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Intimacy

MP.30

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If I had to talk about what was driving my addiction or what was driving my distraction, it would be the void of intimacy. Not physical intimacy, but emotional/psychological/spiritual intimacy. Beginning with my less than fully conscious fear of losing my self in other (merging - Mom), building walls around me to prevent the danger I kept everyone a "short distance from my body" (James Joyce) including myself. Family, friends, and my body were all outside the barricades. I manned them vigilantly. Yes I was such a man-child in my defense against emotion.

I successfully lived in my head, divorced from my heart. Living with only the most formal relation with others and my own self. I believe the relationship with other and the relationship to self are connected. If my consciousness was whole I could have seen through the illusion of the need for the barricade. If my mind and body were one, I could have felt emotion and not run from it, retreating into the recesses of my mind. The world of fantasy was always my safe harbor as a child. I spent many an hour in my head spinning conversation with myself and nameless others.

So the hole started within me. My self without a way to integrate heart and head, then my relations with others operated on the social equivalents of my self division. I keep others at that nice arms distance. I learned to be the good son, student, teacher. I felt at home in the formal requirements of the social. Formal social engagement encourage rational interaction and discourage emotional expression. That fit me snugly. I was at ease here. When the class or other formal social interaction ended, then is when my dis - ease surfaced. So I quickly retreated into my head to safe ground.

I found my worth in externals and ignored my internal signs of distress. My spiritual life was limited by the heady knowledge of Christian piety. My social connects supported by friends and family who functioned in roles, but did not provide sustenance to the needs of human wholeness.

So as I searched to fill the spiritual whole, I substituted one theology for another (evangelicalism for Unitarian-Universalism). But what was missing was my own consciousness. In relationships, I went from one relationship with B to another C. She was not abusive or manipulative, but my pattern of distancing myself from those close to me continued. I kept her at arms length. I thought another relationship (external) would change me. But it didn't. My consciousness was the same. If I could not be emotionally intimate with my own wife, it is not surprising I could not be intimate with friends. Friends were associates I acted along side as I participated in activities of work, play, activism.

My fortieth year coincided with 9/11. Death has a way of focusing the mind at least on something. In my case, I felt the void. The void of intimacy which was my own creation. I felt the emptiness - the loss - the void. It scared me. The mirage lifted to reveal the sand that was water. If I had some awareness, I could have faced this terror. But I assiduously avoided awareness. This lack of consciousness would cost me. Cost me for the next 8 years in empty pursuit of worthiness, cost me my marriage, and then a prison term of another decade divorced me from son and free society.

Intimacy. Intimacy with myself. My own consciousness. And intimacy with others. That is the road out of addiction for me. Building consciousness/awareness and then building intimate relationships. That is my way ahead.

Mindful Prisoner