



Purposeful Wanderings

A Monthly Newsletter for Clients and Friends of **The Road Not Taken**

Volume 13, Number 12 – December 2014

© 2014 Bradford L. Glass • www.RoadNotTaken.com

Create Balance ... by Living “In Nature’s Image”

“Nature does not hurry, yet everything is accomplished.” – Lao Tzu

If we stop for a moment and take a step back from everyday life, we find such struggle, whether it be strife around the world, local events, family drama (this one especially so during holiday season), or our own personal lives. In a world marked by chaos, uncertainty, stress and fear, it’s my view that we’ve lost sight of a deeper reality guiding our lives. As individuals, we seem to have denied ourselves connection with our uniqueness (that deep, innate creative essence that makes us special, or *soul*) and with our oneness (the unity and connectedness we share with all life, or *spirit*).

Often feeling lost, we blame *life* for our despair, because the only world we know lives outside ourselves. I think we have misidentified the enemy. **Life** has not created the lack of meaning so prevalent in society today, but rather the **way we see and think** about life that has left us in the quiet desperation of our own self-imposed limitation.

Life’s mystery, however, is hidden beneath its everyday chaos. Whenever faced with a challenge in life, I’ve learned to stop and ask myself, “What would nature do here?” From early childhood adventures, to an adult finding connection and peace in wilderness, to leading nature tours in some of the world’s most pristine locations, I’ve found inspiration in our natural world. With persistence, non-judgment and remarkable consistency, nature has taught me:

- to CREATE with **intention**. Listen for the inner voice, and honor the deep personal truth to which I am continually drawn. Question: Is my life an expression of what matters most to me? Lesson: life’s path is made by walking it, not by having it laid out ahead of time; devote my energy to the process of creation, from the heart – my truth.
- to LIVE with **awareness**. Possibility emerges from “the space between,” from emptiness; opportunity *depends* on uncertainty and change. Question: What is my relationship to silence? to chaos? to not knowing? Lesson: a personal culture of listening, inquiry and reflection offers a far more effective strategy for creating order than one of command and control; allow my mind to empty, be present for what is true in this moment – pure possibility.
- to ACT with **courage**. Outcomes are rarely knowable ahead of time. Question: Can I trust the power of my truth to define my path in life? How does faith light my way? Lesson: take personal responsibility for my thoughts, words and actions, knowing that while *life* may be uncertain, *I* don’t have to be – resilience & sustainability.
- to RELATE with **reverence** – to myself, to others, to life. We’re all one; separation is illusion. How I think, speak and act profoundly affects my life, as well as the lives of others. Question: Do I live with deep gratitude for all I’ve been given? Lesson: through community, I create a spiral of reciprocity around me – connectedness.

The principles that have guided life for *billions* of years on Earth offer a map to the possibility that has always been inside us. In nature, an ecosystem is a dynamic, interdependent community, united by common purpose – a place of creative genius, with a capacity to create order from uncertainty, respond to change by listening to feedback, adapt and learn, and build communities of support through collaboration and cooperation. We, too, are ecosystems. Yet we seem to fight off these “natural” things – in our lives, in our work – all in the name of predictability and control.

Exercise: Toward balance. If you view yourself an ecosystem, the fuel that creates sustainability in your ecosystem is your **thinking**. You mirror nature when you let go of the need to control outcomes, when you release the opinions of others as criteria for success, and when you practice awareness of your [thinking] environment. There is no independent reality; reality is a natural consequence of how you see and think. Stop for a few moments of quiet each day. Reflect on thoughts you’ve had during the day. Just *notice* them. See if you can trace how your thinking created the way you experience life. Ask yourself if your thoughts were consistent with the kind of life you would *love* to live, or if they *inhibited* you from living that life. No judgment for now; just notice how thinking **created** your day. Consider new ways of thinking that could change this. Suggestion: contrary to what you may have learned, your most powerful tools for creating balance by living “in nature’s image” are *patience*, to wait for new opportunities; *awareness*, to notice when they occur; *acceptance*, that life will unfold to serve you; and *trust*, in your own innate creative essence.

A River Runs Through It [Life lessons offered by nature]

Nature's Story: The Grand Canyon. A mile deep, up to 15 miles wide, almost 300 miles long. Inverted, it would make an impressive mountain range. It's taken the Colorado River about 5 million years to carve the canyon we see today. The canyon is old, yet it's a child compared to the 2 billion-year-old rocks it bisects. The Grand Canyon offers lessons in patience, uncertainty, acceptance, and of course, process rather than outcome. While we "strut and fret our hour upon the stage," nature is quietly doing what she has done for eons. No plan, no agenda, no goal; just a focus on process, the essence; in this case, a river being a river. There was never a plan to create the Grand Canyon. There still isn't. The canyon isn't even an *outcome*. It's just the current state of the continual *process* of creation. In this sense, "river" is a verb. There is no struggle to achieve. The river isn't *trying* to wear down the rocks; the rocks don't fight back. Water changes the shape of all it touches, yet competes with nothing. Nature *holds* water without holding *onto* water. Despite the beauty of the Grand Canyon, if we were to see it from our more common perspective of achieving rather than creating, we'd ask different questions: When will the Grand Canyon be *done*? Did the river carve enough rock today so it can take the evening off to watch TV?

Brad's Story: For 30 years of my adult life, I unconsciously lived society's "prevailing wisdom" – that by knowing more, trying harder and staying busy, I'd make a lot of money so I could buy a lot of stuff, and therefore be happy. It didn't work. I made money, yet had been 'doing life' instead of 'being Brad.' When I realized there was more to life, and to me, I began seeing a new way. For the first time, I began looking inside, where I found real answers, instead of outside, where I'd been taught to look. Through practices offered here, I discovered that my life had been *continually* offering clues to my truth, but I'd been unaware of, or ignored, their messages. The way I've now come to know that truth is this: *I see bigger perspectives so that more becomes possible*. In tracing my life experiences as far back as I could, I found I was *always* pulled to doing this (that's how I knew it was an integral part of me). I even remembered my parents saying my sixth grade math teacher said she went home and studied at night because she was afraid of the questions I might ask. Despite my innate love for math and the sciences, I recall the dichotomy I felt over education's preoccupation with "using formulas," knowing that when I understood how things really worked, I'd give *them* the formulas. As a manager in the software world, I focused less on software and more on reframing our work so managers who worked for me could do a better job. I one day realized this was the essence of coaching, helping others reframe their lives so more is possible. The point here is that I can't *not* be this. It's that part of me that wants to express itself no matter where or how that expression occurs. And like the Grand Canyon, there was never a plan or agenda to make this true; it already was. Balance.

Openings to New Possibility

Available for you:

- *The Road Not Taken Community*, a no-cost subscription that offers you connection, interaction, challenge, and learning. See articles, newsletters and blogs; you'll find "new stuff" [here](#) regularly. I welcome comments and conversation; this kind of dialogue is an example of how we may all learn together.
- "*In Nature's Image*" -- 100 of my nature images, each offering a simple idea to help experience life's meaning.
- *The Road Not Taken* newsletters (12 years, 144 issues of *Purposeful Wanderings*) available [here](#) as a pdf file.
- Photo images from my travels available [here](#) on fun products – note cards, coffee mugs – great gift ideas.

An invitation to possibility: If you have the courage and determination to step apart from the crowd and *challenge conventional thinking* ... so you can live instead with *authenticity and freedom*, contact me for a conversation that can energize your dream. I will help you reach a level of *clarity and perspective* – about yourself, others, your life, your work and the world – that allows you to live your truth, every day. Trade the *way it is* for the *way it could be*.

Book of the month – *The Tao of Pooh*, by Benjamin Hoff. A delightful rendition of the ancient wisdom of the Tao, as told by Winnie-the-Pooh, one of the better known bears on the planet, and certainly a great example of bears' archetypal wisdom. The Tao te Ching, in its original form, laid out "the way," a life of balance and oneness. This text is decidedly more accessible, although decidedly "abridged." If you're not into the fanciful, Wayne Dyer's "Living the Wisdom of the Tao" offers an excellent, perhaps more faithful, albeit more rigid, interpretation. ... And if you're on Cape Cod, you'll find this book at the Market Street Bookshop in Mashpee Commons – 508-539-6985.