

12. RAW AND NERVY

As we learn to more consciously evolve our *dharma intelligence* — the liberating wisdom inherent in consciousness — greater dimensions of reality are illuminated. As falsity is revealed, we realign towards truth.

Being guided by our voice of freedom and dignity often defies logic and reasoning. As our passion for liberation increases we take greater risks, become more daring. This usually means challenging compromise and fear and entering the jaws of raw, tumultuous existence. It's worth remembering that finding our liberation through living often agitates the suppressed apathy or anger driving self-centered striving. But as Nietzsche declared, "You need chaos in your soul to give rise to a dancing star."

E. L. Doctorow says it this way: "We're always attracted to the edges of what we are. Out on the edge where it's a little raw and nervy." And it is a bit nervy to peel off false faces and live from our uncensored wildness.

"The opposite of courage is not cowardice, it is conformity."

~ Rollo May

Some social forces seek to control us by manipulating the conditions for whatever shame can be found. And shame requires buying into a value system that doesn't belong to anyone in particular; more often an illusion assumed as a given truth — such as the one Rosa Parks exposed for its

falsehood. So when you release your shame you discover a radical new source of power and beauty.

So live it. Feel it.

Become alive to it.

Embody your raw nery truth and set yourself free.

Reawaken total being.

Blaze your own trail.

Turn your life into an epic adventure, even if it means defying social mores or breaking taboos that attempt to suppress and control your impulses. It's my sense that when compromise or doubt no longer holds appeal, you will see the "dancing star" on the horizon of your mystery. And when you do, move with it, dance with it, follow your joy, until there's no turning back from the guiding light of what you really love, and leave the rest behind.

"I am often asked about life in prison," writes Ahmed Kathrada in his book *Simple Freedom*. "Here is a passage from a letter I wrote (after twenty-five years in [South African] jails) to a young couple on the verge of marriage:

"The stereotyped image of a prison is one of forbidding high walls; a grim, cold atmosphere, prosaic, harsh, vulgar, violent; an atmosphere of desperate, unsmiling faces; angry, bitter, and frustrated beings. Admittedly, a prison situation is tailor-made for the projection of such an image...It is easy to succumb when faced with prospects of a lengthy and nightmarish existence and consequently dwell on one's miseries, hardships, the manifold deprivations and negative experiences.

“Someone has written about two prisoners looking out of their cell window — the one saw iron bars while the other saw stars. How true!”

“There is no passion to be found by playing small — in settling for a life that is less than the one you are capable of living,”

Nelson Mandela tells us.

“It always seems impossible until it’s done.”