



# Purposeful Wanderings

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

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## Waking to Our True Nature

“Nothing in the universe ever grew from the outside in.”  
– Richard Wagamese, in *Embers, One Ojibway’s Meditations*

Life is difficult. Just ask people; they’ll tell you. Or don’t ask them; they’ll probably tell you anyway. Then they might tell you they’re making New Year’s resolutions, perhaps as a way to regain hope ... in life, or in themselves. Later, they’ll probably tell you how those resolutions failed them ... thereby proving their original assertion: Life is difficult.

Is this what life is about? Or are we missing something? I think we’re missing something. I think we’re missing *a lot*. For sure, we’re missing the amazing potential life holds – its wonder, joy, sacred mystery and meaning. But we’re also missing *why* we’re missing it. And it’s in understanding the obstacles we face that we find openings to our true nature.

*The Obstacle:* I’m somewhat of a student of human struggle. I read; I observe; I listen; and I struggle. Although I’m no expert, I ponder how we can so commonly deny our own potential. Here’s how I’ve got this figured. Life’s early experiences often teach us that happiness lives *outside* ourselves, and that we find it by going along with *other people’s* thinking. We’ve complied, so well that we now believe this adopted thinking is actually *our own*. This [unconscious] belief is so strong that it will prove to be our greatest obstacle to change. We blame *life* for the struggle, unaware we’re trying to make *our* lives work using the consciousness of *others*. Life *is* difficult. No wonder; we *made* it that way.

*The Potential:* I’m somewhat of a student of human consciousness, too. I read; I observe; I listen; I live. Although I’m no expert here, either, even I struggle to grasp the amazing power our consciousness confers. Here’s how I’ve got this figured. Evolution has endowed us with a consciousness unique among earth’s beings, with the capacity to *imagine life into being*. We’re just realizing how we can *use the power of consciousness* to create the life of our unique truth. It’s even our true nature to do this. We get glimpses into our potential many times a day (which it seems we mostly miss, ignore or even deny) – in intuitive senses, dreams, synchronistic events, barely-noticeable hints of deep longing.

The *capacity* to create the life of your potential, *and* the potential itself, live *inside* you, not “out there” somewhere, and certainly not in the thinking of others. But the *choice* to live this way depends on if you can *see* these as being so, using today’s [unconscious] thinking ... which often leads instead to the many ways to say *no*: It’s *easier* to go along with the crowd; it’s all new-age *nonsense*; I don’t want to feel alone or different; I’ll enjoy my dreams in the *next* life. Problem: it’s not until you die that you realize you haven’t truly lived.

To say *yes*, however, means believing, even if on faith alone to start, that more is possible, and that *how you see and think about life* are the keys to living this possibility. It means knowing that personal authenticity offers more to you than social acceptance. If you’re still with me, and you’d like a New Year’s resolution that could hold some promise, it might be to *grow your awareness*, instead of fighting to change the behavior that comes from lack of it! By purposefully discovering the ways of seeing and thinking that have *blocked* you from your potential, those blocks fall away, naturally, exposing and evoking your true nature underneath. It works much as it did for Michelangelo, who, in carving his statue of David, said that David was already in the marble; he needed only remove all that was “not David.”

I reflect on a time in my life, over 20 years ago now, when I “got” what I was missing, and “got” what was truly possible. At the time, I was eating well, yet I was starving. From today’s vantage point, it’s tough to look back and see the kind of person I was then. I’m grateful to those who helped me negotiate this unfamiliar territory; like many, I didn’t do so well walking the journey alone. So if you’re ready, try on the suggested exercise. And if, like me (and many others), you believe you’d benefit by having a guide to the uncharted territory of *your* potential, give me a call. Join me in a conversation that has become *my* life – to continually expand my perspective on the possibility life holds, step each day into the empty space I’ve created, and help others do the same. If you have the openness to allow new ideas to change you, and the courage and determination to challenge *conventional* thinking as a way to discover *your own*, we can explore together. Your answers are inside you; I’ll keep the torch lit to illuminate your path, so you can find your way to your deepest longing, even in the dark. Along this “road not taken,” you’ll no doubt find that the growing sense of self-trust and freedom you experience will become, and always be, your truest companions in life.

**Exercise: Your deepest longing:** The *idea* of this exercise is quite simple: you find your true self by *discovering* it. The *reality* of this exercise may be difficult: one of your undiscovered thoughts likely tells you the exercise is useless. The *concept* of this exercise depends on negotiating an approach different from the way you approach life today:

(1) you don't look for your truth in the external world; it doesn't live there. It lives inside you, the one place perhaps *haven't* looked, both because you were never taught to look inside, and because it often feels uncomfortable to do so.

(2) you don't use force to discover, or live, your truth. You don't need today's constant companions of overwhelm, stress, guilt, anxiety or dread ... unless, for some reason, you want them in your life.

(3) you find your true self by noticing what *keeps* you from it. **You** are already in there; no need to add skills or turn yourself into someone you're not. It's the opposite! In releasing "not you," **you** emerge, as David did from the marble.

*The Practice: Find the obstacles:* Only by **interrupting** the unconscious and incessant flow of thoughts in your mind will you discover they belong to someone else. As an *observer* of your thoughts, you gain a perspective on your consciousness you'd never get as a *participant* alone. (As a participant, you tend to *become* your thoughts. As an observer, you see them, but don't get involved.) **Stop** for a few moments of quiet reflection three or four times a day. During this time, replay in your mind, as observer, thoughts you've had since the last time you reflected. It may help to replay thoughts as if a movie, with you as audience, watching *you* being *you*. *Listen* to what your thoughts tell you. Become a student of your thinking, with depth and clarity. Get to know the unconscious voices that have steered your life toward struggle for years. Resist judging or trying to change them. Just notice. Have some fun: you might even name them!

**Big Note:** thoughts you notice are simply *thoughts*; they have no power to own your life beyond what *you* choose to give them. Getting to know them allows you the choice to give power only to thoughts that honor your truth.

By getting to know the thoughts that occupy your mind, especially those that belong to someone else, you begin to *dissociate* yourself from them, thus freeing you to notice thoughts that are uniquely your own – your true nature. With *regular* self-observation practice, you will: 1) come to know your thoughts *and* develop a *relationship* with them, 2) see that only your perception determines the reality you experience, 3) hear subtle messages of your unique essence, 4) release judgment (as you notice you were the one who created it), 5) view life from a broader perspective, thereby creating greater possibility, 6) choose personal authenticity over social acceptance, 7) come to notice your thinking **as** you think, and 8) come to trust yourself, life and your potential to guide your life.

There are no textbooks here; you're using your *experience* of yourself to *discover* yourself. How long does it all take? It takes as long as it takes for you to let go of stories that hold you back today ... which happens at a rate that matches your awareness of what's going on in your head ... which happens through a practice of *noticing* what's going on in your head! It's amazing how much space you free up when you stop listening to these voices. *In this empty space*, your true self emerges, thereby allowing you to "be your gift to the world."

**Life lessons from nature:** The entire universe is always in a state of becoming. Everything *in* the universe is always in a state of becoming. The earth, as well as all its life, is always in a state of becoming. As conscious beings, we, too, are "becoming." (At least we have the choice and capacity to do so.) Nothing is static, except perhaps the way we've learned to see it. What we experience as reality is, in fact, the *current state* of a process that never stops becoming. As an example, the Grand Canyon is not a "result," but today's evolution of a river in touch with its environment. And if we look closely, we see that everything "becomes" from the inside out, *starting with energy of its own unique truth*. It's how the universe was formed, and continues to be. I find this pretty exciting, to know that we are actually participants in the continual unfolding of life ... and that we can "become ourselves into the life of our dreams."

**Book of the month: *Embers, One Ojibway's Meditations*, by Richard Wagamese.** "I am a traveler on a sacred journey through this one shining day." His words get inside me, in a way I've not experienced for some time. Perhaps a perfect antidote to our [unconscious?] obsession with the world *outside* ourselves, he offers a path back to the world *inside* ourselves. His teachings carry wisdom, depth, clarity, strength, and simplicity. As do I, you may find them **evoking** the truth that is uniquely your own. "All we have are moments. So live them as though not one can be wasted. Inhabit them, fill them with the light of your best good intention, honor them with your full presence, find the joy, the calm, the assuredness that allows the hours and the days to take care of themselves. If we can do that, we will have lived." And if you're on Cape Cod, you'll find this book at the Market Street Bookshop in Mashpee Commons; 508-539-6985.