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mp78 Journaling and Creativity 10-20-14

Why do I have such a negative view of journaling? Putting form to thoughts is as much a creation whether the form is poetry, fiction, memoir or essay. Fiction allows the writer to go beyond the confines of ones own biography to a truth within a broader set of constraints. Fiction and Poetry are more easily identified as a creative act. But every transformation of experience into language is in fact a creation. It forces on to render. I am sitting here on the yard this Saturday morning. Close by is a rendering plant. Every few days the wind direction changes and we are assaulted by the smell of burnt flesh floating over the compound. To render, to boil down, to break down into basic properties, to separate elements, is not that is what I am doing?

My meditation and study is designed to allow the mind to boil off unwanted qualities so that I can separate and hold on to skillful qualities of mind. I render qualities of awareness, concentration, love, kindness, patience, equanimity passion from other less skillful qualities (jealousy, envy, pride, anger, or fear). These less skillful feelings are never completely eliminated. I will always have these habits in my mind. But the rendering allows me to clarify identify which are skillful for reducing suffering and increasing happiness and direct my intentions in that direction.

Prior to coming to prison, my mind was a sea of passions that I saw as me. The whole sea tossing this way or that. This image gave me a feeling of hopelessness. How was I going to change something so big and incomprehensible? Destined to be thus, for better or worse. I had to live it.

When things were going well, I was happy. I forgot about any issue or feeling that caused me pain yesterday. When those old issues reasserted themselves, I retreated into a trance state to wait out the suffering. over time I retreated further and further into my head. It was my safe zone. People, situations, my feelings could not hurt me in my own private cell.

I would have continued if my choices for opening my prison cell had not turned from legal to illegal. I don't think I would have changed courses in the near term unless something external broke through. The FBI served as that external force. I was too comfortable in my semi-conscious state. I preferred the numb drugged out quality of mind to my imagined life of lying with all my feelings exposed. I wanted a savior. Someone to save me from myself. My partners B & C were potential saviors. But as the impossibility of salvation by another became more clear I retreated into a psychic cell. My cell provided safety from feelings I feared.

Coming to a physical prison broke through my imaginary cell. I could not retreat far enough to get away from me (without giving up sanity itself or my life). It was only here that I began to question the wisdom of my trance like existence. Only here did I begin to see how I harmed those around me by treating emotionally. How I encouraged others to join me mindless states through my virtual identities online. How I treated others as objects of my own manipulation. How I abandoned the people that loved me the most and attached myself to virtual relationships which could never ever give or receive love. How my imaginary life had robbed me of the time and energy to live a real life of meaning and appropriate passion.

Now with a decade long timeout, the time to begin rebuilding a consciousness that can not only give me clarity and happiness, but help others to rebuild their own lives. By rendering the healthy from the unhealthy, I can choose more and more life enhancing actions/thoughts. I can encourage others to do their own healing of their minds and lives. While the action can only be done each of us, the whole process is collective or social one not a private individualistic act. We only gain the wisdom and the strength to save ourselves within the context of a community of people who have gone before and alongside us. We gain strength by hearing heir stories, seeing their transformed lives and learning to tell our own stories.

The language of healing is social creation, transforming brain signals into words that people can share. It is a creative act to assemble and communicate these words through voice or text. My journaling is an act of creation, if done well could be considered an art. Taking sensory experience and transferring into language that can resonate with other is an art itself. I should not feel like I am wasting energy that could be used in other ways, by processing my experience in my journals (which edited versions are reflected in the blog).