

WELCOME BACK



Kindred Spirits – David Kreider

The Beauty of the Song: Embracing the Vulnerability of Others



Image: The Visitation by Jacopo Pontormo (1528)
Music: The Beauty of the Dancer – Sara Thomsen

Setting of Intention

- This morning we will focus on the integration of soul and role; weaving the beauty of the dancer within the beauty of the song.
- We will highlight core principles and practices of Circles of Trust®
- We will explore the language and landscape of vulnerability.
- We will honor the stories of illness and celebrate the wonder and wisdom of leading from within.



The place God calls you to is where your deep gladness
and the world's deep hunger meet.

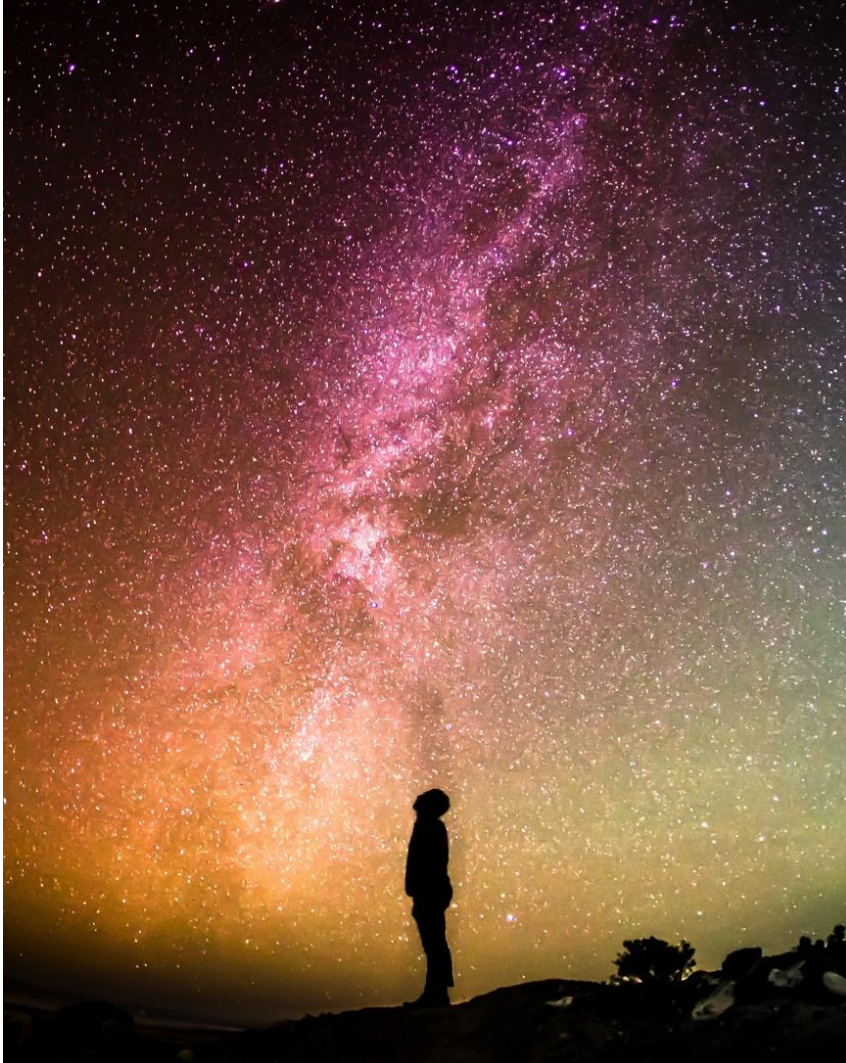
Frederick Buechner

Shaping Soul and Role (tending self and service)



Now I Become Myself

May Sarton



Now I become myself. It's taken
Time, many years and places;
I have been dissolved and shaken,
Worn other people's faces,
Run madly, as if Time were there,
Terribly old, crying a warning,
"Hurry, you will be dead before--"
(What? Before you reach the morning?
Or the end of the poem is clear?
Or love safe in the walled city?)
Now to stand still, to be here,
Feel my own weight and density!
The black shadow on the paper
Is my hand; the shadow of a word
As thought shapes the shaper
Falls heavy on the page, is heard.
All fuses now, falls into place
From wish to action, word to silence,
My work, my love, my time, my face
Gathered into one intense
Gesture of growing like a plant.
As slowly as the ripening fruit
Fertile, detached, and always spent,
Falls but does not exhaust the root,
So all the poem is, can give,
Grows in me to become the song,
Made so and rooted by love.
Now there is time and Time is young.
O, in this single hour I live
All of myself and do not move.
I, the pursued, who madly ran,
Stand still, stand still, and stop the sun!

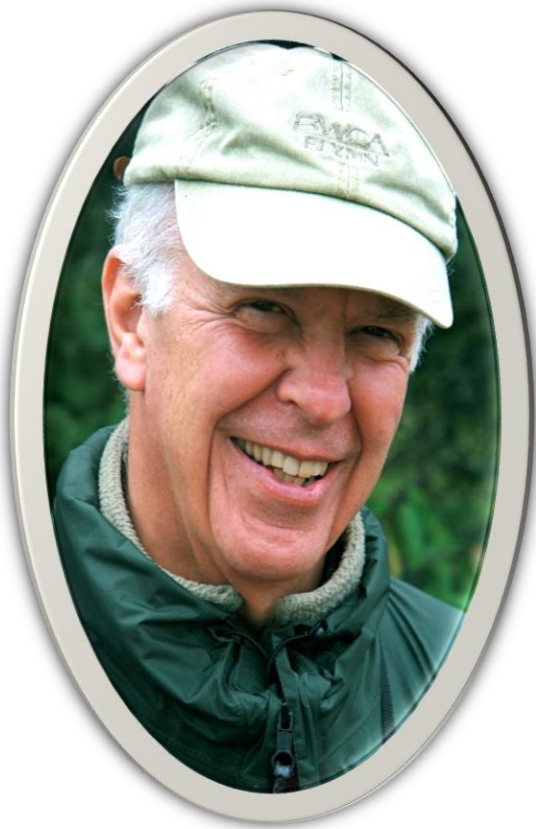


Henry Ossawa Tanner: The Banjo Lesson

Our deepest calling is to grow into our own authentic self-hood, whether or not it conforms to some image of who we ought to be.

As we do so, we will not only find the joy that every human being seeks—we will also find our path of authentic service in the world.

Parker J. Palmer



Parker J. Palmer

- Hidden Wholeness
- Mobius Strip
- Circles of Trust[®]
- Open, honest questions
- Touchstones
- Third Thing
- Habits of the Heart

www.couragerenewal.org




Hidden Wholeness

There is in all visible things an invisible fecundity,
a dimmed light, a meek namelessness,
a hidden wholeness.

This mysterious unity and integrity is wisdom,
the mother of all, Natura naturans.

Thomas Merton

Solitude



Solitude does not necessarily mean living apart from others; rather, it means never living apart from one's self. It is not about the absence of other people—it is about being fully present to ourselves, whether or not we are with others. **Community does not necessarily mean living face-to-face with others;** rather, it means never losing the awareness that we are connected to each other. It is not about the presence of other people—it is about being fully open to the reality of relationship, whether or not we are alone.

– Parker J. Palmer
from *A Hidden Wholeness*

Two Perspectives

Thomas Merton

- We make ourselves real by telling the truth.
- Love is our true destiny.
- We do not find the meaning of life by ourselves alone.
- We find it with one another.

Parker J. Palmer

- Inner life questions are the kind everyone asks with or without the benefit of God-talk
- Does my life have meaning and purpose?
- Do I have gifts the world wants and needs?
- Whom and what shall I serve?
- Whom and what can I trust?
- How can I rise above my fears?

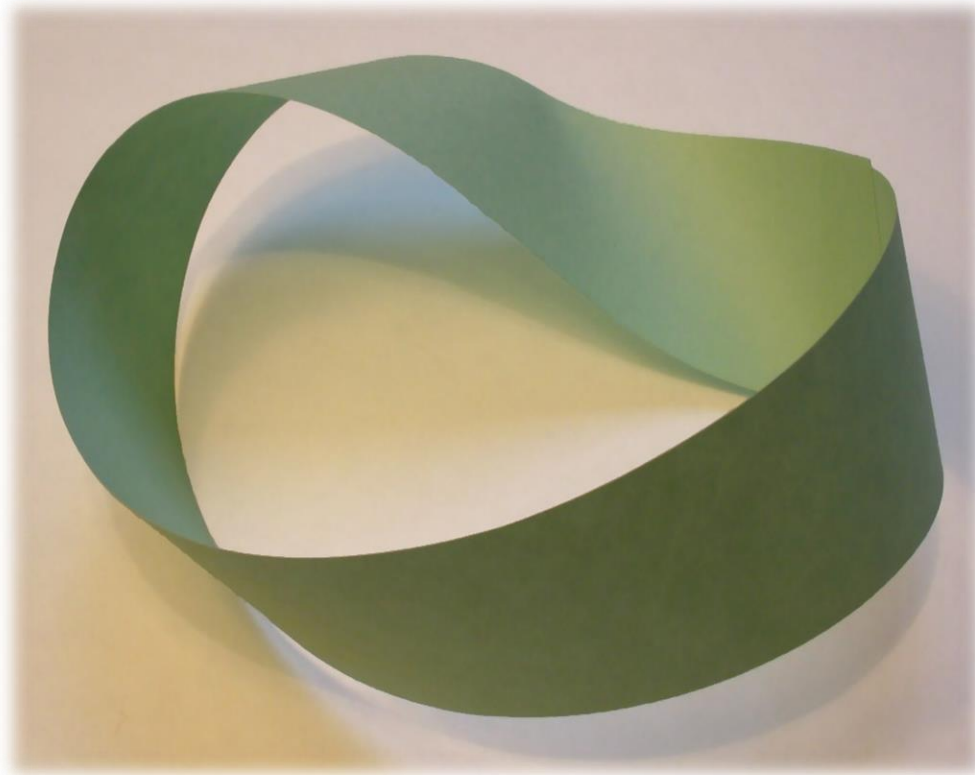
Circles of Trust[®]



A Quaker process of discernment that promotes deep listening to one's own voice and the voice of others. Invites "true self" to the forefront of consciousness; allows ego and intellect to take a back seat.

"a space between us that honors the soul"

Life on the Mobius Strip





Inner Stations of the Cross: Recognition – Resistance – Acceptance – Affirmation – Liberation

Promise of Paradox – A Celebration of Contradictions in the Christian Life

Parker J. Palmer

Circle of Trust® Touchstones

Circle of Trust® Touchstones

developed by Parker J. Palmer and the Center for Courage & Renewal
www.couragerenewal.org

Give and receive welcome.

People learn best in hospitable spaces.
In this circle we support each other's learning
by giving and receiving hospitality.

Be present as fully as possible.

Be here with your doubts, fears and failings
as well as your convictions, joys and successes,
your listening as well as your speaking.

What is offered in the circle is by invitation, not demand.

This is not a "share or die" event!
Do whatever your soul calls for, and know
that you do it with our support. Your soul
knows your needs better than we do.

Speak your truth in ways that respect other people's truth.

Our views of reality may differ, but speaking
one's truth in a Circle of Trust does not mean
interpreting, correcting or debating what
others say. Speak from your center to the
center of the circle, using "I" statements,
trusting people to do their own
sifting and winnowing.

No fixing, saving, advising or correcting.

This is one of the hardest guidelines for
those of us who like to "help." But it is
vital to welcoming the soul, to making
space for the inner teacher.

Learn to respond to others with honest, open questions...

instead of counsel or corrections. With such questions,
we help "hear each other into deeper speech."

Circle of Trust[®] Touchstones

Learn more about Circles of Trust[®] at www.couragerenewal.org/approach

When the going gets rough, turn to wonder.

If you feel judgmental, or defensive, ask yourself, "I wonder what brought her to this belief?" "I wonder what he's feeling right now?" "I wonder what my reaction teaches me about myself?" Set aside judgment to listen to others—and to yourself—more deeply.

Attend to your own inner teacher.

We learn from others, of course. But as we explore poems, stories, questions and silence in a Circle of Trust, we have a special opportunity to learn from within. So pay close attention to your own reactions and responses, to your most important teacher.

Trust and learn from the silence.

Silence is a gift in our noisy world, and a way of knowing in itself. Treat silence as a member of the group. After someone has spoken, take time to reflect without immediately filling the space with words.

Observe deep confidentiality.

A Circle of Trust depends on knowing that whatever we say will remain with the people to whom we choose to say it — whether in small groups or in the large circle — and will never be passed on to others without our explicit permission.

Know that it's possible...

to leave the circle with whatever it was that you needed when you arrived, and that the seeds planted here can keep growing in the days ahead.

Facilitators of Courage & Renewal programs use these Touchstones to define clear boundaries in a Circle of Trust, the kinds of boundaries that create safe space for the soul. While these Touchstones define how we relate in a retreat, they can be adapted to support workplaces, schools, communities, and other groups—any place where we want to honor the integrity of the individual and build relational trust.

Open, honest questions

- What does hope look like for you at this time?
 - If you were to write a book about your life, what would the title be?
 - What matters most to you at this time?
- What three words best describe what you are feeling following our conversation?

What image or poem or song etc. brings you comfort at this time?

At the End of the Day: A Mirror of Questions – John O'Donohue

What dreams did I create last night?

Where did my eyes linger today?

Where was I blind?

Where was I hurt without anyone noticing?

What did I learn today?

What did I read?

What new thoughts visited me?

What differences did I notice in those closest to me?

Whom did I neglect?

Where did I neglect myself?

What did I begin today that might endure?

How were my conversations?

What did I do today for the poor and the excluded?

Did I remember the dead today?

Where could I have exposed myself to the risk of something different?

Where did I allow myself to receive love?

With whom today did I feel most myself?

What reached me today? How deeply did it imprint?

Who saw me today?

What visitations had I from the past and from the future?

What did I avoid today?

From the evidence – why was I given this day?

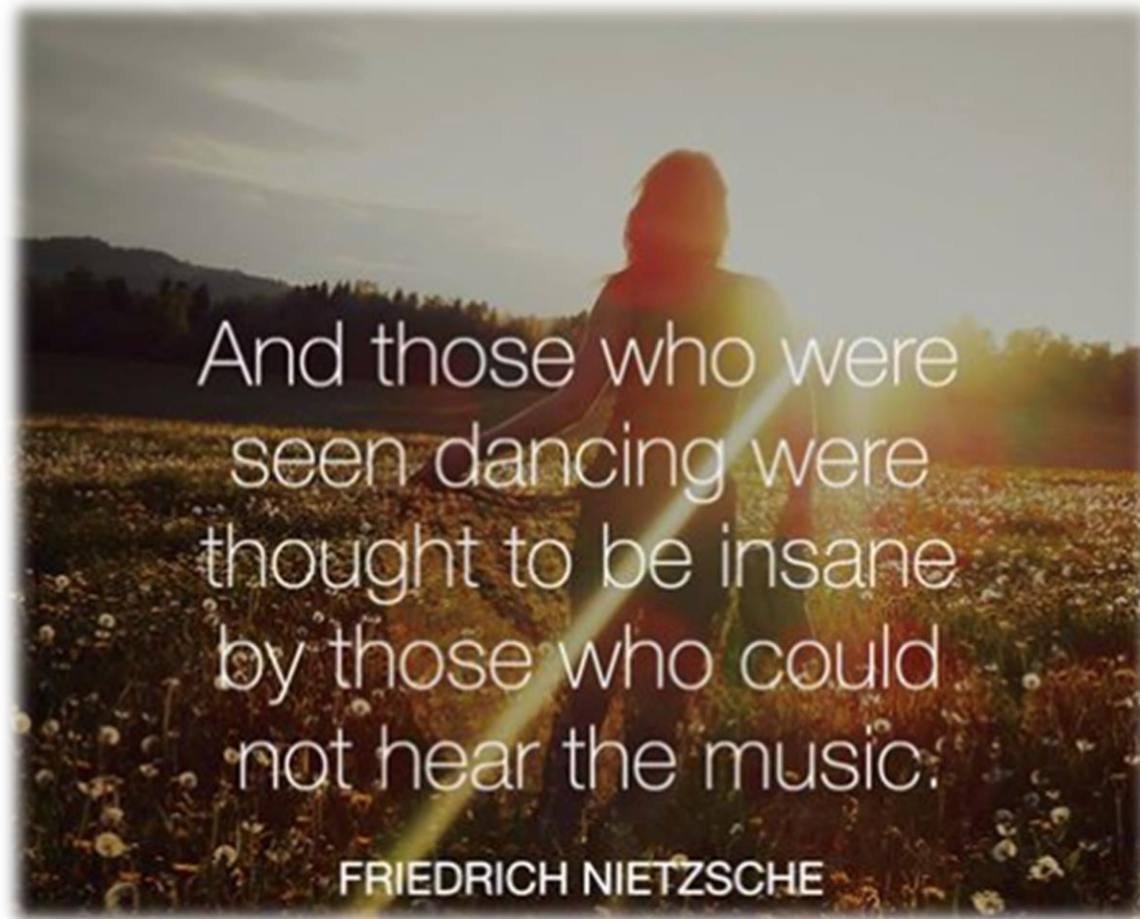
A third thing

A third thing:

any modality that invites one
to begin to indirectly explore
one's truth and integrity;
a poem, song, piece of music,
film, quote, book, story,
painting, image etc.



The Language of Vulnerability



And those who were
seen dancing were
thought to be insane
by those who could
not hear the music.

FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE

Power of Words



Words That Work

- Help me to understand...
 - Tell me more...
- He/she is very fragile at this time...(to family)
- I am sensing there is something you want to tell me...
 - I would like to learn more about your story...
 - Is now a good time to visit?...
 - What are you hearing in what I just said...
- It saddens me to not have the news that you were hoping for...
 - When one is sick, “they take to their bed”,
dying is illness magnified.

Never Say Die

Rachel Naomi Remen, MD

Death is just not part of the American Way of Life. In our culture that so values youth and mastery and control, death is kept out of sight and under the table. I once asked a patient how she felt about dying and she responded "Embarrassed." Over the years other patients have told me that they were worried that they would not be able to die "right" or die "well" with the same anxiety one might worry about a social event like a dinner party going astray.

Yet every death has its own deep integrity and meaning. In the past few weeks I have become acutely aware of how rarely we even hear the word "dead" as in THE DAY OF THE DEAD and how many other ways we have found or created so as not to have to say this word out loud. So here is a list of the many ways we in America might avoid saying THE DAY OF The DEAD.



AIRPORTS SEE MORE
SINCERE KISSES THAN
WEDDING HALLS
THE WALLS OF HOSPITALS
HAVE HEARD MORE
PRAYERS THAN
THE WALLS OF CHURCHES

Sometimes there are no words...



To run from vulnerability is to run from the essence of our nature,
the attempt to be invulnerable is the vain attempt to become
something we are not and most especially,
to close off our understanding of the grief of others.

Consolations – David Whyte

Tell me about the beauty within you...
what do you see?



Noticing...Reflecting...Healing: 55 Word Stories

An excellent practitioner (teacher, leader) notices what others may not.
Awareness and presence in the practitioner-patient-family encounter allow
the hidden to become visible.

Healing occurs on many levels not only for the patient and family, but also
for the practitioner and the team.

As we touch the vulnerable places in others who may be very ill and
frightened, we have the opportunity to heal vulnerable places
within ourselves.

We need tools, such as writing, to do this.

Lucille Marchand, MD, BSN et al

Noticing...Reflecting...Healing:

55 Word Stories

Pain

So much suffering. It was as if the flood gates had finally opened, allowing years of turmoil, angst, and betrayal to come forth, burying us in your sorrow.

But why is this all about you? Rather, isn't it always all about you...

Noticing...Reflecting...Healing:

55 Word Stories

Paradox

The flowers were fading in the corner of the room.

She has been here too long.

Multiple admissions for a body breaking down: dementia, hyponatremia, aspiration, infection. A nursing home fall caused a brain bleed, and they chose surgery.

Her daughter is frustrated.

She doesn't hear the patient, who just wants to go home.

Noticing...Reflecting...Healing:

55 Word Stories

Perspective

The spreadsheets continue to absorb my every waking moment. I realize we have tough decisions to make but I also know I am not making them alone. I need to put this all in perspective. I will pause and take a walk up to the ICU and return with new eyes and a

Noticing...Reflecting...Healing:

55 Word Stories

Wonder

I wonder if there is such a thing as caring too much. Today I feel overwhelmed with sadness after three of my patients died. There seems to be no room to process this kind of reality. It's as though we are expected to just move on like nothing happened. Is this what vulnerability feels like?

Poetic Medicine

Straight to the
Heart of the Matter

My Machine

If I had a machine to use in a case like yours, I'd
use it on the nucleus that makes my feelings, to
deepen them.

I'd take a long time, like a monk at morning prayer,
before I spoke and turned each word into a
sign of passion. When I told you,

Yes, the damage is more than anyone knew, I'd
hold you in my arms, desperately close like
death. I'd throw off the shame

of working in a reasoned way to find the answers
to your pain

Instead, I'd use an archaic neural poem and feel
the pull

of healing, skin to skin, instead of acting neither
man nor woman and doing the decent thing. The
ache would be a price worth paying

Jack Coulehan, MD

Honoring the Stories of Illness

Attention, Representation and Affiliation

As together, we health care professionals and patients delve into the challenges and rewards of serious storytelling in illness, we see with new clarity deep aspects of the illness, the sick person, the situation of care, and the person who cares for the sick.

We see, too, newly opening avenues toward the human affiliations that alone can ease suffering, those bonds that indeed unite us...with all who have suffered.

I want to tell you
about what I love
and
what I will miss
before I let go.



I need to tell
someone this
before I die...

I need to get these
words out,
they have been like
an albatross
around my neck my
entire life!



Stay with me



"The Power of Touch" -- an incredible oil painting by Meagan Wu, who is an undergraduate at Stanford University majoring in Art Practice and minoring in Biology with premedical studies.

The Challenge Before Us – the Possibility Within Us

- We've been so long into problem solving and critical analysis.
- We need a both/and approach rather than an either/or.
- Ways of thinking that we find comfortable – detachment from our own vulnerability
- Consequences when we are trained in only one way...when service becomes an industry
- We are not able to listen for meaning and Mystery – only to problem solve or critique or offer advice.
- Deductive reasoning has a way of silencing and reducing stories.
- Brain forms habits of mind around certainty – we are being invited to bless our uncertainty, to pause, to turn to wonder.

Gently turning...



Landscape of Vulnerability



Turning to Wonder

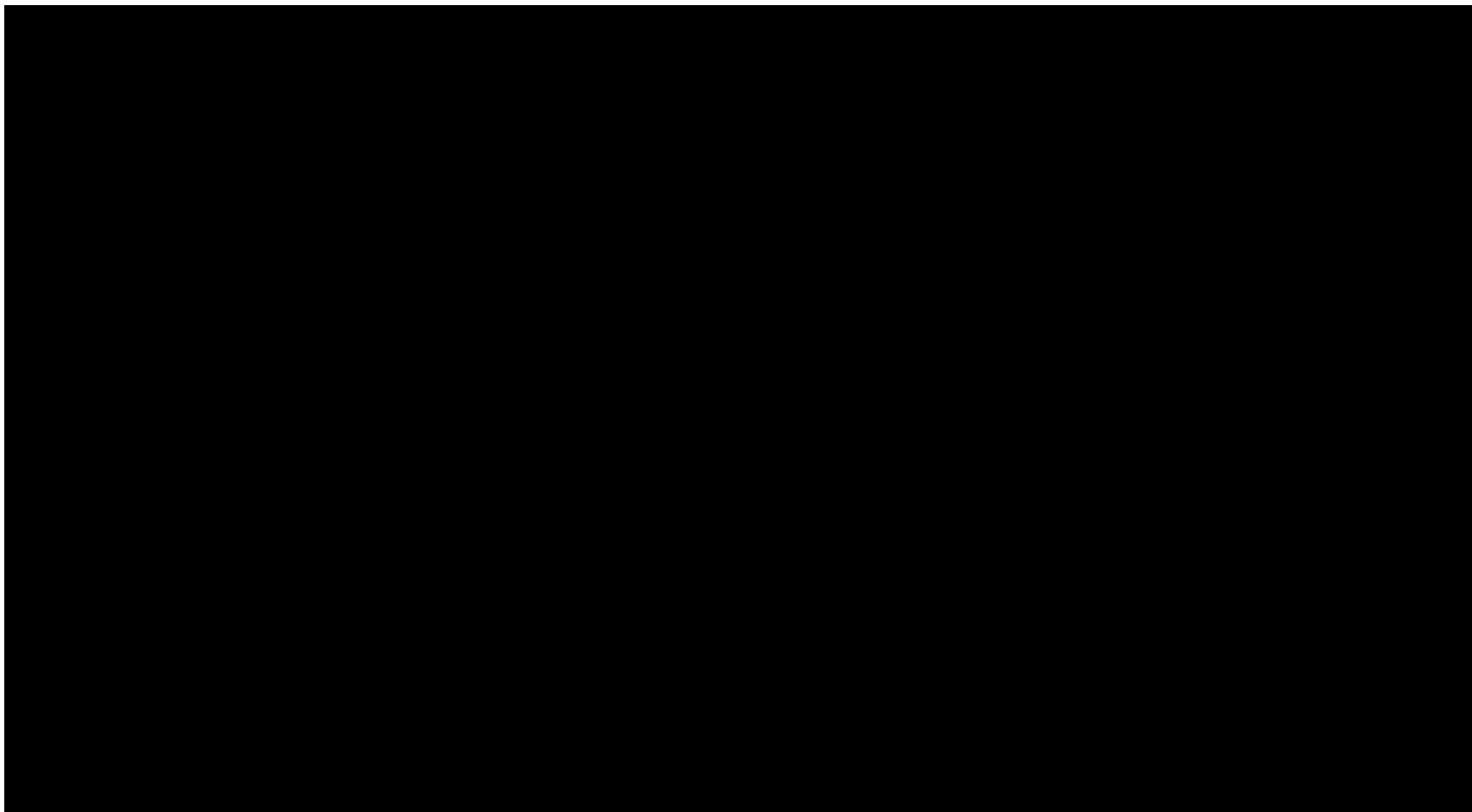


The more we're willing to seek out moments of collective joy and show up for experiences of collective pain—for real, in person, not online—the more difficult it becomes to deny our human connection, even with people we may disagree with

—BRENÉ BROWN



Empathy



Being Mortal

Atul Gawande

That makes a few conclusions clear:

that our most cruel failure is how we treat the sick and the aged is the failure to recognize that they have priorities beyond merely being safe and living longer; that the chance to shape one's story is essential to sustaining meaning in life; and that we have the opportunity to refashion our institutions, culture, and conversations to transform the possibilities for the last chapters of all of our lives.

Viriditas



Organizations as Machines, Organizations as Conversations

Two Core Metaphors and Their Consequences

Anthony L. Suchman, MD, MA

One factor contributing to the limited success of organizational change initiatives is the use of an outmoded conceptual model: the organization as machine. This metaphor leads to the creation of detailed blueprints for desired changes; invites unrealistic expectations of control; and creates anxiety, blame and defensiveness when events inevitably do not proceed according to plan, thus hindering the work.

An alternative conceptualization-the organization as conversation- portrays an organization not as a mere object upon which we can act but as self-organizing patterns of thinking (organizational identity and knowledge) and relating (organizational culture) that exist in the medium of human interaction in which we participate.



Everybody should be quiet
near a little stream and listen

“We are so obsessed with doing that we have
no time and no imagination left for being.
As a result, people are valued not for who they are
but for what they do or what they have
-for their usefulness.”

Thomas Merton



"What you encounter, recognize or discover depends to a large degree on the quality of your approach. Many of the ancient cultures practiced careful rituals of approach. An encounter of depth and spirit was preceded by careful preparation.

When we approach with reverence, great things decide to approach us. Our real life comes to the surface and its light awakens the concealed beauty in things. When we walk on the earth with reverence, beauty will decide to trust us. The rushed heart and arrogant mind lack the gentleness and patience to enter that embrace."

*— John O'Donohue,
Beauty: The Invisible Embrace*

Contemporary Violence

To allow oneself to be carried away by a multitude of conflicting concerns, to surrender to too many demands, to commit oneself to too many projects, to want to help everyone in everything is to succumb to violence.

Thomas Merton



Before I die

Before I die I want to FIND MY VOICE

Before I die I want to SUCCEED

Before I die I want to visit every continent

Before I die I want to Become Famous

Before I die I want to Morris Miles

Before I die I want to help as many people as I can

Before I die I want to make a impact on a child's life

Before I die I want to LIVE

Before I die I want to SEE GRAND KID

Before I die I want to Play Soccer

Before I die I want to Find my dream

DON'T
PUT
IT ON FB
IT'S ALREADY
ON A
WALL



So Then How Shall We Live?

- Cultivate a love of thin places
- Journaling, walking...
- Safeguard times of solitude and play
- Schedule virtual free days/evenings/weekends
- Cultivate a love of the arts
- Immerse yourself in nature
- Consider a Circle of Trust retreat
- I – AM – HERE (mindfulness practices)
- Practice random acts of kindness
- Turn to wonder
- Befriend your own story – both the ache and the awe
- Practice open, honest questions
- Mirror of Questions – examen
- Remember often in whose image you were made

Blessing Our Uncertainty

We look with uncertainty
beyond the old choices for
clear-cut answers
to a softer, more permeable aliveness
which is every moment
at the brink of death;
for something new is being born in us
if we but let it.

We stand at a new doorway,
awaiting that which comes...
daring to be human creatures,
vulnerable to the beauty of existence.
Learning to love.
--Anne Hillman



Gently turning...



We remember, we celebrate, we believe
In their own words...





*“I am not going far away...
I will be closer than ever before.”*

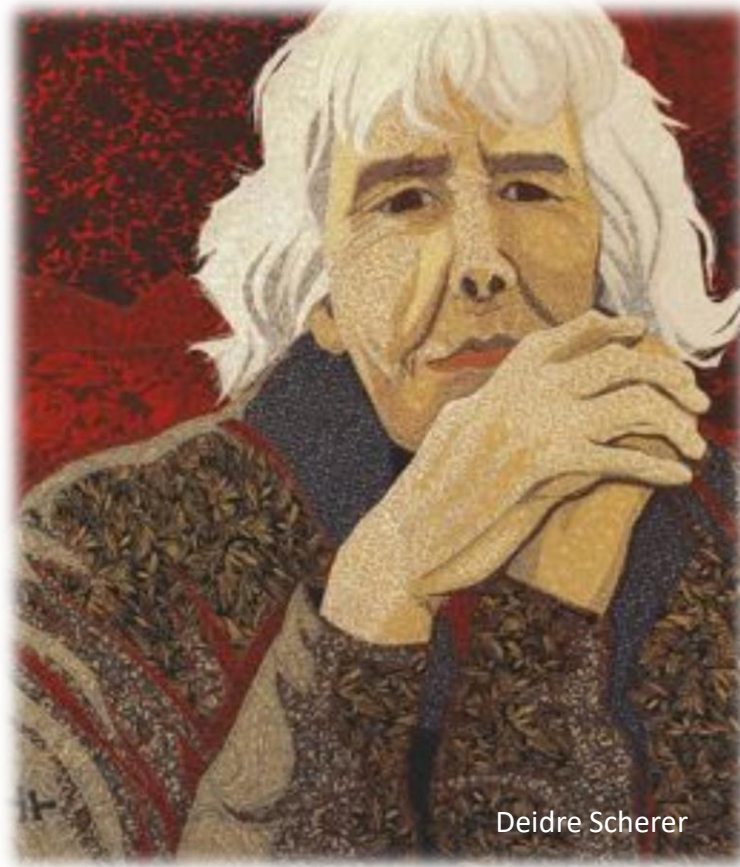


Deldre Scherer

“Please don’t let me die in pain.”



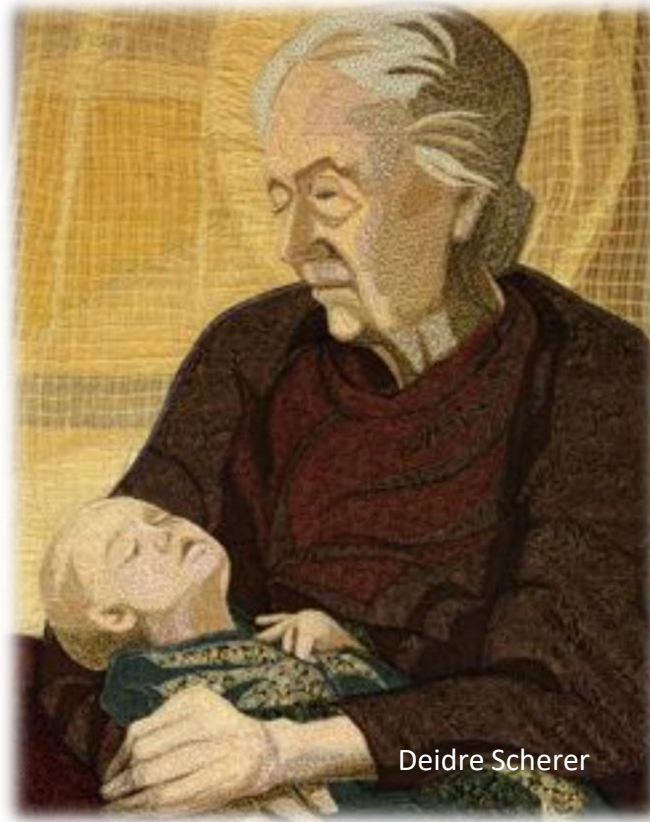
*“I feel safe knowing that you
will shelter me from the
darkness of the night.”*



“I wonder what life after this will be like...tell me what you think...”



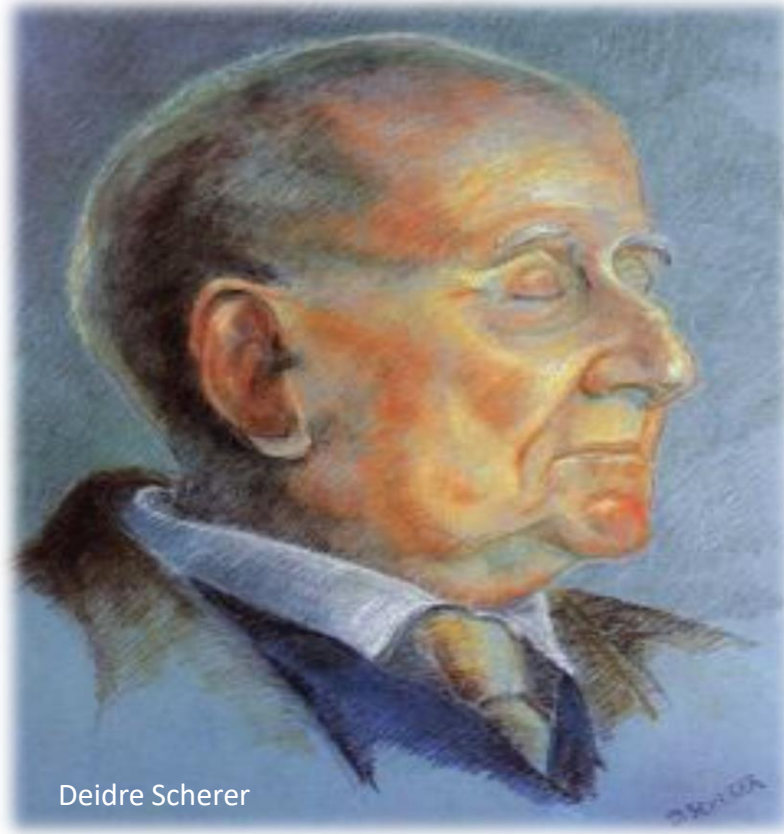
*“I wish I could start my life over again...
I have so many regrets.”*



*“I miss my mother so very much...
I wish she were here to hold me again.”*



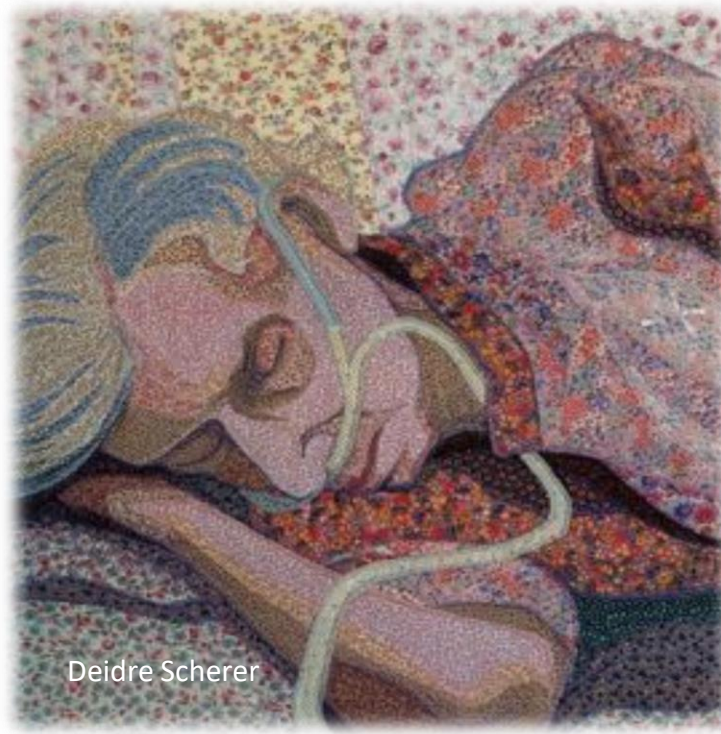
*“You will never know what he means to me...
seeing Sam has given me a reason to smile again.”*



*“When I close my eyes, I am afraid that
I will not wake up...
so I just try to stay awake all night long.”*



*“Love is all that matters when you don’t
know what tomorrow will bring.”*



*“It’s as though I am being held
captive inside my own body...
I need to be released from all that
keeps me holding on.”*



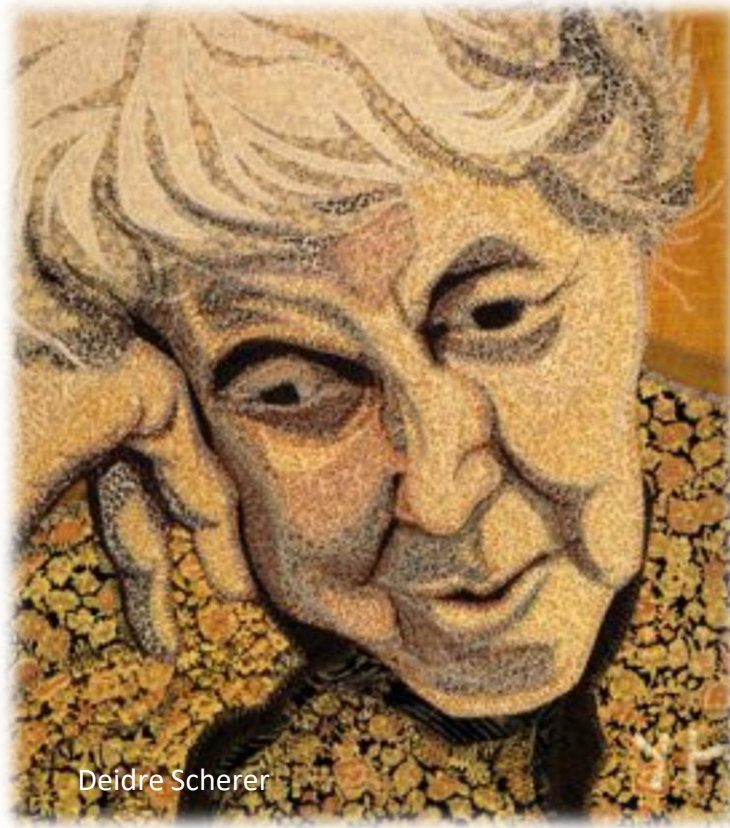
*“I don’t need things anymore...
I am at peace now because
I have seen the face of God!”*



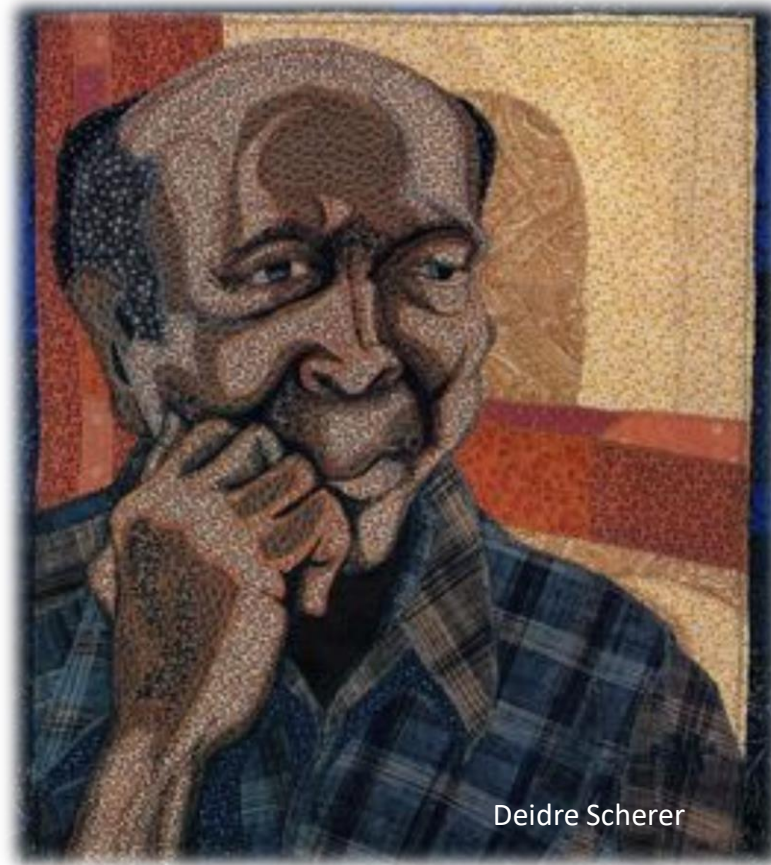
“There is so much I want to say to my children before I die, but I don’t have the strength to speak the words.... will you speak them for me ?”



*“Grandpa, will I be able to
hear your laugh after you die?”*



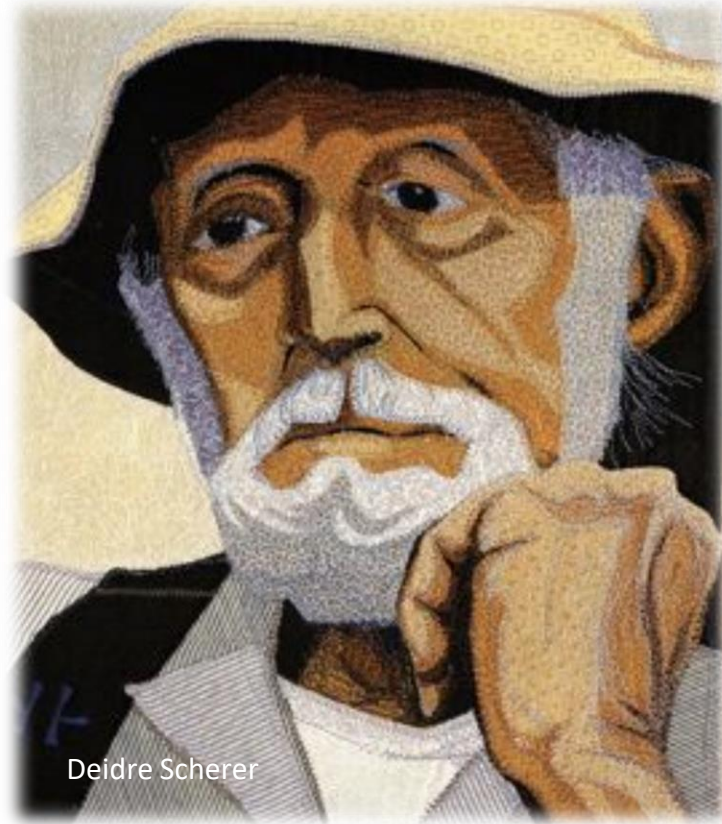
“Blessed assurance...Jesus is Lord!”



“Doctor, do you believe in God?”



*“Thank you for your
unconditional care for me
...especially when I feel
so unworthy of love at all.”*



*“I don’t worry so much about
when I will die, but I do worry about
how I will die.”*



*“I want to live just long enough to
see my grandchild’s face
smiling back at me.”*

love IS OUR ORIGIN
AND OUR DESTINY





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