

24. AWESTRUCK VISION

“Open your eyes, look within. Are you satisfied with the life you’re living?”

~ Bob Marley

C*onsciously* transforming oneself is obviously a complex undertaking. It is often arduous and all-consuming, requiring heroic patience and determination. At other times, the way is silent, nearly imperceptible.

It can also be a magical dance, whereby we smile as we absorb life’s delicious blend of beauty and intrigue. Then, without notice, a storm of torment, origin unknown, sweeps over us and brings us to our knees.

The Canadian philosopher Mark Kingwell in addressing the “enduring vulnerability” of the human condition, writes: “Nobody seems to write songs about the pain. I mean, the long-standing burden of love, the ever-present epoxy of gratitude for one’s good fortune mixed with this terrible, unwholesome fear of having its source damaged or taken away ... Awake at night, I place my left hand on the delicate fretwork of Gail’s rib cage and feel the slow beating of her heart, wishing I could somehow cup it in my hands and keep it safe. How is it that happiness can include, apparently as a necessary condition, so much potential unhappiness? How is it that love, which brings so much strength, should also entail this enduring vulnerability, this dreadful potential for pain?”

Being alive and engaged with whatever life throws our way is an odyssey no one can prepare us for. No amount of spiritual practice or psychological preparation makes direct experience any less daunting.

“Perhaps everything terrible is in its deepest being is something helpless that wants help from us.”

~ Rainer Maria Rilke

Daniel Dennett, the American philosopher and author, writes: “If you can approach the world’s complexities, both its glories and its horrors, with an attitude of humble curiosity, acknowledging that however deeply you have seen, you have only scratched the surface, you will find worlds within worlds, beauties you could not hitherto imagine, and your own mundane preoccupations will shrink to proper size, not all that important in the greater scheme of things. Keeping that *awestruck vision* of the world ready at hand while dealing with the demands of daily living is no easy exercise. But...if you can stay centered and engaged, you will find the hard choices easier, the right words will come to you when you need them and you will be a better person. That, I propose, is the secret to spirituality.”

“The goal of our journey, our quest, is to penetrate the mystery of life’s events.”

~ African oral tradition

And what is the secret to your spirituality?
The goal of your own unique quest?