

MyQuest

By Daniel Labbe

Today's Meditation - Even in Prison I lead a fairly busy life. Often times I find myself caught up in current events - or the current of events. Once this happens it starts a chain reaction. It's as if my mind is now on a mission to stay perpetually distracted. Why is that and ~~from~~ what is my mind distracting itself from? Have you ever found yourself caught in this current of events, jumping from one busy distraction to the next? It has an addictive quality to it, doesn't it? As if our minds are terrified of stopping for a moment and actually experiencing our own reality.

When I live this way, jumping from one busy distraction to the next, I notice that instead of thoughtfully responding to ~~the~~ the events in my environment I react out of conditioned habit. My mind is too distracted to actually consider an authentic response so I just fall back on old familiar patterns. This, sadly, is how many people live their entire lives, not aware that another, more rewarding and vibrant option exists. Stagnant patterns replay themselves over and over until life loses its flavor and all we're left with is a lukewarm porage of blandness.

If any of this sounds familiar to you - I know it sure rings a bell for me - I'd like to suggest that you take a few moments to consider what it is you are distracting yourself from. Why do our minds often prefer distraction? Maybe you could try and exercise. Find a quiet place to sit, clear your mind, and take some deep, cleansing breaths. Now just allow yourself to remain still and relaxed. Try to be aware of each thought and emotion that comes up. Once you are aware of the thought or emotion,

(2)

Let it go and wait for the next one to come along (it won't be long!). See how uncomfortable some thoughts and emotions are, why is that? Let them go, spent five to ten minutes just allowing yourself to experience each thought and emotion as it rises and falls away. Are some thoughts/emotions easier or harder to sit with? Why? Can you endure the uncomfortableness of some of these thoughts/emotions? Why or why not?

This exercise can be repeated on a daily basis to see just what it is our distractions are hiding from us. The insights gained by this practice can be ~~start~~ Startling - this isn't for the light-hearted! 😊 Good luck and happy travels ~~to~~ to you on your quest.

Book Talk - I'm reading The Language of Emotions, by Karla McLaren. Wow! This is deep stuff. I don't believe in chance but rather the idea that we get what we need when we need it. This book is a thoroughly detailed map ~~of~~ that is indispensable for any spiritual adventurer, ~~or~~ seeker, ~~or~~ person trying to work through personal issues. McLaren walks us through an honest and fearless way of facing life, ourselves, and our emotions. I am finding the combination of scientific ~~and~~ psychological research and unsentimental spirituality ~~very refreshing~~ ^{refreshing}. McLaren's words are sincere, brutally yet thoughtfully honest, and come from a place of deep, quiet wisdom. This book isn't for ~~the~~ everyone, but for those willing to truly face themselves and who seek to lead a more integrated and fulfilling life. It is written for those who are willing to do whatever it takes to gain their grail.

Current Events - I got a new cell-mate the other day. My last one went to another Prison, ~~My new cell~~ My new celly and I get along well. He's clean, respectful, and quiet. The Quality of your Prison bid is greatly affected by your relationship with your celly. Many of the people in Prison - including myself - have poor inter-personal ~~relations~~ skills, poor coping skills, and Wrought with neuroses. Dysfunction is the norm so getting a celly you get along with is a real God-send. I've had cell-mates that were impossible to live with. Violent temper tantrums, Paranoia, Schizophrenic delusions, guys that refuse to shower, extremely ~~loud~~ loud and negative, and so on. I lucked out this time :)

I'm about halfway finished with writing the Prospectus for LifeQuest. For anyone who doesn't know yet, LifeQuest is my dream for a revolutionary social organization that will provide people with meaningful and effective ways to come together and pursue their unique personal development and life enjoyment goals. LifeQuest combines ~~social~~ social person to person support that so many people find helpful in twelve-step groups with the ~~the~~ latest findings in psychology, personal and spiritual development, and life enjoyment and incorporates the social networking and any-time accessibility of the internet. People in LifeQuest can attend weekly support meetings, go out to enjoy fun ~~day~~ organized day trips, and stay connected on the internet. Online services will provide a monthly newsletter, a three-part curriculum teaching LifeQuest skills and principles, social networking similar to Facebook, chat-rooms, message boards, Events calendar and a community-outreach page advertising the volunteer needs of the local community. I'm looking for people in the

4

fields of Psychology, personal development, spirituality, and anyone who has created similar organizations to help me create an effective curriculum for the online course. I have the main principles and skills that I'd like to incorporate, but I would like to have my work reviewed to ensure I'm offering the best ~~content~~ that is available with current research.

Instead of explaining it all here I'll just complete the Prospectus. I'm wondering if I should just upload the Prospectus on the blog so anyone who is interested could take a look. Yet I am concerned about the possibility of someone creating LifeQuest without me. What do you think?

My personal journey is steadily moving forward. Every day I'm amazed at the progress I've been able to make. Just three years ago I was a complete mess. Depressions, manic episodes, extremely potent suicidal urges, confusion and dysfunction. This was all part of a normal break for me. Before my arrest I wasn't exactly healthy, but - to my surprise - things got a lot worse once I came to prison. I even got to the point where I was cutting myself with razors to alleviate the psychological pain.

The road out of that hell was long, dangerous, and torturous, but I persevered. I gave myself fully to the work of personal development. Through therapy (I've been blessed with having two great therapists in the last 4 years), my spiritual practice, and intense research I've been able to overcome so many of the issues that once tormented me - and others. Now the real-work begins.

Oh, don't forget the support of a few loving family members, Thank You!

(5)

Some of the books that helped me were-

- The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People - Stephen Covey
- How we Choose to be Happy - Greg Hicks
- Learned Optimism - Dr. Martin Seligman
- Awaken the Giant Within - Anthony Robbins.

These books helped me with what I call "ego-work." A healthy ego is vital, it's only the attachment to ego that causes us trouble.

As far as spiritual books, I've read so many I can't recall them all, but here's some of the ones I've found helpful.

- Books by Buddhist author Thich Nat Han
- The Alchemist Paulo Coelho
- The Bhagavad-Gita Hindu scripture
- The Tao Te Ching Lao Tzu - Taoist ~~or~~ scripture
- The Celestine Prophecy James Redfield.
- The language of Emotions Karla McLaren
- The Power of Myth and The Hero of a thousand Faces by Joseph Campbell

and so many others, but anyone familiar with the above titles knows where I'm coming from. I thank them all for helping me on my journey, My Quest.

Today's Quote - "A determined soul will do more with a rusty monkey wrench than a loafer will accomplish with all the tools in a machine shop." Rupert Hughes