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SUBJECT: mp.64 Cont. Why Dad?

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mp.64 Cont. Why Dad? 10.15.13

Continuation of Why Dad?

I ended the last post (mp.63) with a statement about denial was the a core source of why I find myself behind bars rather than outside in the "free world." But I think I can say more about this quality of being I called denial. What was I denying? Why was I in denial? What alternatives could I have chosen instead?

First, what was I denying? At root what I would say now is that I was denying the human condition. I think the emptiness I felt was in fact something we all feel and have to respond to in some way. The feeling of general unsatisfactoriness, of never good enoughness, always needing more of this or that in order to be happy, content, whole is something every human being has to wrestle with and come to some resolution. For Christians the whole is filled by God/Jesus. For Buddhists the emptiness points to the illusion of the separate self/ego. The Self is empty of eternal separate existence. The insufficiency of the ego or self, leads to another source of enoughness humans inner nature (Buddha nature) which is not separate from but interconnection with all of reality. These qualities of consciousness are shared by all humans if they choose to access them. But the issue is one has to experience the possibility of wholeness or enoughness before one can slay the dragon at the center of one's heart. Our ideas about God or higher power or reality will not do. We need to experience it directly.

I faced my dragon (and ran away) at the same time many men (and women) do in midlife. My Midlife crisis was a combination of professional anxiety, personal efficacy, intimate loneliness, and spiritual crisis. As I was approaching my 40th birthday I was completing my dissertation. Completing is not the word for what I was doing. I was stumbling toward the finish line with a jumble of words on a page. I had experienced a real wakeup call at my first dissertation defense. The committee in total said what I was doing was not acceptable. It was sloppily written and theoretically unclear. I knew this on one level even as i was denying it on another by not dealing directly with finding a good editor and a person to work through the conceptual and methodological issues. I procrastinated both decisions till it was too late. I procrastinated because I was having second thoughts on who I was and what I wanted to say.

I felt like a fraud. I was parroting others ideas and did not seem to have any voice within to add. Who was I? What did I want to say? That I did not know. My procrastination led to a very humiliating dissertation defense. I was devastated by the reaction to the dissertation. While I did complete it by the next defense, the whole feeling of being a fraud and having nothing to say only became more ingrained. My use of the internet to escape from the dissertation became at first a needed break, then a compulsion. The pull of infinite information became an obsession that allowed me escape the pain of my unworthiness in the text of my dissertation. That is escape only temporarily and never completely.

My professional emptiness was mirrored on personal and spiritual dimensions. I will talk more about that later.

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