



# Purposeful Wanderings

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

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## The Stories That Shape Our Lives

“Truth resides in every human heart, and one has to search for it there and to be guided by truth as one sees it.” --- Mahatma Gandhi

Whether you're a newsletter reader, friend or client, you know I use the world of nature as both backdrop and source of examples for my writing and coaching. The reason is simple: *nature matters ... to me*. Since childhood, being in nature has helped me make sense of my world. In her presence, I've found a lifelong companion and a compassionate listener. Quiet time in nature evokes feelings of reverence, reciprocity and mystery – about myself, others, life and the world. This helps me tap my curiosity and creativity, inspiring me to help others. The energy that guides me here is archetypal; that means it's an innate part of who I am, a story line running through my entire life. I can't *not* be this.

Why does this matter? You, too, have archetypal energy that defines your uniqueness. If you're consciously aware of this energy and have consciously allowed it to frame your life, you know the grace, peace and joy that accompany your choices. If you're unaware, you risk having become someone you're not, and perhaps then experience life as a struggle or lacking in meaning. What if? What if ... the challenges you face are a result of your being someone you're not?

We're all different, largely because we have different archetypal energies. I have a friend whose archetypal essence is visibly defined by caregiving and nurture. Whether with children, adults or gardens, she finds in these things meaning, joy, and a deeper connection with her truth. If you read my recent blog post about my struggles caring for my dad, you will see that I do *not* have this archetype. This kind of work drains me; it inspires her. My daughter-in-law is a perfect model of the mother archetype. It's a joy to even *watch* her parent my granddaughters. By contrast, Carolyn Myss, author of many works about archetypes, admits she has zero mother archetype. (Humorously, she just as freely admits to having a very strong 'fairy godmother' archetype.) Within this context, each one of us is living our truth.

Yet as much as nature means to me, I realize this isn't true for everyone. On one hand, you might find it helpful to hug a tree; spend some time in the woods; learn about climate change; or understand the motions of the sun, earth and stars. Yet when I invite you into a story about nature's way, I'm offering a path for you to see in a new way, not pushing you to adopt my worldview. That said, however, I *am* pushing you to find a metaphor that's right for *you*. Find that source of uniqueness within – an archetypal story that keeps pulling at you; the roots of your deepest longing, inviting you to design your life around its natural flow. Because when you do, you'll find inspiration and a life-long source of 'free' energy that can both light your way and guide your choices from here on. Find your truth and make your life your own.

**Exercise: *What matters ... to you?*** If you don't truly *know* your archetypal energy, it's "deceptively simple" to find. *Simple* in the sense that it speaks to you every day, asking you to listen; *deceptive* in the sense that unless you're truly listening, you won't hear it. That's because the message you hear is "so you" that you might not even recognize it as your authentic truth. (By the way, life tells you not to slow down enough to listen.) **The practice:** In several quiet-time sessions this month, just listen for your inner voice. It will speak to you. As Rumi said, "Let yourself be silently drawn by the strange pull of what you really love. It will not lead you astray." If you feel you need to "do" more, ask what you long for most deeply in life; notice times when you were so "in life's flow" that you were unaware of the passage of time; recall times when you were completely energized (vs. drained) by hard work; look for times when you felt most "like yourself." If you're interested and would like more in-depth practice for this inquiry, email me; I'll send it.

**A River Runs Through It** [Life lessons from nature]: In nature, each thing lives its own unique essence. Seeds sprout to become trees; caterpillars morph into butterflies; rivers carry water to the sea. A river would have a tough go of it all if it chose to stand still and branch for the sky. As humans, our awareness offers us a choice unique on this planet – not to become a tree, but to honor the deep truth inside us. We are thereby the only species capable of *not* living its truth.

**Book of the month – *Sacred Contracts***, by Caroline Myss. A classic piece on archetypes and their impact in our lives. You *have* an archetypal truth; when you *know* that truth and live by *honoring* it, you live with confidence and meaning. And if you're on Cape Cod, you'll find this book at the Market Street Bookshop in Mashpee Commons; 508-539-6985.