

Taking the plunge into the deep ... Risk-taking from a contemplative place!

Reflection:



Dee Brestin (image from website)

We probably all like to think of ourselves as “risk-takers.” And yet how often when the moment comes to take the deep dive or to get out of the boat and “walk on water,” we choose instead that which is safe and sure, the practical and the proven?

Once again we find ourselves as individuals or communities, firmly planted on the shore, or safely sitting in the boat, perhaps wearing one life jacket and sitting on another – just in case. It isn’t about taking a risk just to be novel or different, but rather because it is “the moment” that invites or even demands something other than what is. Perhaps we have all had the experience of coming to that “aha moment” as an individual or group, sensing excitement and energy welling up within us, only to take a step back because it is too new, too different, and demands too much. And sadly we put it to rest, before it ever sees the light of day. Catherine of Siena wrote, “My deepest me is God.” She knew what it meant to “take the plunge”, to go deeper, and she trusted that the risk was worth it.

Questions to ponder (and share):

- ❖ What enables me to take the “deep dive” as I face the realities of this moment, and as I look to the future?
- ❖ What difference will it make if we allow our response to come from that contemplative place...that cleared space within where God’s spirit dwells?
- ❖ What image or metaphor speaks to me as I imagine taking the plunge into the deep at this time?

Blessing:

Blessing that Bears the Wind, the Wave

Jan Richardson – author and painter



That we will risk
the drenching

by which we
are drawn
toward the voice
that calls us,
the love
that catches us,
the faith
that carries us
beyond the wind,
the wave.

The image "Walk Across That Water" and the poem "Blessing That Bears the Wind, the Wave" are © Jan Richardson from her blog The Painted Prayerbook (paintedprayerbook.com).

Reading: Matt: 14: 26-31

Jesus came walking toward them on the water. They were scared out of their wits. "A ghost!" they cried in terror. But Jesus was quick to comfort them. "Courage, It's me. Don't be afraid." Peter, suddenly bold, said, "Master, if it's really you, call me to come to you on the water." He said, "Come ahead."

Jumping out of the boat, Peter walked on the water to Jesus. But when he looked down at the waves churning beneath his feet, he lost his nerve and started to sink. He cried, "Master, save me!" Jesus didn't hesitate. He reached down and grabbed his hand. Then he said, "Faint-hearted, what got into you?" (from THE MESSAGE - the Bible in Contemporary Language. Eugene Peterson)

Reflection/Sharing:

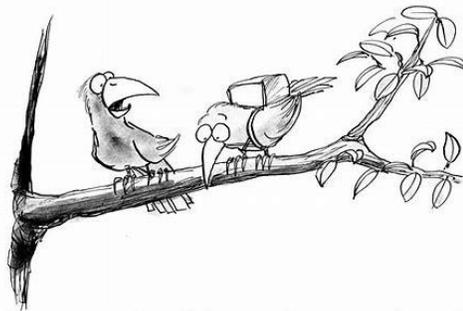
- ❖ Imagine that you are Peter. Once you are back in the boat and have stopped shaking, what are you thinking and feeling about the risk you just took? What would you say to Jesus and the others in the boat? Imagine you are a companion in the boat, watching all of this take place. How would you respond?
- ❖ Describe a time when you were the one "calling to others" to take a risk?
- ❖ When have you had an experience of being the one "called out" by someone else to be the "risk-taker" for the good of the whole?
- ❖ How do Jan Richardson's words of blessing above speak to your mind and heart?

Making Meaning of Risk-taking:

A **RISK** is the potential of gaining or losing something of value. Something valued can be gained or lost when taking a risk resulting from a given action or inaction, foreseen or unforeseen. Risk can also be defined as the intentional interaction with uncertainty.

RISK-TAKING is the act or fact of doing something that involves danger or risk in order to achieve a goal. It is about performance or acceptance of a task which holds both the promise of success and the risk of failure, usually correlated with creativity or undertaking a thoughtful and determined risky behavior or decision.

What could you say/add to the understanding/expression of risk-taking given your experience personally or as a community? How can one make meaning of "risk-taking?" What can be helpful in enabling one to hold more lightly the implications of risk-taking?



“Let’s try it without the parachute.”

Reading:

The form of education which most changes people in lasting ways has to touch them at a broader level than the thinking, reading mind can do. ***Somehow we need to engage in hands-on experience, emotional risk-taking, moving outside of our comfort zones, with different people than our usual flattering friends. We need some expanded level of spiritual seeing or nothing really changes at a cellular or emotional level.*** Within minutes or hours of entertaining a new idea, we quickly return to our old friends, our assured roles, our familiar neural grooves, our ego patterns of response, and we are back to business as usual. It is as if we never read the latest book or listened to the most recent lecture. It is merely another consumer object which we can now add to our repertoire and résumé. “Done that!” instead of “Let it be done unto me.”

Richard Rohr, Daily online Meditations - August 24, 2015.

Questions to consider when faced with a “risk-taking” moment:

- ❖ What makes this a risk?
- ❖ What could be lost by not taking this risk? What could be gained?
- ❖ Where is the movement of God’s spirit in this possibility?
- ❖ Who could benefit most from this “risk-taking” moment?
- ❖ What is the best case scenario?
- ❖ What story could you tell about an experience (yours or someone else’s) when taking a risk had a significant impact for good?

Song: If Not Now

[Chorus]

If not now, tell me when
If not now, tell me when.
We may never see this moment
Or place in time again
If not now, if not now, tell me when.
I see sorrow and trouble in this land
I see sorrow and trouble in this land
Although there will be struggle
we'll make the change we can.
If not now, tell me when.

[Chorus]

I may never see the promised land.
I may never see the promised land.
And yet we'll take the journey
And walk it hand in hand
If not now, tell me when.

[Chorus]

So we'll work it 'til it's done
Every daughter every son,
Every soul that ever longed for something better,
Something brighter.
It will take a change of heart for this to mend.
It will take a change of heart for this to mend.
But miracles do happen every shining now and then
If not now, tell me when?

[Chorus]

If not now,
Tell me when.
But miracles do happen every shining now and then.
If not now tell me when.
If not now tell me when.
If not now tell me when.

Songwriters: **CARRIE NEWCOMER**

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Temple of the Cosmic Spheres Website

Other Resources:

Taking the Leap, Pema Chodron; Shambhala – Boston and London 2009

What Do You Do With An Opportunity? (children's book), Kobi Yamada; Compendium, Inc.;
Seattle WA, 2017