was that of a contemplatively oriented spiritual director. Whenever I talked to him about my work with others, he quietly and steadily turned the focus on *me*, indicating I was not to *fix* people. This positively predisposed me toward the contemplative emphasis toward which I was drawn.

Year by year, I continued my work with individuals. But gradually, I began questioning my identity. I was flying by the seat of my pants, in a way. Was I a spiritual director? Wouldn't it be responsible to get preparation from persons who were experienced in the discipline?

I knew there was a way to pursue this. I had been introduced to Shalem Institute's programs at a regional conference in 2004. We were divided into small groups, and my good fortune was to be placed with six other women who naturally bonded, and decided to continue meeting, as we have done ever since. It became a solid place for the contemplative orientation to be nourished. Over time, as the existence of Shalem's Program of Spiritual Guidance beckoned, with the encouragement of my "sisters," I enrolled.

The Basic Question Arises

Entry into the program changed everything and raised the seminal question I am posing here: *How are the spiritual and psychological elements of growth related?* At that time, Shalem placed a strong emphasis on the distinction between therapy and spiritual direction. I became immediately alert and eagerly delved into the reading that delineated these differences.

A barrage of questions haunted me:

--Was I to abandon my psychological insights and instincts?

--I had experienced radical change in my own life; was I to relinquish that desire for change in others?

--Were others attracted to working with me in part because I appeared to be an agent of change?

--Was it a matter of simply learning a new soul language? I heard certain phrases from Shalem staff that sounded like jargon to me. I wondered if I just needed to learn to word my questions differently.

--Was God trying to get my attention about deepening my spiritual practices, particularly my prayer? I was still a learner in contemplative prayer.

Since my calling as a spiritual director was nested within my work as a counselor at Life/Work Direction, I had to take a closer look at my approach that was an undefined blend of spiritual and psychological insights. Now that I would be more clearly defining myself as a “spiritual companion” (my preferred term), questions about spiritual directees arose:

Many of these persons did not come to me explicitly describing the presenting issue as their prayer. What were their expectations with regard to the vast array of topics about their life and work they tended to introduce in our conversations, and what kinds of responses were they looking for? Would this now change if I saw myself as a spiritual director?

At the same time that I pondered these questions, I continued to feel grounded in my basic motivation. I knew I was called to accompany others in their inner spiritual journey, a path that led to a deepening connection with a God of unconditional love. I plunged into the Shalem program, blindly, but trustingly, not sure how answers to my questions would unfold. It was abundantly clear to me that the program’s impact would be primarily on

my own spiritual growth and development—the basic qualification for my inner work with others.

It was during my first residency in the program that the issue of the subtle but marked distinction between psychological and spiritual work arose. I was dismayed, wondering what would happen with my tendency to listen *analytically* for the sake of *understanding*. Could I learn, and as I called, to listen *contemplatively* for the sake of *discernment*, a distinction suggested by some authors? ⁸

I went through a sequence of reactions: I began by being defensive. I noticed some of my peers seemed to either ignore or be unaware of psychological factors in a spiritual direction. I saw this as limiting their work. In my initial peer group meeting I was told that I was not a suitable candidate for their group because I was “too psychological.” My confusion was complete.

My second reaction was to enter a period of intense self-criticism. I tried to get the hang of the contemplative approach, ask the right questions, and use the special words that seemed to be *de rigueur*. I felt like someone struggling to put on an ill-fitting coat, and finding an extra sleeve. It did not seem as though my peers were having any difficulty asking sincere evocative questions that deepened others’ responses. Their simplicity and profundity spoke to me powerfully. I felt awkward and ignorant.

A third reaction emerged out of the crucible of my own anguished prayer at the end of the first residency. I listened thirstily to the seminar on psychological and spiritual work, and to a question-and-answer session on transference. I was at home with these issues, though still puzzled as to what God wanted to do with me in particular regarding them. At the end of the concluding 36-hour retreat of the residency, I walked the labyrinth alone with God and laid it all at his feet. There on the hillside, God gently affirmed me for *who I was* at that moment in time. I was reassured that God accepted the rich texture of my insights and instincts, that they were part of the tapestry of my life and calling and that I was not to try to “erase” part of my self. I released my questions to God, whom I trusted to show me the way.

The Prayer of Intimacy Alters the Concept of Self

A fourth dimension evolved as my prayer began to change. The *prayer of intimacy* that had begun in me had a home to nourish its growth. Bruteau describes some of the shift that was becoming familiar to me:

What has happened is that one has shifted what one means by “myself.” We had thought that the quintessence of selfhood was individuation; now it appears that...this entering into, sharing the consciousness of, another self is the most characteristic act of a self.²

The program I was entering would increase my desire for that intimacy in sharing Christ’s life. I was hopeful and expectant, as I became familiar with being in a cloud of unknowing.

I grasped the meaning of allowing God to *pray through me* for others. Gerald May's *The Awakened Heart*⁹ was one of many readings that helped me relax into love in the way I approached my spiritual practices. The experience of God's presence (as described by Brother Lawrence and *The Cloud of Unknowing*) became natural and more constant. I approached my spiritual directees differently. There was more of a blend of my psychological and spiritual orientations. I was glad for my keen observations, but did not need to act on them to "fix" as much. My spirit was different in my relationships with my colleagues at work and with my husband. I opened my heart and mind to the possibility that God wanted me to approach my calling more in the contemplative mode, though I was not yet "there" in terms of it being fully integrated.

A culminating movement came during the second residency. I cannot definitively say what it was that marked the decided shift. For those ten days I was grounded in God's loving presence in a way that was new. My sometimes-crippling self-consciousness was gone. God's presence was deeply internal; it may not have been evident to anyone around me, but I knew its "truth in the inward parts" of my soul. Along with this, came a hopeful yearning, a hunger, for a new way of being with my spiritual directees and in my peer group and Seven Sisters Group. This was new, this inner *desire* for the contemplative approach, not of my own effort or will, but an upwelling of the Spirit from within. I was startled to find a *natural* patience emerging at the deeper core, tempering my characteristic eagerness and quickness. A willingness to wait has emerged as genuine, and not something put on.

This is still too new to make any claims of having “arrived.” It simply feels rooted and planted by God, not the result of my effort. It was a foretaste of what Bruteau calls the *prayer of coincidence*, “which is...experiencing Jesus’ consciousness of himself...It is the interior of [Jesus’] experience that is thrown open to the one who prays...[and] the one who prays must be conscious of it *from the inside*, and there is no way to do this except by experiencing it as being true of oneself.² The distinction between my own experience and that of God within me was mercifully missing or blurred. I knew what it was to simply *be*. Even if it were only for a few hours in a day, or a week, it was God’s gift for me to savor.

Spiritual and Psychological Bypassing

What are we then to make of this tapestry of spiritual and psychological threads in our work? How will this work itself out in the future? As the discipline of spiritual direction becomes increasingly professionalized (as Edwards, Leech and May discuss),¹⁰ a firm dividing line between psychological counseling and spiritual direction is hard to maintain in the real world. In fact, as a result of deliberating on my own experience, I find the line is anything but firm. Rather, *who I am* as created by God and shaped by his spiritual companionship with me is what determines the blend of those elements we label “spiritual” and “psychological” as though they were opposed.

As I watch the way young persons in the church are now gravitating toward spiritual communities and processes as much as therapy, I see a different snare. When spiritual direction comes with little or no financial cost, a subtle danger arises that persons who

would benefit from psychological work fall into what John Welwood calls “spiritual bypassing”—“the tendency of persons in spiritual communities to use their spiritual involvements to bypass certain kinds of personal, emotional unfinished business.”¹¹

Writing in the 1980s, Welwood saw how young people who were flocking to gurus and adopting Eastern meditation practices seeking enlightenment, were tempted to use these practices to make up for developmental deficiencies, while lacking a stable self structure. Today, we face a similar snare in another sector of the religious culture as some people ask, “Why pay a big fee to a psychotherapist in a somewhat alien and forbidding clinical setting and be stigmatized by a diagnosis?” It is far easier to go to a pastoral assistant or someone with a guru-like reputation who will offer you another way around your pain, and will not ask you to probe that messy “unfinished business.”

From reading Welwood’s description, I intuit the existence of a parallel danger—“psychological bypassing”—wherein even educated and sophisticated persons come to rely on therapists to help solve life’s problems, thereby ignoring the gaping wound of the “God hole” from which they may unconsciously suffer. Therapists themselves are sometimes reluctant to address matters of faith, leaving clients with a vacancy in their self-structure. Neither the psychological or spiritual can be passed over; both need to be joined in order to produce wholeness of life.

The Marriage of Spiritual and Psychological Work

Thus I find it significant that the dream given to me at the end of the closing 36-hour retreat during my final Shalem residency was a dream about marriage.

Two artist friends of ours, a married couple, were gathered in a large remodeled barn area for a dedication service. The atmosphere is Shalem-like. Someone up front is presenting Eucharist. Greta, wife in the couple, and another woman are to come forward to receive the elements and distribute them, one on either side of the presenter. Then Greta speaks to the group. She tells how she and her husband planned to move into this barn area and make it their living space and now she is so moved by what this group has done with the space, making it holy and meaningful. I experience her statement as a beautiful tribute. I am grateful.

Upon awaking, I knew this dream—like most dreams – is about *me* and the inner marriage within me. Upon reflection, I realized how apt it was that the dream was about this particular couple, because I strongly identify with both husband and wife—in their positive and negative qualities alike. The dream presents a marriage within me—a loving acceptance of the truth of my Self in all its parts, nurtured by God’s work: my eagerness to express and participate, my emotionality and analytic tendencies, together with a patient listening, a willingness to wait—essential qualities in my spiritual companionship. This couple enriches experience for others around them; and the dream accentuates the dedicatory nature of the occasion by the offer of Eucharist, reminding me of my own calling, offered to God as bread and wine. The placement in a *barn* – a place housing the peculiar wisdom of animal instincts, so useful in my work - transforms the ordinary into the holy. Since it took place in a Shalem atmosphere, I understand the dream to be paying tribute to Shalem’s influence on my growth.

In the end, I revel in the marriage of psyche and spirit in my calling. I acknowledge the mystery. Love for my directees, and love for God, and for myself blend. Love teaches me how to be fully present in each encounter. Together, we find our way to the heart of God. The path may not be straight, but often alternately messy and uplifting – a little like finding Eucharist in a barn.

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