

Listen

A Seeker's Resource for Spiritual Direction

O C T O B E R 2 0 0 7 V O L 1 : I S S U E 3

CREATIVITY FEEDS THE SOUL



Raven—*Corvus corax*

SEEDS OF INTEREST:

- Field Notes: *Tilling the Creative Ground*
- Field Guide: *Art and Spiritual Direction*
- Share *Listen* with friends, interns, and directees
- Poetry: *Prayer*

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The world speaks in vivid sign language. Can you read it? Hear it? Sense and intuit the conversation? Do you believe that silence, play, work, and loving can birth creativity within your own self, in families, and in our communities? The ability to show up for our life specifics and be present to the universe humming around us contributes to infinite expressions of creativity.

Where is creativity birthed in you? Does it arise from an inner landscape of brilliant light? Or, perhaps burgeon forth from times of moon shadow and twilight, or even piercing darkness? What captures your attention in the place where you dwell and spend your waking and sleeping moments? To notice where you are inspired and deeply moved is a spiritual act. Often times it is in the small details that we discover the gift of wonder, a natural response to any creative act.

Opportunities arise every day to express your sleepy, tame, or wild spirit. How often do you miss an occasion to play or create, simply because of busyness, or a bored spirit? What inside of you longs for expression that will ultimately satisfy, inform, and renew you in your depths? Are there particular activities

that nourish your soul? A valuable spiritual practice is to simply tend to what captures your attention and speaks your soul language.

Maybe playing with color, words, images, rhythm, or design is of value to you. Perhaps carving, cooking, dancing, or weaving soothes your soul. Whatever you do to express yourself has merit and worth. All creativity is a spiritual endeavor—a conversation with meaning and expression. From where I write, fifty yards away a glacier melts to the sea, while salmon swim upstream to spawn, die, and fertilize the river habitat. Creativity is similar. It too has a season of living, dying, and perhaps even an unexpected offering of new life for others.

Creative actions may simply nourish our own spirit. Or, they may ripple into our homes and communities, perhaps inspiring hundreds or thousands of others, offering peace and justice to a hungry world.

Take time in the next month for a creative play date. Don't wait for the right time or circumstances. Choose to feed your life today. Then share what you discover with your spiritual director or guide. Listen to how your life will hum and sing to you in a new way!

SPIRITUAL DIRECTION

Spiritual direction is the process of accompanying people on a spiritual journey. Spiritual direction helps people tell their sacred stories every day. Spiritual direction exists in a context that emphasizes growing closer to God (or the holy or a higher power). Spiritual direction invites a deeper relationship with the spiritual aspect of being human. Spiritual direction fosters peace, justice, and respect for the integrity of creation.



TILLING THE CREATIVE GROUND

Creativity is illusive. We all want it, and our work requires it. Yet, how do we cultivate it? I like to compare it to tending a garden. We make the soil ready, plant the seeds, water the ground and pull the weeds. We don't make the seeds grow. But we do *till the soil*.

As a spiritual director and writer, I *till the soil* best when I have a routine that reminds me I am co-creating with God. I created a routine to help calm my racing mind and open up space in my being for new and creative ideas for writing and expanding my spiritual direction ministry and service.

Perhaps you are facing a work task that requires creativity. Try this spiritual practice and see what it unleashes.

- Begin with a ritual that recognizes God. Light a candle, sing a chant, or recite a short prayer.

- Notice how you are feeling. Is your body relaxed? Is your mind calm? If not, take a few moments to settle.

- Visualize yourself becoming grounded in God's unconditional love and creative power. If it helps, imagine roots growing from your body into the earth.

- Imagine your intuition as a large and beautiful room. Allow the room to become spacious and uncluttered. Invite the Holy One into the room. Or simply acknowledge the Holy One's continuing presence in your intuition room. Be in silence with your image of God for a few moments.

- Feel the light of the Holy One saturating your whole being, freeing you for the work you are called to do.

- Ask God any questions you have about your work. Listen. Practice listening.

- End by thanking the Source of Life for the energy and creativity needed to complete your task. ✍

If you enjoy this, check out more prayer practices in *50 Ways to Pray: Practices from Many Traditions and Times* by Teresa Blythe. You can reach Teresa at tblythe@jps.net.

SPIRITUAL DIRECTORS INTERNATIONAL has launched

Seek and Find: A Worldwide Resource Guide of Available Spiritual Directors

the first-ever comprehensive, multi-faith, global listing

- ➔ The *Seek and Find Guide* is a free, online, searchable list of more than 5,000 available spiritual directors from many faith traditions.
- ➔ Designed using a hyperlinked global map, seekers can click on their location to find available spiritual directors to interview in their area.
- ➔ Along with the *Seek and Find Guide*, Spiritual Directors International offers helpful advice for seekers about how to interview prospective spiritual directors in order to ensure a good match.

"The *Seek and Find Guide* is utterly fantastic! I've already used it to respond to someone looking for spiritual directors to interview in another part of the world." —Jim Keegan, SJ

To search the *Seek and Find Guide*, go to www.sdiworld.org. If you are a spiritual director who would like to be listed, you can find information at www.sdiworld.org.

TENDING THE HOLY AROUND THE WORLD AND ACROSS TRADITIONS

Find a Spiritual Director Anywhere in the World!

Seek and Find Guide:

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ART AND SPIRITUAL DIRECTION

Spiritual direction helped me understand that my journey as an artist and teacher would intersect with my spiritual path. While in spiritual direction I had an opportunity to be listened to without judgment. I was encouraged to speak with my personal inner wisdom that came to me from my Creator. Years later while attending the Institute for Spiritual Companionship in Illinois, USA, my creative self began to change direction and flourish like never before. I did not know where the journey would take me, nor was the final destination most important to me. The process and journey is what mattered most.

Throughout most of my formal education the creative aspect of spirituality was not mentioned, and I did not experience an intersection between specializations and disciplines. For example, in art school a person was a painter, sculptor, printmaker, photographer, and so forth. Since my spiritual path and creative spirit are now intentionally interwoven, my work and life are evolving in ways I could never have imagined. I have discovered an authentic calling found in the meeting point of art and spiritual direction. As a result, many doors for me, my directees, and students are opening that I never imagined possible.

In the art and spiritual direction classes I now teach at the Institute of Pastoral Studies through Loyola University of Chicago in Illinois, my students share with me how integrating the creative process and spiritual direction expands their ability to guide others—if they themselves travel their own authentic spiritual path. Because I am in process along with them, we are all growing individually and collectively. One of the most important feelings we share is the wisdom to be totally involved in the process and not worry about the product. Then, intuition and experimentation can present new possibilities creatively and spiritually. Talking about the process and what is experienced allows each person to make the unknown

known. Art-making in a spiritual context can assist us toward deeper and holistic self-understanding and growth. The product may be a few scribbles but the process can be a masterpiece.

Many years ago I came across the work of the Swiss artist, Paul Klee. His images touched me deeply. Klee once wrote that art can make visible the invisible. I believe Klee thought that being in the process of creation is what makes visible the invisible. In my class at Loyola, we talk about the process and understand how the product is a result of the process. We try to get out of our heads and let the spirit within guide us. This is where I think art-making and spirituality come together for personal and spiritual growth. We then move forward with a new appreciation and deeper understanding of the gifts we have within. Together the creative process and spiritual direction can be a wonderful guide for anyone willing to take the first step. It certainly has been for my students, directees and me.

Richard F. Bough, MFA is a spiritual guide living in Illinois, USA and can be reached at rboughart@hotmail.com.

Footprints of the Soul:



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Teresa Blythe 520-290-6734; tblythe@jps.net
www.desertrenewal.org/hesychia

Spiritual Ministry Center

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www.spiritmin.org

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www.bethanyspiritualitycenter.org

Servant Song Ministries

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www.servantsongministries.org

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SPIRITUAL DIRECTION

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*"If I take the wings of the morning...
even there your hand will lead me" – Psalm 139:8-9*

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Prayer

Let me make of this day
A prayer.
An offering, a plea,
Gratitude and praise.
Every task as worthy
And every rough place
Bearable,
With enough quietness of heart
To find my way on toward
Connection
With all that is.
A prayer, a poem,
A sculpting, a moment
Each day a life,
My only life.
Amen.

—Mary Anne Perrone, March 15, 2006

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ASK OWL

Question: Does one "outgrow" one's spiritual director? What are the signs that suggest it's time to part ways and move on to a new companion?

Hoot Hoot: Thank you for your e-mail! You pose an important question. First, I'm not certain that someone "outgrows" their spiritual director; though authentic listening to the unique movements of the Spirit may guide seekers to ask a set of questions or respond to life in a way that may not be understood, or even heard by their spiritual director. That being said, a primary role of a spiritual director or guide is to receive your sacred story in its fullness and meet you exactly where you are at any given time. Spiritual directors engage in supervision to explore their own interior freedom in order to unreservedly listen to you and the true spiritual director: God beyond all names. Questions you might ponder and bring to spiritual direction include: What activity causes me to sense I have outgrown my relationship with this spiritual director? What experience brings this question to the surface? What is familiar about this feeling? Courage and maturity develop in the process of exploring these questions with your spiritual director.

There is immense value in being in a long-term relationship with the same spiritual companion—they know you well. Let prayer inform your discernment. Be willing to be surprised and open to what God reveals in the process. Before you seek and interview a potential new spiritual director, bring your current relationship to a close.

Whether the journey has been months, years, or decades, if you ultimately discern to end or terminate a spiritual direction relationship, consider sharing a ritual or blessing together and name aloud the blessings and growth you have experienced in one another, offering thanksgiving.

—If you have a question for Owl, please e-mail Listen@sdiworld.org.



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GLOBAL EVENTS : Programs and Events to Support Your Spiritual Journey

ASIA

December 3-7, 2007
South Korea: Seoul
Topic: Spiritual Direction and Supervision Seminar
Presenter: Mary Ann Scofield, RSM
Location: Sogang University, Ignatius Hall
Contact: Russ Feldmeier, russfeldmeier@yahoo.com

January 24-27, 2008
Philippines: Manila City, Manila
Topic: International Ecumenical Event
Presenter: GSMI, G-Events
Time: 9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.
Location: Philippine Trade Center
Contact: Marie Atchada, churches@gsmi.com.ph 633-633-2002

OCEANIA-AUSTRALIA

October 12-17, 2007
Papua New Guinea: Port Moresby
Topic: Peer Support for Active Spiritual Directors
Presenter: Team of spiritual directors
Location: Xavier University
Contact: Marie Turner, DW, mariedw@daltron.com.pg 657-328-1384

January 21-23, 2008
Australia: Ashburton, Victoria
Topic: Dream Work: Journeying to the Interior
Presenter: Jeremy Taylor
Location: The WellSpring Centre

Contact: Rev. Peter Bentley, info@wellspringcentre.org.au 03-9885-0277

January 25-27, 2008
Australia: Ashburton, Victoria
Topic: Exploring Your Dreams
Presenter: Jeremy Taylor
Location: The WellSpring Centre
Contact: Rev. Peter Bentley, info@wellspringcentre.org.au 03-9885-0277

EUROPE

United Kingdom
October 12-14, 2007 and November 16-18, 2007
Northumberland: Carrshield, Hexham
Topic: Introductory Retreat in the Soto Zen Tradition
Location: Throssel Hole Buddhist Abbey Monastery & Retreat Centre
Contact: gd@throssel.org.uk 44-0-1434-345-204

November 21, 2007
Salisbury, Wiltshire
Topic: Still Moves
Presenter: Viv Stacey
Time: 9:45 a.m.-4:30 p.m.
Location: Sarum College
Contact: hospitality@sarum.ac.uk 44-0-1722-424800

NORTH AMERICA-Canada

October 12-14, 2007
Canada: Vancouver, British Columbia
Topic: Workshop: Supervision of

Spiritual Directors: Growing in Self Awareness and Freedom
Presenter: Maureen Conroy, RSM, DMIn
Location: Carey Centre, University of BC campus
Contact: Karen Webber, soulstream1@gmail.com

NORTH AMERICA-USA

October 6, 2007
USA: Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Topic: Desires of the Heart and Spiritual Direction
Presenter: Robert Howlett, EdD
Time: 9:30 a.m.-3:00 p.m.
Location: Chestnut Hill College
Contact: Carol McGinley, mcginact@comcast.net 610-431-7805

October 10-12, 2007
USA: Detroit, Michigan
Topic: Cosmology: Faith Seeking Understanding
Presenter: Joseph Mitchell, CP
Location: St. Paul of the Cross Retreat Center
Contact: Jean T. Booms, info@dominicancenter.org 313-387-9574

October 12, 2007
USA: Mt. Angel, Oregon
Topic: Art and Spirituality
Presenter: Rev. Dr. Rebecca Bradburn Langer
Time: 8:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m.
Location: Shalom Prayer Center Queen of Angels Monastery
Contact: Rev. Elaine Andres, elaine@sacredpathministry.com 541-543-3181

October 15, 2007
USA: Marriottsville, Maryland
Topic: A Call for Me?
Presenter: Marjory Zoet Bankson
Time: 3:00 p.m.-6:00 p.m.
Location: Bon Secours Spiritual Center
Contact: Anna Gilcher, agilcher@earthlink.net 301-589-7070

October 23, 2007
USA: West Hartford, Connecticut
Topic: Spiritual Direction: 25 Years of Evolution & Growth
Presenter: Carol Ludwig
Location: Spiritual Life Center
Time: 9:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m.
Contact: Andree Grafstein, agrafstein@comcast.net 860-243-2374

October 26-28, 2007
USA: Litchfield, Connecticut
Topic: 8th Casagrande Interfaith Institute, Children: Our Future
Time: following the Spiritual Directors International Leadership Institute, Oct. 25.
Presenters: Buddhist, Christian, Jewish, and Muslim Panel.
Location: Wisdom House

Contact: info@wisdomhouse.org 860-567-3163

November 10, 2007
USA: Park Ridge, Illinois
Topic: The Heart's Calling: Personal Vocation and Social Conscience
Presenter: Dr. John Neafsey
Time: 10:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.
Location: Saint Luke Lutheran Church
Contact: Robert Backis, Director, ISC, rbackis@sbglobal.net 773-510-6553

November 12-14, 2007
USA: San Antonio, Texas
Topic: Becoming a Praying Congregation: The Art of Teaching Spiritual Practice
Presenter: Rev. Jane Vennard
Location: Oblate Renewal Center
Contact: Alban Institute 800-486-1318

November 14, 2007
USA: Denver, Colorado
Topic: Spiritual Direction with Marginalized Persons
Presenter: Vie Thorgren, DMIn
Time: 4:00 p.m.-6:15 p.m.
Location: Saint John's Cathedral
Contact: Barb Chambless, barbchsd@aol.com 303-726-8309

January 18-19, 2008
USA: Denver, Colorado
Topic: From Healing to Holiness: Engaging the Power of Presence
Presenter: Cynthia Bourgeault and Ken Phillips
Location: Saint John's Cathedral
Contact: Barb Chambless, barbchsd@aol.com 303-726-8309

March 11-13, 2008
USA: Grand Coteau, Louisiana
Topic: Across the Rim of Chaos: Thomas Merton as Spiritual Guide in a Time of Fear
Presenter: Donald Grayston
Location: Jesuit Spirituality Center
Contact: Rose Marie Clarke, rclarke@bayou.com 318-687-4096

March 26-30, 2008
USA: Washington, DC
Topic: Conference of Spiritual Directors International "Being Present" Leadership Institute and Conference, Spiritual Directors International
Presenter: Keynote-Rose Mary Dougherty, SSND; Spiritual Director-Jacob Staub; and forty-two workshops
Location: Hilton Washington Dulles Airport Hotel Washington, DC Metropolitan area; Dulles Airport Hilton Hotel
Contact: Spiritual Directors International, events@sdiworld.org

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Richard Bough, MFA—*Through the Gate*

“Tending the holy around the world and across traditions ...

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—Translated by Marta Rios and Xavier Ortiz Monasterio

SPIRITUAL DIRECTORS INTERNATIONAL EVENTS

Washington, DC March 26-30, 2008

Being Present

KEYNOTE PRESENTER

Rose Mary Dougherty, SSND, is the Shalem Institute's Senior Fellow for Spiritual Guidance, currently working as a volunteer at Joseph's House, a hospice for formerly homeless men who have AIDS. She also offers retreat and group spiritual direction for hospice care-givers. She is a sensei (teacher) in the lineage of the White Plum Sangha.



CONFERENCE SPIRITUAL DIRECTOR

Jacob Staub is a Reconstructionist rabbi. He serves as Professor of Jewish Philosophy and Spirituality at the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College in Wyncote, Pennsylvania, USA, where he established and now directs the Program in Jewish Spiritual Direction. He is the author of *The Creation of the World According to Gersonides* and the co-author of *Exploring Judaism: A Reconstructionist Approach*.



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