

The Human Experience Pt 3: Wholeness in a World of Division

Frank is sitting in a local café. Rose comes through the door, waves and silently gestures 'may I join you'? Frank nods as she approaches. *"You were sitting there so peacefully. I thought you might not want to be disturbed."* she says, sitting down. Frank smiles as she continues *"You really look good. Relaxed, calm and at peace."*

"I am, Rose" replies Frank. *"I've just returned from five days in the bush and it was really powerful. As you know, I've been really stretched over the last couple of months. I just needed to get out of the hurly-burly of work. No! Out of everything really... the first two days was a lot of hiking - hot sweaty days, sometimes going until late into the night."*

Rose listens, gazing attentively. *"On the third morning I woke before first light and the night sky was abundant. I lay on the cool damp ground looking up at the cosmos, watching it disappear as the sun brought in a new day."*

"Magic!" says Rose. *"I had a similar experience two weeks ago. I walked into the lounge and there was Tom with the two kids; snuggled up asleep. I sat for... oh, I don't know how long. Just seeing and knowing... love. It was intense, you know? Hard to put into words that would express the truth."*

"Yes. I know what you mean Rose."

The waitress approaches, sets a steaming cup of hot chocolate before Rose and departs, smiling.

There is a moment of silence before Frank says *"What was different for me this time is that I just knew."* Pausing, he gazes upward, again searching for the right words. Finally, he says *"You're right Rose. Words only confuse the truth of what I know too. I think I'll shut up now!"*

Grinning, they sit in companionable silence...

Wholeness Is

In the 1980s I frequented Crawley's university chapel (St. Thomas More Chapel, for those of you who are not Perth 'locals'). It was one of those magical places. As you entered, you were greeted by the soft light from the stained glass windows. The parquet floors and the beautiful tapestries on either side of the altar would comfort your eye and your spirit. I would often sit there for hours - not talking, just listening to my 'inner space'. And then silence would come, I would feel complete and whole - not perfect by any means - but experiencing 'wholeness'. Somehow, all the inner divisions were brought together to breathe as one.

Fortunately, I had many 'chapels' I could visit from time to time to find respite - safe, quiet and healing places where self-integration unfolded. And slowly, I have come to understand that integration does not depend on *place*, but my own inner intention to look within and come to stillness. There is no doubt that this intention (to gaze within oneself, without fear) brings you face-to-face with your divided self and wholeness. And as I see it, that capacity is shared by all human beings. Wholeness is - and our ability to create division and feel detached from LIFE is of our own making.

A story by Morris 'Morrie' Schwartz summarises this dynamic - this division and wholeness. You may recall, Morrie was a sociology professor at Brandeis University in the US, who was brought to prominence through his quite public death and who became the subject of Mitch Albom's best-selling book *Tuesdays With Morrie* (1997), and later, a movie. (They are both lovely works which I recommend highly). In the book, Morrie begins. He wants to tell Mitch a story...

"The story is about a little wave, bobbing along in the ocean, having a grand old time. He's enjoying the wind and the fresh air until he notices the other waves in front of him, crashing against the shore.

'Oh My God, this is terrible,' the wave says 'Look what's going to happen to me!' Then along comes another wave. It sees the first wave, looking grim, and it says to him, 'Why do you look so sad?'

The first wave says 'You don't understand! We're all going to crash! All of us waves are going to be nothing! Isn't it terrible?'

The second wave says 'No, you don't understand. You're not a wave; you're part of the ocean.'"

For me, that story perfectly illustrates that we human beings are part of the ocean of LIFE; and that sometimes we forget that. In our forgetfulness we experience ourselves as divided from our true essence. There is a wholeness that makes up our lives and even though we may forget this fact; it is still the truth. The beauty of being human is that each of us has the capacity to KNOW our wholeness and our self-created division; without fear. ■ ■