



# Purposeful Wanderings

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

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Vol. 18, No. 6 -- June 2019

## A Path to Peace

*"I keep what's true in front of me. I won't get lost that way." – Richard Wagamese, *Embers**

I don't think I've ever known anyone who wouldn't *like* more peace ... in themselves, in their lives, in the world. I have, however, met many who are unwilling to follow a path that leads to the *experience* of peace. It's either too hard, too esoteric, too time-consuming, too counter-cultural or too inconvenient. Although we'd not admit it, evidence suggests we'd rather complain about the lack of peace than do something to create it. Yet there *are* paths – many – that *do* lead to peace. Peace begins *inside* each of us. And even one person at a time, it expands ... to "bigger" forms of peace ... with family, community, nation, planet. As Richard Wagamese notes in *Embers*, "Nothing in the universe ever grew from the outside in." Here's a glimpse of the path that offers peace in *my* life.

**Silence:** Setting aside time each day for pure silence connects me with the silence deep within me. Call it quiet time, meditation, or 'time-out,' by just *being present in this moment*, I re-find myself each day.

**Reflection:** The practice of silence, above, opens me to self-inquiry: my thoughts, feelings, intuition, inner guidance, deepest longing, nature's wisdom. By noticing my thoughts, I'm aware of how my mind creates my reality. I realize that thoughts are simply *viewpoints* – made-up ways of seeing and thinking.

**Awareness:** Reflection lets me see that viewpoint is a choice I make, so I can easily choose *curiosity* as my viewpoint, thereby clarifying my perception and expanding my perspective ... which makes my world a bigger place. A broader perspective lets me see the patterns and rhythms that confer *meaning* on life's day-to-day events.

**Clarity:** Awareness expands into every corner of my being, leading to my truth, and in turn, awareness of the truths of others, life and cosmos. Truth just *is*, so judgment falls away. I listen to the energy to which I am continually drawn – the sacred ground that stirs my heart and soul. I *experience* more because I *see* more ... things that used to go unnoticed against the backdrop of everyday noise.

**Authenticity:** Clarity opens me to honoring my truth through the way I choose to believe, see, think and live. My life is my own. I'm able to use my thinking to steer the course of my life in the direction of what matters most to me – the essence of creative spirit. (Without this belief in myself, the world would always appear a scary place.)

**Self-Trust:** Authenticity invites me to trust my inner compass as the beacon lighting my path. Messages from the outside world begin to fade; social acceptance no longer matters. Everything I need to chart my course is inside the experience of being my truth. This unites rational and emotional energy so as to create *meaning*. While I will never know what comes next, it was an illusion to believe I *did* know. (Uncertainty is the home of opportunity.)

**Freedom:** Self-trust loosens my unnatural grasp on life, so "discovery can find *me*." I notice that I *fit* – naturally – into the amazing mystery life is. Taking full personal responsibility for how my life goes is a source of freedom, not fear. I'm here for a reason; I'm free to become it.

**Peace:** Freedom leaves me connected with all life. All is one; no either/or. Without artificial boundaries, I am at peace; my life has meaning and purpose. With inspiration from nature, a sense of community, and belief in a higher power, I feel deeply connected with both my own uniqueness – or *soul*, and my oneness with life – or *spirit*. I live in gratitude, reverence and reciprocity with life.

And ... being human, I still step in the lake now and then. While I may no longer give others the power to ruin my day, I do react at times. I just "catch myself" sooner, and don't "run down the street with my judgments," as I once did. Through nurture of conscious awareness, I've created "extra" – extra space, extra time, extra energy. I can now draw on these reserves as a way to stay in balance, even in times of chaos or challenge. This "extra" creates space for serendipity – the spontaneous manifestation of unexpected good stuff! I'm listening.

**Exercise:** Open the window to your world just a bit wider. Changing your viewpoint shifts your perspective of what's possible. I suggest this both literally and figuratively. Literally open your windows: connect more deeply with the outdoor world around you. Not only is the view refreshing, but nature might offer you some beautiful lessons. Figuratively open your windows: ask bigger questions, of yourself, and of life. Big questions open big possibilities. Big questions result from deep personal inquiry and reflection, both so uncommon in our society that it's no wonder we don't experience the *underlying order* in our lives. Dare to go deep. Obviously, to do this invites a practice of silence, which, curiously, may just start you on a path to peace. Here are a few questions that might take you to new places:

What if my mind *weren't* already made up about things? What might I discover then? (openness)

What *more* could be possible if I stopped *fighting* with life, and didn't need to impose my will? (acceptance)

What if I trusted my own inner voice to guide me instead of my age-old thought patterns? (awareness)

What if I didn't have to know *how* it would all work out, but rather know *that* it would all work out? (trust)

What if there really *were* an underlying order to life? Am I willing to step into its experience? (courage)

What if I allowed wisdom to show up when conditions allow, not when I force it with my will? (patience)

What if I could really *live* with these questions, every day, as a new way of being? (practice)

Pondering these questions offers a start to breaking down unconscious barriers to peace. The difference between *wanting* peace and *experiencing* peace is action ... and yes, silent awareness and reflection are "actions."

**A workshop offering: Living Authentically ... in a World that Would Rather You Didn't.** Wednesday, June 12, from 7-9pm (Eastern), I'm offering an online videoconference program designed to help you discover your own unique truth, then honor your discovery by living it. Think of it as an antidote to a world determined that we become someone we're not, even to the denial of who we truly are. Release the struggle of trying to live what should be and step with confidence into what could be. Personal authenticity leads to freedom. Program fee: \$30. (This is the same program offered last month, so if you missed it, here's another chance.) Questions? Send me an email. Registration required ahead – link to details and registration on my website ([here](#)).

**Life lessons from nature:** Nature finds sustainability and order through a combination of creativity, feedback and self-organization. *Creativity* is the essence of nature's way; no matter the circumstances, nature just keeps creating – mountains, forests, animals. Every situation is an opportunity. Even devastation is an opportunity – for new invention. Then ... nature listens to *feedback*, a natural information flow in every living system that tells the system how things are going; nature uses this information to know what might come next. No plans, goals, management teams, or external (artificial) measurement systems. The system "knows" its own path; feedback shines the light. Lastly, *self-organization* is nature's way of creating order from chaos; recurring patterns, community, connectedness, all working in collaboration to create the majestic beauty we experience. And let us not forget – we are part of that beauty ... those principles, that process. Only our consciousness determines if we see, experience and follow this natural flow, or if we fight it off, apparently in the name of a "need to control."

**Book of the month: *The Untethered Soul*, by Michael Singer.** I've suggested this book before, and one day I may yet again. Singer shows how to work with your thoughts and feelings to escape life-limiting constraints and thereby develop a sense of inner calm. Because what we see as possible is determined largely by our thinking, our capacity to be in touch with our thinking holds huge power for us. With all that potential available, why allow your thinking to limit you? His path leads you to your own deepest essence, your personal truth ... its own place of peace in life. And if you're on Cape Cod, you'll find this book at the Market Street Bookshop in Mashpee Commons; 508-539-6985.