

IGNATIAN DISCERNMENT

Spiritual Discernment 101

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Choosing the Deeper Wisdom: Spiritual Discernment 101

What must I do? What may I do? There are myriad options in any one moment, let alone any one lifetime. Each of us is a deep well of spirit and grace, even as we are also busy people engaged in a complex world. How often do we dip into this refreshing well that helps to shape direction and meaning in our decisions? This graphic volume is a manual in spiritual discernment, the art of making decisions in light of our spiritual natures. Most of the wisdom about discernment of spirits and decision-making is pulled from the *Spiritual Exercises* of St. Ignatius of Loyola but with a modern twist. The content is of equal interest for those who are already engaged in a lifelong journey of faith, and for those who consider themselves “spiritual but not necessarily religious.”

This is an updated **Word Document** of the panels in their entirety:

[Spiritual Discernment 101 Cartoons](#)

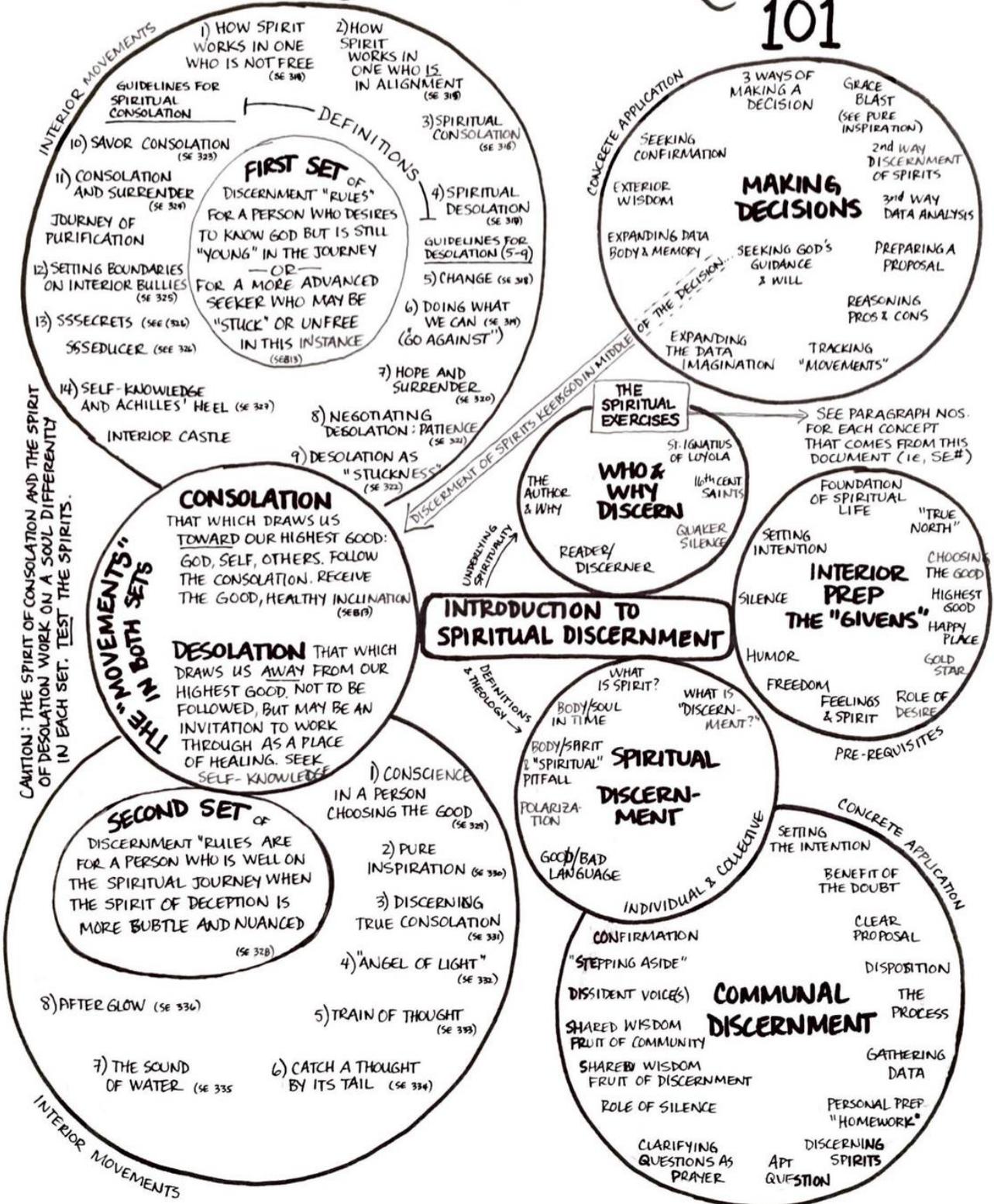
The contents includes cartoon panels depicting the concepts and examples of the 22 “Rules of Discernment” found in the *Spiritual Exercises* of St. Ignatius of Loyola, as well as his instructions on how to make a decision with God in the Spirit. There are other traditional and contemporary sources sprinkled throughout. There is a bibliography for those who wish to pursue your own study and practice. While these concepts are sequential so far, there are missing panels that I hope will tie the “experience” together from one panel to the next, even as I hope that each speaks for itself as well. These insights come from years of studying but also from spiritual experience of my own and that of individuals and groups I have directed.

Thank you for your feedback from your own experience and for your patience... Please come back and check on the progress.

<https://godseekersnd.com/discernment-101-2/>

MAP OF SPIRITUAL DISCERNMENT

101



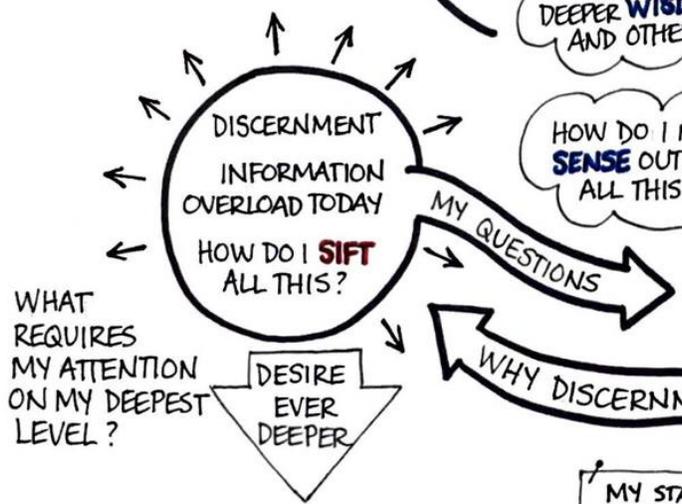
CAUTION: THE SPIRIT OF CONSOLATION AND THE SPIRIT OF DESOLATION WORK ON A SOUL DIFFERENTLY IN EACH SET. TEST THE SPIRITS.

WH AND WH ? CURIOSITY AND WONDER ROCK...

TODAY
 ACCORDING TO CURRENT STATISTICS:
 • THERE IS AN INCREASE IN NUMBER OF "NONE'S" (NO RELIGION) AND
 • "SPIRITUAL BUT NOT NECESSARILY RELIGIOUS"
 • DECLINE OF INTEREST IN "CHURCH" AMONG YOUNG

THIS WORK IS AN ATTEMPT TO CONVEY 16th CENTURY WISDOM FROM ROMAN CATHOLIC TRADITION FOR THOSE SEEKING DEEPER, MEANINGFUL CONNECTION WITH GOD, SELF AND OTHERS

*This is handwritten because it is my best way to both experience and to convey **SOUL-STUFF**! slow, playful and exploratory*



HOW DO I STAY CONNECTED TO MY DEEPER **WISDOM** AND OTHERS?

WHAT DO I **CHOOSE** THAT IS MOST LIFE-GIVING?

HOW DO I MAKE **SENSE** OUT OF ALL THIS?

I WANT **GOD** IN MY LIFE... HOW DO I KEEP GOD IN THE MIDDLE?

QUO VADIS?

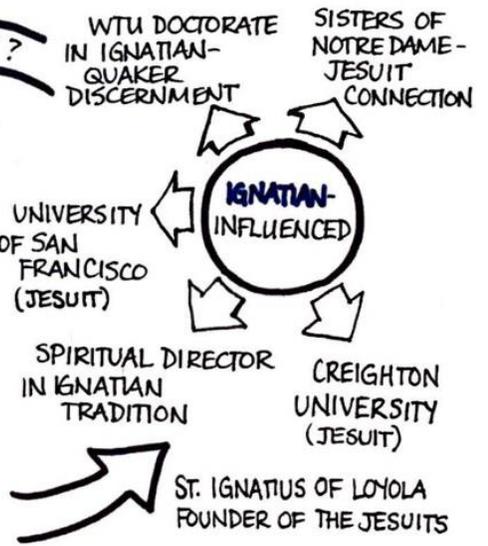
INTRODUCTIONS

START HERE

HI!

SR. MARY LEANNE

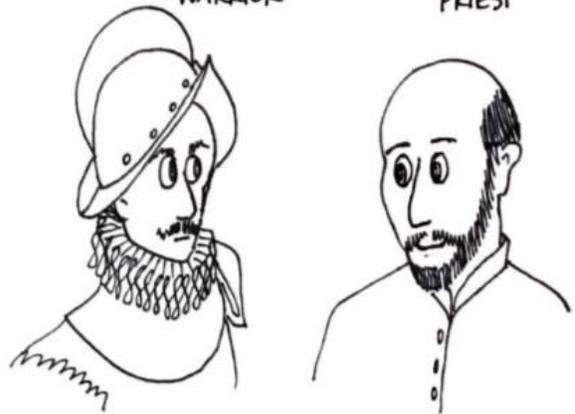
MY STATS
 WH. FEMALE
 USA BORN 1962
 EUROPEAN-RAISED
 ROMAN CATH.
 SR. OF NOTRE DAME
 GODSEEKER
 EDUCATOR:
 6th GR. TO
 GRAD. SCH.
 SEMINARY
 SPIRITUAL DIRECTOR



ST. IGNATIUS' UNDERSTANDING OF THE "SPIRITS"

ST. IGNATIUS WAS A 16TH CENTURY BASQUE SPANIARD, A MILITARY MAN, A COURTIER, AMBITIOUS & PRAGMATIC. UNTIL HIS CONVERSION HE WAS FOCUSED ON HIS OWN HONOR & GLORY AND THAT OF HIS FAMILY NAME. AFTER HIS SPIRITUAL CONVERSION HIS MOTTO BECAME, "ALL FOR THE GREATER HONOR AND GLORY OF GOD." SAME OBSESSION, BUT NO LONGER FOR SELF.

FROM COURTIER WARRIOR TO PILGRIM AND PRIEST



IS THIS THOUGHT FROM YOU, GOD, OR AM I DELUDED?

I'M NOT SURE I BELIEVE IN ANGELS OR DEMONS... WHAT IF IT'S JUST ABOUT MY FEELINGS AND THOUGHT? IS THAT OK?

I DO WANT TO BE GOOD, TO CHOOSE GOD, AND I DO BELIEVE IN SOMETHING... I WANT TO BE AUTHENTIC!

PSST... DOWN HERE. HEY, LISTEN TO ME!

WHETHER YOU BELIEVE OR NOT, I'VE GOT YOUR BACK...

NOTE: NOT NECESSARILY A HEALTHY IMAGE. IT CAN BE POLARIZING INSIDE & OUT.

AS A 16TH CENTURY MAN, IGNATIUS BELIEVED IN SPIRITS, THOSE FROM GOD, AND THOSE ALIGNED WITH SATAN, OR EVIL. THESE WERE SPIRITUAL ENTITIES THAT COULD INFLUENCE THE HUMAN SPIRIT, THOUGH HUMANS REMAIN FREE TO CHOOSE. IGNATIUS' WRITTEN WORK IS A PERSONAL TESTIMONY OF THE JOURNEY TOWARD MORE & MORE **FREEDOM** TO CHOOSE THE "GOOD," THE "GREATER," THE "MORE." THAT IS NOT BOUND BY THE SLAVERY, BLINDNESS & DISTORTION OF THE "ILL" EFFECTS OF PERSONAL & SOCIAL CONTRARY SPIRITS.

WHETHER YOU, THE READER, BELIEVE IN THESE SPIRITUAL ENTITIES OR NOT, IGNATIUS DID, AND IT IS HELPFUL TO REMEMBER THE CATHOLIC TRADITION THAT FORMED HIM. REGARDLESS, IGNATIUS' "RULES OF DISCERNMENT," THE BULK OF THIS WORK, ARE STILL PSYCHOLOGICALLY AS WELL AS SPIRITUALLY INSIGHTFUL.

IGNATIUS & DISCERNMENT OF SPIRITS

IGNATIUS' **CONVERSION** WAS WORKED THROUGH A VERY SLOW AND PAINFUL CONVALESCENCE AFTER A WAR INJURY. A CANONBALL SHATTERED HIS LEG, AND BECAUSE OF HIS VANITY, HE HAD DOCTORS RE-BREAK HIS LEG AFTER IT BEGAN TO SET CROOKED.

AS IGNATIUS LAY PRONE FOR LONG MONTHS, HE FANTASIZED ABOUT CHIVALROUS ADVENTURES AS A HERO KNIGHT IN SHINING ARMOR. IN HIS FAMILY CASTLE WERE ALSO TWO BOOKS: THE LIFE OF CHRIST, AND THE LIVES OF THE SAINTS.



THE DAWNING OF A CONCEPT... **DISCERNMENT OF SPIRITS** ACCORDING TO IGNATIUS



OVER TIME IGNATIUS BEGAN TO NOTICE THAT WHEN HE ENGAGED IN CHIVALROUS FANTASY IT WAS PLEASURABLE BUT AFTERWARD LEFT HIM **DRY** AND **AGITATED** IN SPIRIT. IT TOOK MORE CONCENTRATION TO READ THE HOLY BOOKS, BUT HE FOUND GREAT SATISFACTION, **ENERGY** AND **SWEETNESS** IN REFLECTING ON THESE STORIES. THEY MADE HIM WANT TO BE A BETTER PERSON. IGNATIUS NAMED THESE TWO MOVEMENTS **DESOLATION** AND **CONSOLATION**.

THE FOUNDATION of the Spiritual Life

THERE IS A HIGHEST "UNCREATED"

GOOD, BEAUTY, TRUTH,

A PURPOSE AND PERSON
BIGGER THAN I

WHO SEEKS ME AND
MY **WHOLENESS**

EVEN MORE THAN I DO,

WHO DESIRES TO
COMMUNICATE
WITH ME.

I AM CREATED (CREATURE)

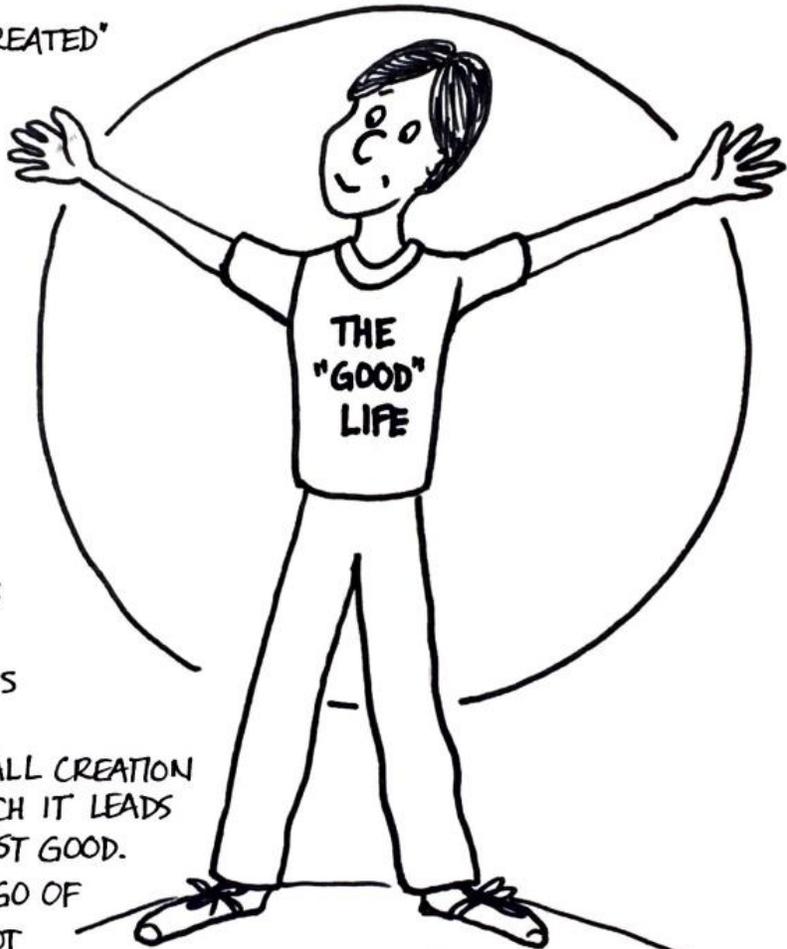
LOVED & LOVEABLE.

EVERYTHING CREATED IN THIS
WORLD MAY LEAD ME
TO FULFILLMENT IN THIS
RELATIONSHIP

I AM INVITED TO ENGAGE ALL CREATION
TO THE EXTENT TO WHICH IT LEADS
TO THIS END, THE HIGHEST GOOD.

I AM CHALLENGED TO LET GO OF
ANYTHING THAT DOES NOT
LEAD TO THIS END ("INDIFFERENCE"
BORN OF INNER FREEDOM).

I AM CAPABLE OF **DISCERNING**
AMONG OPTIONS AND OF
CHOOSING THAT WHICH GIVES
FREEDOM AND LIFE
WITH THE GUIDANCE OF
THE **SPIRIT.**



THE "GOOD" LIFE?

GREATER **INTEGRITY** OF SELF,
OF RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD,
SELF, OTHERS, CREATION

MORE **FREEDOM** FROM INNER
& RELATIONAL SLAVERY

MORE **CLARITY** TO SEE
AND TO CHOOSE
THE "GOOD."

TRUE NORTH

CALIBRATING OUR INTENTION TO...

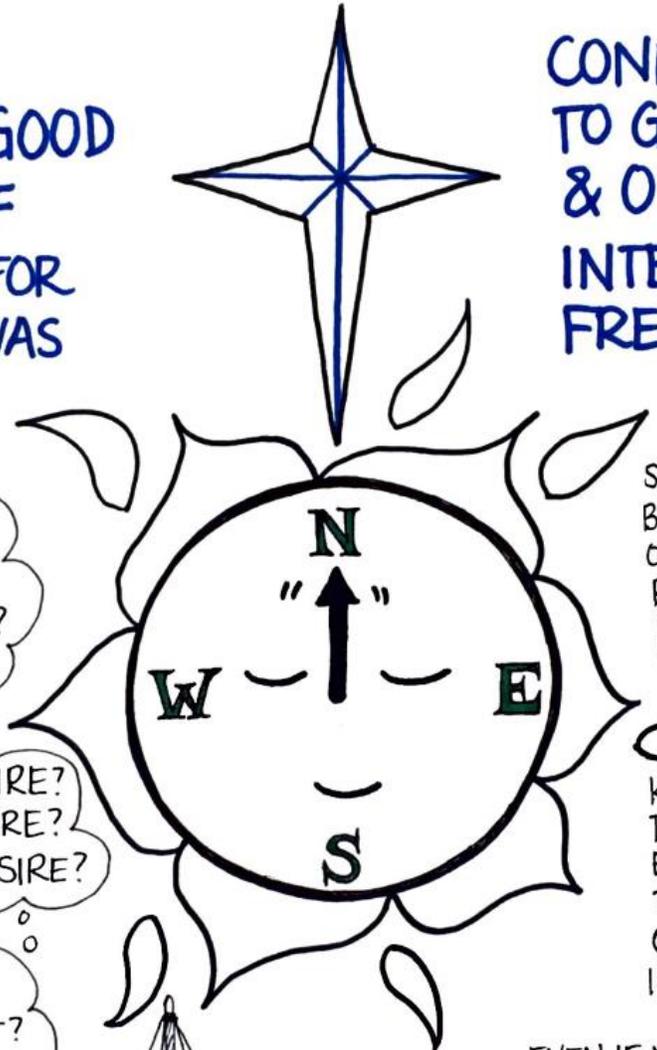
GOD
HIGHEST GOOD
BEST SELF
THE AIM FOR WHICH I WAS MADE

CONNECTEDNESS TO GOD, SELF & OTHERS
INTEGRITY
FREEDOM

WHAT GETS ME OUT OF BED IN THE MORNING?
WHY BOTHER?

WHAT IS MY DESIRE?
MY DEEPER DESIRE?
MY DEEPEST DESIRE?

WHAT OR WHO IS MY GUIDING LIGHT?
BY WHAT OR WHOM DO I SET AND RESET MY COURSE?



SETTING THE INTENTION BEFORE EACH STEP AND OFTEN IN BETWEEN RECALIBRATES OUR INTERIOR "HOMING DEVICE."

KEEP RETURNING TO THE FOUNDATION, ESPECIALLY WHEN THE FOG OF CONFUSION OR COMPULSION ROLLS IN. SLOW DOWN INSIDE.

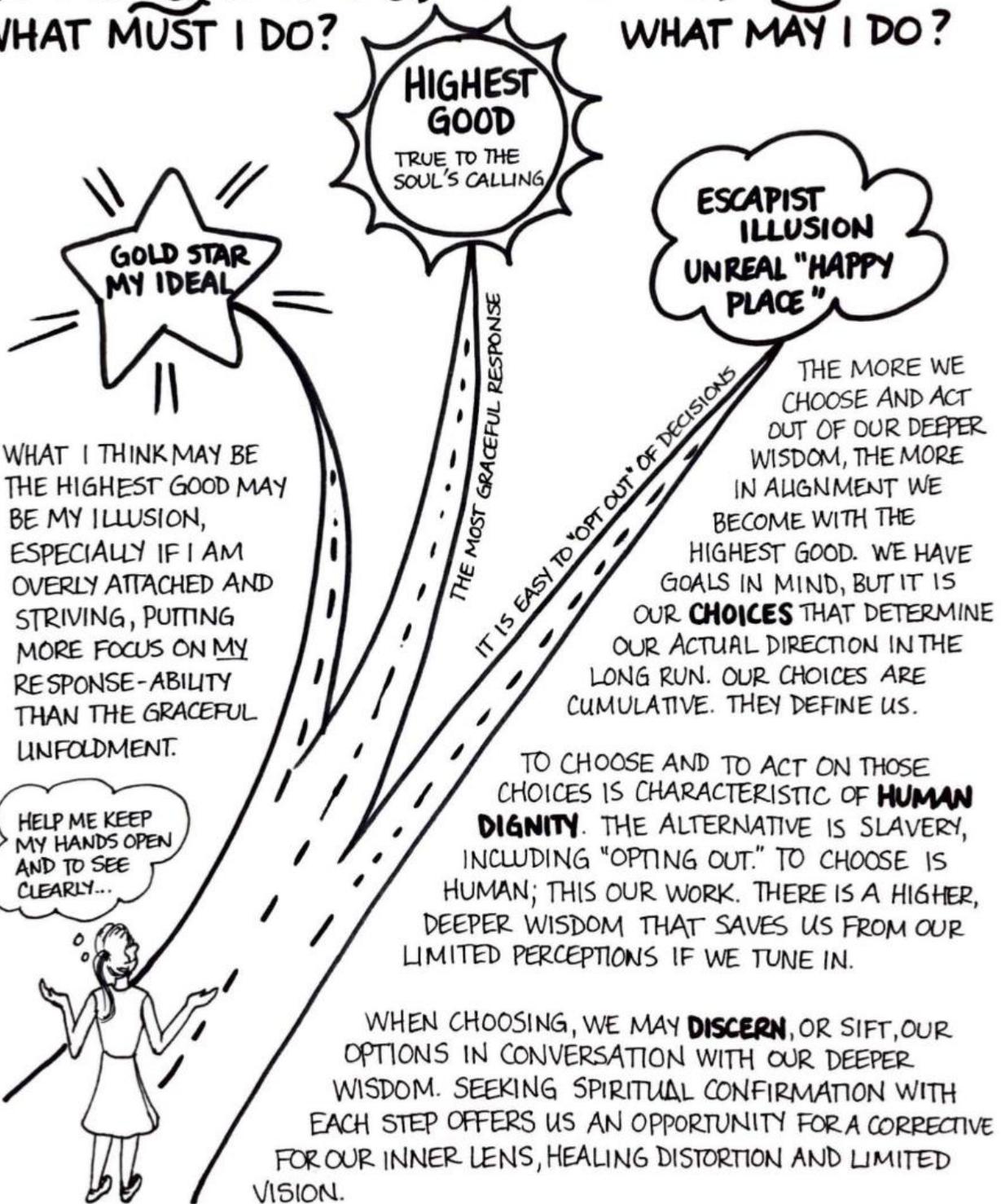
EVEN IF YOU CAN'T SEE TRUE NORTH, SPIRIT CAN GUIDE YOU THROUGH A COURSE CORRECTION. NOTE: "CORRECTIONS" CAN BE GNARLY, EVEN AS THEY ARE FRUITFUL FOR THE LONG HAUL.



CHOOSING THE "GOOD"

WHAT MUST I DO?

WHAT MAY I DO?

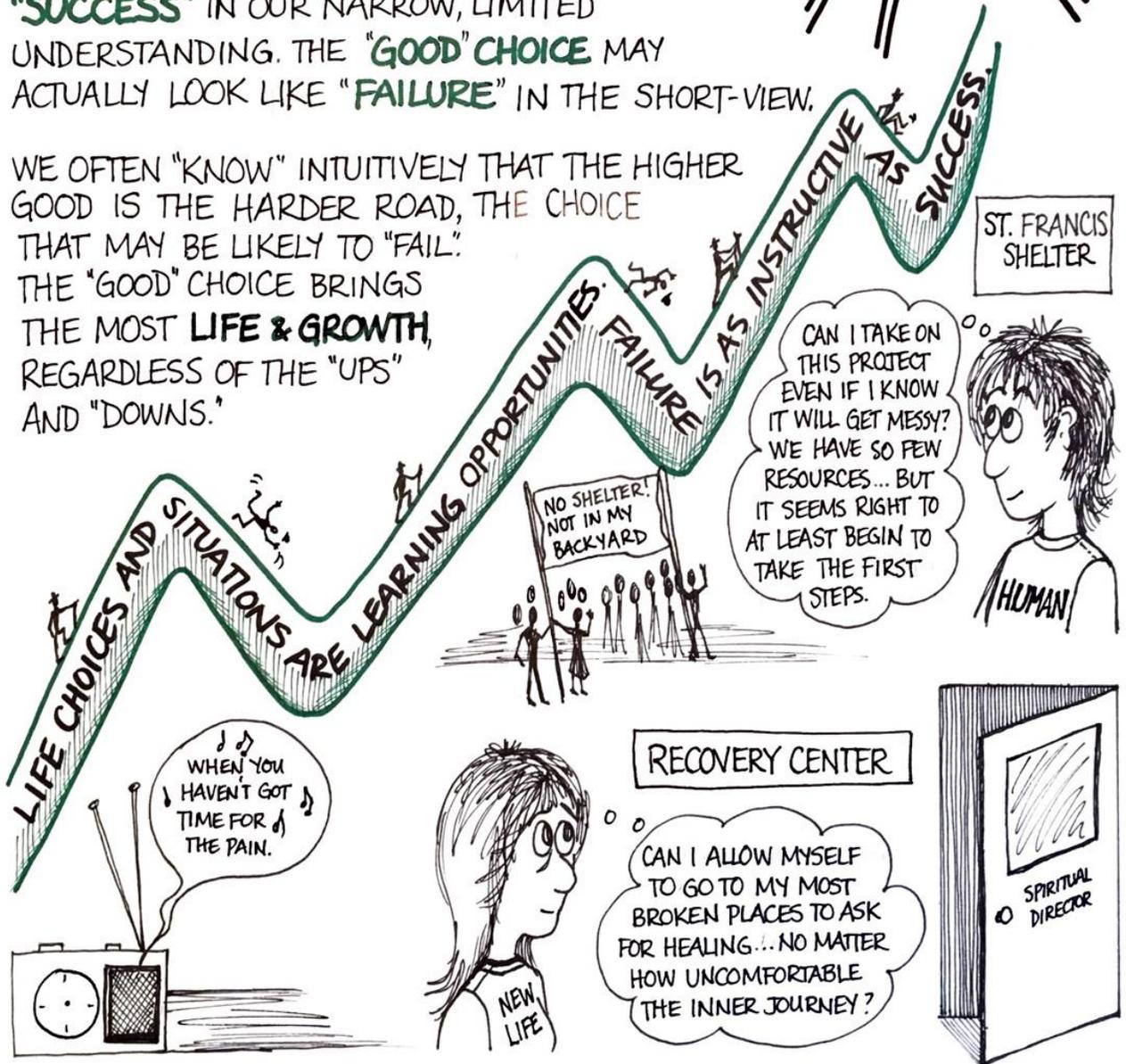


CHOOSING ^{THE} HIGHEST



THE HIGHEST GOOD, THE JOURNEY TOWARD INTEGRITY, CLARITY AND FREEDOM DOES NOT ALWAYS CORRESPOND TO WHAT LOOKS LIKE "SUCCESS" IN OUR NARROW, LIMITED UNDERSTANDING. THE "GOOD" CHOICE MAY ACTUALLY LOOK LIKE "FAILURE" IN THE SHORT-VIEW.

WE OFTEN "KNOW" INTUITIVELY THAT THE HIGHER GOOD IS THE HARDER ROAD, THE CHOICE THAT MAY BE LIKELY TO "FAIL". THE "GOOD" CHOICE BRINGS THE MOST LIFE & GROWTH, REGARDLESS OF THE "UPS" AND "DOWNS."



CHOOSING THE GOOD?

THE GOLD STAR

SOMETIMES WHAT WE PERCEIVE TO BE THE HIGHEST GOOD IS A FUNCTION OF OUR **PERFECTIONISM**, OUR NEED TO MAKE OURSELVES INTO THE IMAGE WE HAVE CONSTRUCTED FOR OURSELVES.

THIS SHORT-SIGHTED STRIVING PLACES LIMITS ON GOD'S POSSIBILITIES, GOD'S DREAM FOR US. OUR LIMITED IDEA OF PERFECTION, THEN, DOES NOT LEAVE ROOM FOR GOD'S ABUNDANCE.

THIS GOLD STAR IDEAL IS OFTEN A CONSTRUCTION OF OTHERS' OR OF OVERALL CULTURAL **EXPECTATIONS** (IDEAS OF "SUCCESS," "SPIRITUAL," ECT.)

THIS DEFAULT THINKING NEEDS TO BE PURIFIED IN THE LIGHT OF THE PRESENT DISCERNMENT



I HAVE TO BE "GOOD" ALWAYS. IT IS NEVER OK TO BE SAD OR ANGRY.

I MUST BE RESPONSIBLE ALL THE TIME. NO ONE ELSE IN MY FAMILY IS UP TO THE TASK.

ATTENTION: TO OVERSTRIVE IS OFTEN A SIGN THAT THE HEALING TO BE SOUGHT IS "GOOD-ENOUGH-NESS".
SPIRIT, MAY I KNOW I AM BOTH BROKEN AND LOVED AS GOOD ENOUGH IN THE NOW.

HIGHEST GOOD HERE

NOTE "ALWAYS" & "NEVER" ON THE WAY TO DESOLATION

HIGHEST GOOD RIGHT HERE

I WANT TO BE HOLY JUST LIKE ST. FRANCIS, THE GREATEST SAINT EVER!

HIGHEST GOOD MAKE A U-TURN

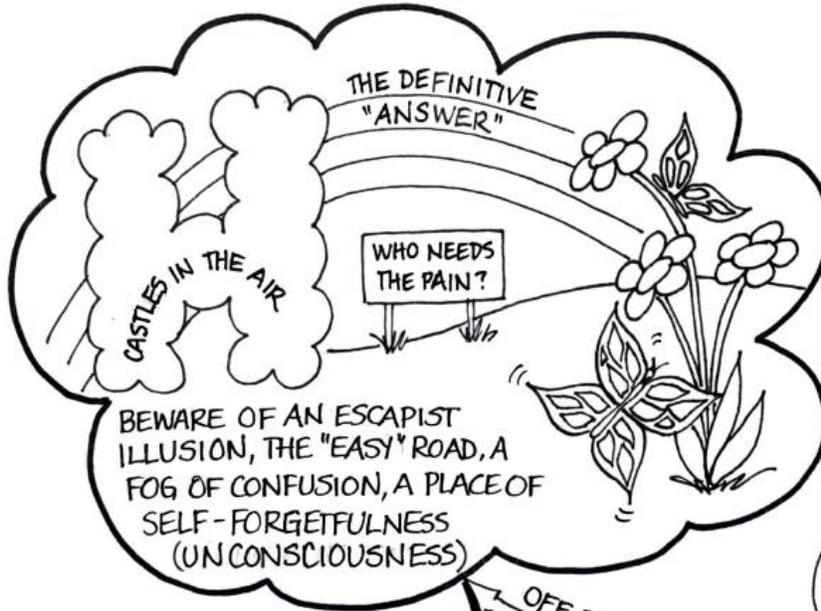
STRIVING TOWARD A PRE-SET GOAL, WITHOUT ATTENDING TO INNER MOVEMENTS, WE MAY MISS THE GOOD THAT IS RIGHT IN FRONT OF US IN THE **PRESENT**, THE **NOW**

HIGHEST GOOD FOR TODAY
WAY OVER HERE



CHOOSING THE "GOOD"?

THE "HAPPY PLACE"



THE
HIGHEST
GOOD
THE REAL DEAL

WE MAY CONFUSE THE "GOOD" WITH WHAT "FEELS GOOD" OR AT LEAST LESS ARDUOUS. JUST BECAUSE IT FEELS GOOD IN THE **SHORT**

TERM DOES NOT MEAN IT IS TRUE SPIRITUAL CONSOLATION THAT LEADS TO DEEPER **LIFE & CONNECTION**

RECALIBRATION QUESTION:
DOES THIS CHOICE BRING ME
DEEPER CONNECTION WITH
MYSELF, GOD, OTHERS?



OFF THE MARK

DON'T WORRY BE HAPPY!

THE YELLOW BRICK ROAD...

THE MOUTH OF...

THE PITFALL OF THIS PATH OF **ILLUSION**

IS THAT WE AVOID

DEEPER FEELINGS AND

CONTRADICTIONS IN THE

HUMAN CONDITION. WE REPLACE

REAL, MESSY CONNECTION WITH

NUMBING BEHAVIORS: SUBSTANCE

ABUSE, MEDIA ADDICTION, EXERCISE

ADDICTION, PERFECTIONISM, UNGROUNDED

PIETY, FRENZIED BUSY-NESS, ETC., ALL TO

MASK DEEPER DISCOMFORT

JOURNEY OF PURIFICATION & CONNECTEDNESS

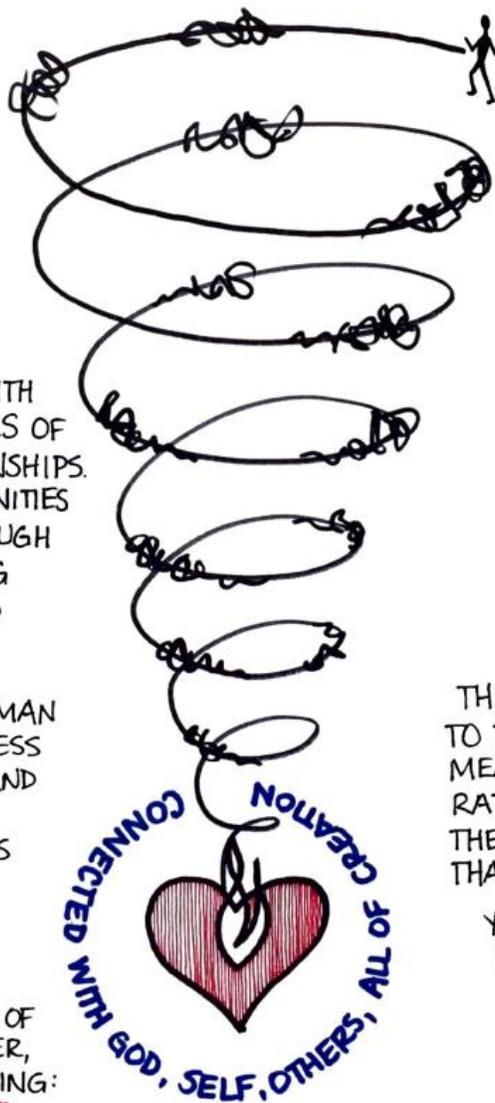
DOWNWARD & INWARD (rather than upward & onward)



WE ARE ALL FAMILIAR WITH THE STORMS AND SQUALLS OF THE INNER LIFE & RELATIONSHIPS. THESE "BUMPS" ARE OPPORTUNITIES TO BREAK DOWN AND THROUGH CRYSTALLIZED WAYS OF BEING THAT NEED REORDERING AND HEALING.

WITH EACH STORM, OUR HUMAN LIMITATIONS AND BROKENNESS ARE REVISITED ON DEEPER AND DEEPER LEVELS. WHEN WE SURRENDER TO THIS PROCESS OF PURIFICATION, LAYERS AND LAYERS OF HEALING OCCUR.

PLACES WHERE "BAD" SPIRITS ATTACK ARE, THEN, NOT DEVOID OF GOD'S PURIFYING WORK. RATHER, WE COOPERATE BY SURRENDERING: **"I CAN'T DO THIS. HELP!"**



OPPORTUNITIES TO HEAL...

NUMBNESS
 NARCISSISM
 ENTRANCEMENT
 ENMESHMENT
 CO-DEPENDENCE
 SELF-DECEPTION
 EGOTISM
 ADDICTION

THE CLOSER YOU COME TO THE CORE DOES NOT MEAN THE STORMS CEASE, RATHER, BY THIS TIME THERE IS MUCH EVIDENCE THAT "THIS TOO WILL PASS."

YOU BEGIN TO TRUST THE PROCESS AND THE CREATOR.

FREEDOM FROM INORDINANT ATTACHMENTS



THIS IS SO HARD
SOMETIMES BUT
I'M MAKING THE
INTENTION TO BE
HEALED. I'M
CHOOSING TO
SURRENDER



FREEDOM FOR
CLEARER DISCERNMENT WHICH LEADS TO
DEEPER CONNECTION WITH GOD, SELF, OTHERS

DESIRE: What do you want... really...the **DEEPER DESIRE?**

WE OFTEN HAVE A HARD TIME ADMITTING TO OURSELVES OUR TRUE DESIRES. WE LIKE TO PUT OUR BEST FOOT FORWARD EVEN TO OURSELVES. IF WE WANT TO LIVE A "GOOD" OR "SPIRITUAL" OR "HOLY" LIFE, THIS NEED CAN BE EVEN MORE PRONOUNCED. THE BEGINNING OF EVERY DISCERNMENT OR DECISION BEGINS WITH IDENTIFYING **WHAT I WANT**, NO MATTER HOW MUNDANE OR SELFISH OR IGNOBLE IT SEEMS. WE MUST BEGIN WITH UTTER **SELF-HONESTY**. THIS TRANSPARENCY IS THE BEGINNING OF THE JOURNEY TOWARD THE HIGHEST, DEEPEST GOOD. ONCE ADMITTED, THIS DESIRE MAY BE PURIFIED AND CLARIFIED.

THINGS TO REMEMBER...

1. IDENTIFY MY DESIRE
(without judgment)
2. MAKE THE INTENTION THAT I WANT THE HIGHEST GOOD
(re-center, re-calibrate)
3. NOTE THE PARTS OF MYSELF THAT NEED ATTENTION AND HEALING.
4. LET THESE INSIGHTS BE AN INVITATION TO PRAYER, A CONVERSATION WITH DEEPER WISDOM.



I ONLY WANT WHAT GOD WANTS... I'M WAITING... BUT I DON'T HEAR ANYTHING.

WHINY...

I WANT, I WANT, I DON'T KNOW WHAT I WANT...

WHAT I WANT IS THAT YOU AGREE WITH ME.

MMM... IS THAT WHAT I REALLY WANT?

GOOD QUESTIONS

I WANT YOU TO RESPECT MY CONTRIBUTION.

ATTENTION TO FEELING: CONNECT

I WANT TO BE VALIDATED AS A PERSON. I WANT YOU TO CARE THAT I'M HERE.

TIME

I WANT TO BE IN A MEANINGFUL AND AUTHENTIC RELATIONSHIP. I WANT TO BE REAL, AS I AM.

I WANT TO BE LOVED.

HEART OF THE MATTER

SPIRIT, HELP ME TO REMEMBER I AM LOVED AND SAFE... ALWAYS.

FEELINGS: TRUTH-SAYERS OF THE HEART

FEELINGS DO NOT LIE IF WE CAN IDENTIFY THEM. THEY ARE WHAT THEY ARE. THEY REVEAL THE TRUTH OF WHERE WE ARE INTERIORLY, NO MATTER HOW MUCH WE TRY TO CONVINCE OURSELVES OTHERWISE, OR HIDE IN A FOG OF "I DON'T KNOW." THE FEELINGS ARE NOT "GOOD" OR "BAD," BUT THEY ARE SIGNS AS TO WHETHER A PERSON IS MOVING TOWARD OR AWAY FROM THE HIGHEST GOOD, DEPENDING ON ONE'S ORIENTATION.

WHEN WE ARE CAUGHT UP IN THE STORY (IN OUR HEAD) - THE DETAILS, THE WRONGS, THE RIGHTS, THE INDIGNATION AND THE GLORY - IT IS IMPERATIVE TO KEEP FOCUSING ON OUR FEELINGS AS THE STARTING PLACE FOR SEEKING THE DEEPER WISDOM.

AND THEN HE SAID...
AND THEN SHE SAID...
AND THEN I WAS MAD...
BUT THEN HE CAME IN
AND DID A TERRIBLE
THING...

GETTING STUCK
IN THE STORY
FLAMES THE
PASSION AND
DOES NOT
ALLOW FOR
REFLECTION

MMM... I WAS
MAD... ANGRY?

STAY WITH THIS
FEELING LONG
ENOUGH FOR IT
TO SPEAK TO YOU.

WHAT IS REALLY GOING
ON IN ME? WHAT AM I
REACTING TO?

DON'T JUST
USE YOUR HEAD
TO DISSECT
YOURSELF...
PRAY.

WHEN HAVE I
FELT THIS WAY BEFORE?

SPIRIT, HELP ME TO STAY
WITH THIS ANGER OR DIS-EASE.
MEET ME HERE. HEAL ME.
TEACH ME WHAT I
NEED TO KNOW

**DISARMING A
RUNAWAY STORY...**

TAKE A BREATH
BE STILL AND PAY
ATTENTION

MOVE FROM HEAD STORY
TO HEART FEELING

MAKE THE INTENTION
TO KNOW THE DEEPER
TRUTH AND WISDOM

LISTEN IN THE SILENCE



IS THIS A MOVEMENT LEADING
ME AWAY FROM OR TOWARD
THE HIGHEST GOOD? ANGER
IS NOT GOOD OR BAD. IT MAY
BE AN INVITATION TO CHANGE.

DEVELOPING A DISPOSITION OF INDIFFERENCE

DISINTERESTED
(MY "INTERESTS" ARE NOT CAPTIVATED BUT FREE)

IMPARTIAL
(WELL, I CAN DESIRE ONE THING BUT I CAN ALSO LIVE WITHOUT IT)

DETACHED
(FROM DISORDERED, THAT IS, "OUT OF ORDER", IMPULSES)

UN"HOOKED"

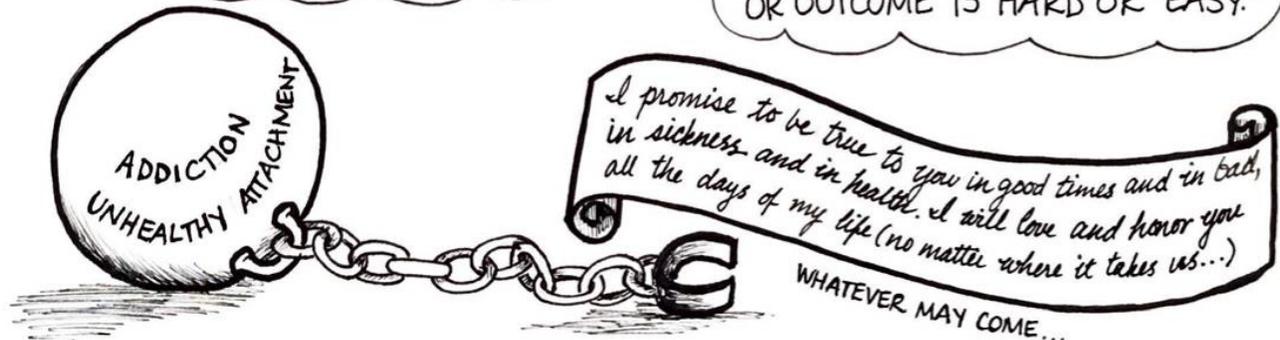
I CAN LIVE WITH EITHER OUTCOME IF MY HEART IS IN LINE WITH THE "GOOD."

HOW FREE AM I TO CHOOSE IN THIS CASE?

AM I UNDULY ATTACHED TO A PARTICULAR OUTCOME OR EXPECTATION?

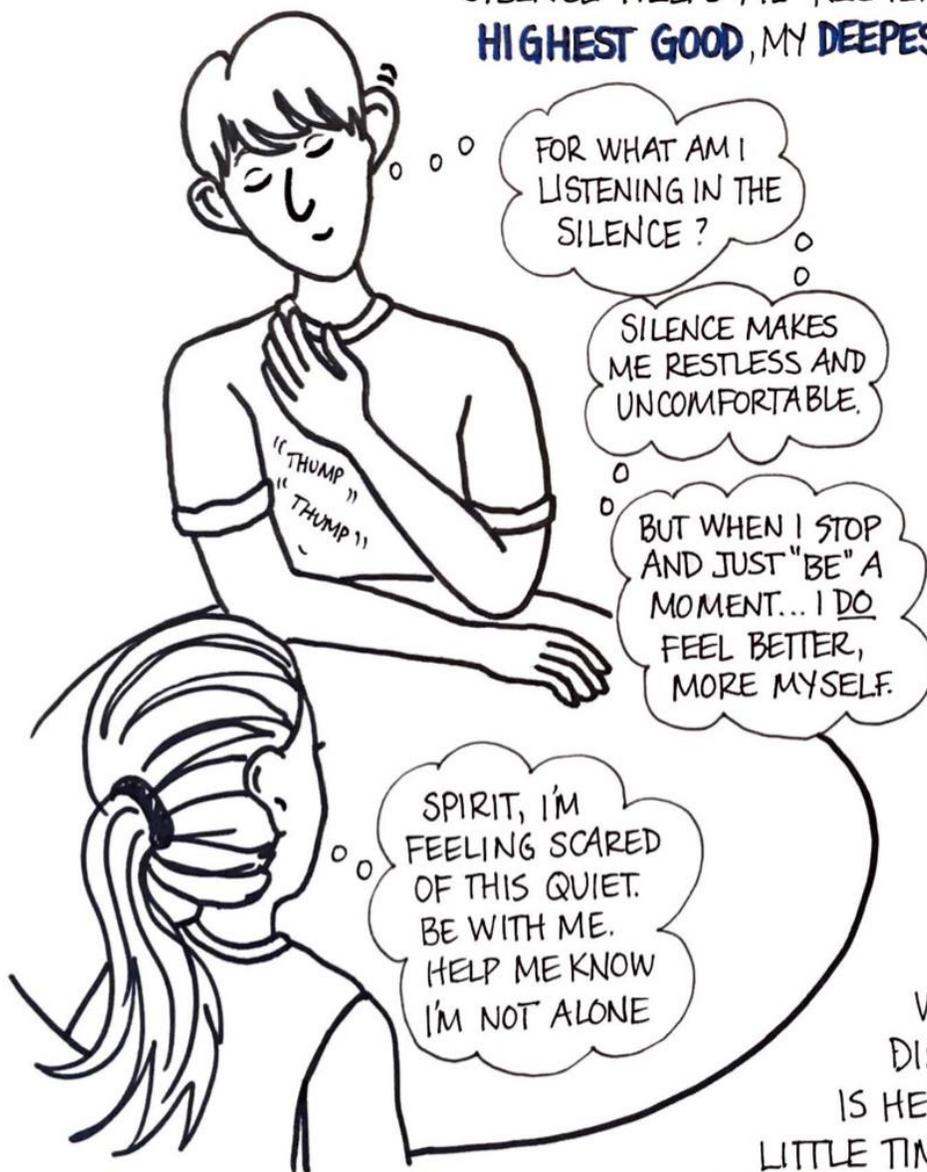
DO I HAVE PEACE OF HEART WHEN I IMAGINE EITHER OUTCOME, IF THIS DISCERNMENT SEEMS TO BE IN THE HIGHEST GOOD IN THIS CASE... FOR NOW?

IF I AM TRULY IN ALIGNMENT WITH GOD/HIGHEST GOOD IT SHOULDN'T MATTER IF THE CHOICE OR OUTCOME IS HARD OR "EASY."



LISTENING ^{IN} THE **SILENCE**

LISTENING TO THE HEART OF THINGS, PEOPLE, SITUATIONS, MYSELF, I **WAIT** ON THE **DEEPER WISDOM**, BEYOND THE EASY "FIX," THE IMMEDIATELY EXPEDIENT "ANSWER." THE PRACTICE OF INTERIOR SILENCE HELPS ME RECALIBRATE TO THE **HIGHEST GOOD**, MY **DEEPEST VALUES**.

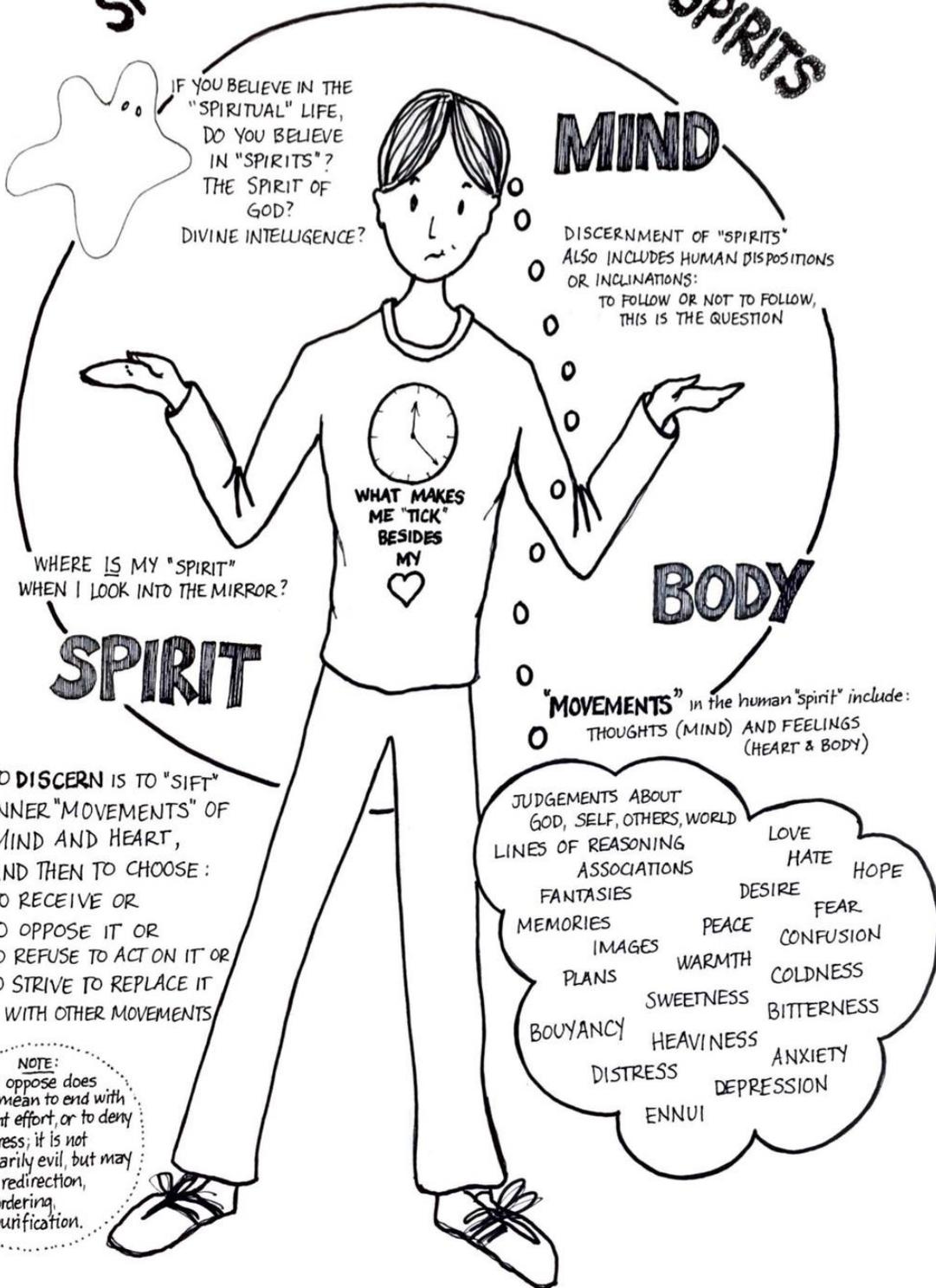


THE SILENCE IS NOT A **VOID**. THERE IS **SOMEONE** TO WHOM WE ARE LISTENING: TO OUR DEEPEST SELVES, TO SPIRIT, TO THE SPIRIT OF OTHERS WHO ARE PRESENT. IF YOU ARE HAVING TROUBLE, **RESET** THE INTENTION THAT YOU ARE LISTENING TO OR WITH SOMEONE WHO MAKES YOU FEEL SAFE.

TO "TUNE IN" OFTEN DURING THE DAY WHEN WE ARE TRYING TO DISCERN NEXT STEPS, IT IS HELPFUL TO SET ASIDE A LITTLE TIME EACH DAY TO **UNPLUG** FOR PRACTICE.



SPIRITUAL DISCERNMENT OF SPIRITS



IF YOU BELIEVE IN THE "SPIRITUAL" LIFE, DO YOU BELIEVE IN "SPIRITS"? THE SPIRIT OF GOD? DIVINE INTELLIGENCE?

MIND

DISCERNMENT OF "SPIRITS" ALSO INCLUDES HUMAN DISPOSITIONS OR INCLINATIONS: TO FOLLOW OR NOT TO FOLLOW, THIS IS THE QUESTION

WHERE IS MY "SPIRIT" WHEN I LOOK INTO THE MIRROR?

SPIRIT

BODY

"MOVEMENTS" in the human "spirit" include: THOUGHTS (MIND) AND FEELINGS (HEART & BODY)

TO DISCERN IS TO "SIFT" INNER "MOVEMENTS" OF MIND AND HEART, AND THEN TO CHOOSE: TO RECEIVE OR TO OPPOSE IT OR TO REFUSE TO ACT ON IT OR TO STRIVE TO REPLACE IT WITH OTHER MOVEMENTS

NOTE:
To oppose does not mean to end with violent effort, or to deny or repress; it is not necessarily evil, but may need redirection, reordering, purification.

- JUDGEMENTS ABOUT GOD, SELF, OTHERS, WORLD
- LINES OF REASONING
- ASSOCIATIONS
- FANTASIES
- MEMORIES
- IMAGES
- PLANS
- BOUYANCY
- DISTRESS
- ENNUI
- LOVE
- HATE
- HOPE
- DESIRE
- FEAR
- CONFUSION
- PEACE
- WARMTH
- COLDNESS
- SWEETNESS
- BITTERNESS
- HEAVINESS
- ANXIETY
- DEPRESSION

WHAT IS "SPIRIT"?



I THINK
THEREFORE
I AM

YES... AND NO.
I AM MORE THAN
MY MIND...

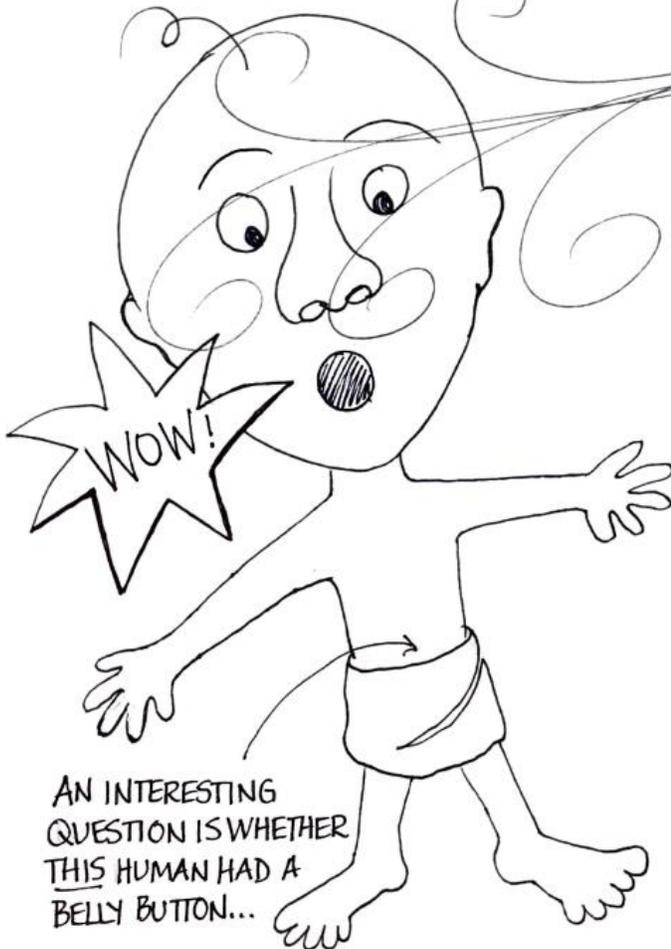
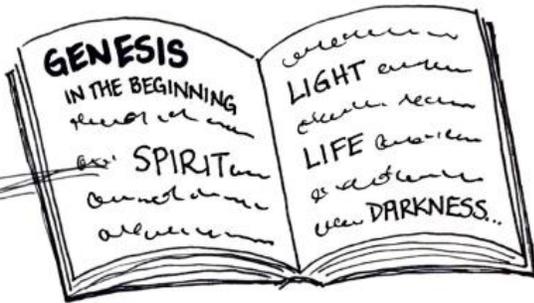
I FEEL
THEREFORE
I AM

YES... AND NO.
I AM MORE THAN
MY FEELINGS...

I AM MORE THAN MY MIND, MY FEELINGS, MY BODY? WHY DO I BELIEVE I AM MORE THAN MY MIND? WHY DO I BELIEVE I KNOW "THERE IS MORE"? ... WHAT IS SPIRITUALITY?

**I AM MORE
THAN MY BODY
YET I AM
MY BODY TOO.**

WHAT IS SPIRIT?

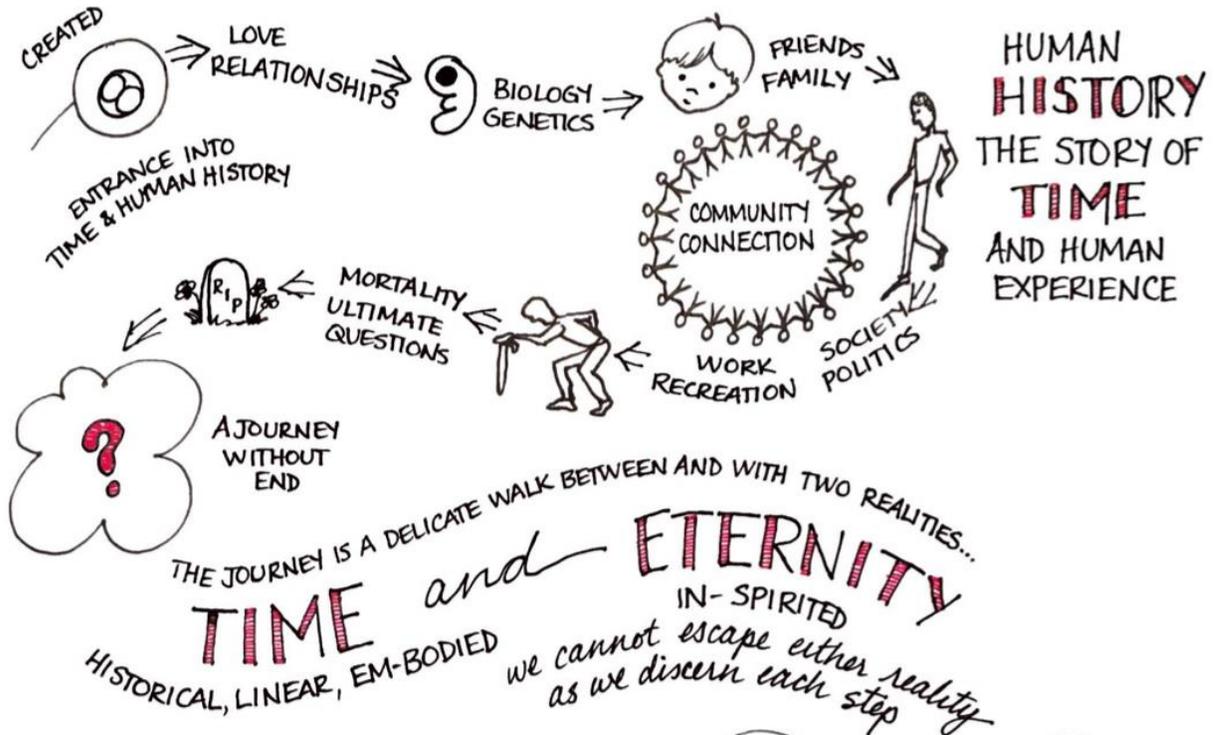


AN INTERESTING
QUESTION IS WHETHER
THIS HUMAN HAD A
BELLY BUTTON...

IN THE JUDEO-CHRISTIAN SCRIPTURES
"SPIRIT" IS RESPONSIBLE FOR **LIGHT**
AND **LIFE**. THE WORD MEANS
"WIND" OR "BREATH." IN THE BOOK OF
THE "BEGINNING," GOD BREATHEES INTO
THE NOSTRILS OF THE HUMAN THE
BREATH OF LIFE

(AKA "SPIRIT"). THIS HUMAN SPIRIT IS
THE LIFEFORCE THAT SUSTAINS US, PART
OF US THAT IS ESSENTIAL (ESSENCE =
I AM-NESS), AND BY WHICH WE CAN
EXPERIENCE THE **SPIRIT OF GOD**
WHO CREATED US.

BODY-SOUL IN TIME



THE BODY-SOUL EXPERIENCE IS VERY PURPOSEFUL. IT IS OUR HUMAN DESTINY, INDIVIDUALLY AND COLLECTIVELY. WE ACT ON THE WORLD. WE EXPERIENCE CONSEQUENCES OF ACTION AND INACTION.

WE WORK OUT OUR SPIRITUAL LIFE IN THESE BODY-SOULS, AND THAT IMPLIES HISTORY, AND THEREFORE CONSTRUCTION TO THE PARTICULAR: FAMILY, GEOGRAPHY, PLACE AND TIME IN HUMAN HISTORY, ETC. NONE OF THESE "GIVENS" CAN BE SEPARATED OUT FROM THE "SPIRITUAL LIFE." THESE FACTS ARE OUR SPIRITUAL LIFE AS BODY-SOULS!



BODY~SPIRIT & the "spiritual" pitfall



AS HUMAN BEINGS WE ARE BODY AND SPIRIT, MATERIAL AND SPIRITUAL, **INDIVISIBLE**. IF WE IDENTIFY TOO MUCH WITH THE SPIRITUAL, TO THE EXCLUSION OF OUR BODILY NATURE, WE LOSE OURSELVES AND OUR CONNECTION TO GOD AND OTHERS.

SELF-STYLED "SPIRITUAL" PEOPLE OFTEN TRY TO LIVE OUTSIDE OF OR DESPITE THEIR BODIES, PERCEIVING THE MATERIAL WORLD TO BE CONSTRICTING, A PRISON FROM WHICH THEY STRIVE TO BE FREED. SEEN THIS WAY, THE BODY BECOMES A LIABILITY THAT MUST BE ABANDONED, IGNORED OR FORCED INTO SUBMISSION, OFTEN THROUGH RIGOROUS "SPIRITUAL" PRACTICE.

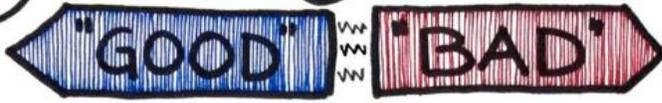
WHEN I REJECT MY BODILY HUMANITY I AM LIKELY TO REJECT THAT OF OTHERS, AS WELL AS THE FULL RANGE OF HUMAN EXPERIENCE.



NO "SPIRITUAL" PRACTICE CAN FREE US FROM THE **GIFT** OF THE **BODY**. WE MUST HONOR **BODY=SOUL** AS **ONE REALITY**

THIS ESCAPISM FROM BODILY REALITY CAN BE A REACTION TO FORMER SLAVERY OR ADDICTION TO BODILY IMPULSES... OR A COPING MECHANISM FOR VICTIMS OF OTHERS' NEGLECT OR ABUSE

POLARIZATION



IGNATIUS OF LOYOLA USED LANGUAGE OF **GOOD** AND **BAD** SPIRITS TO CONVEY MOVEMENTS **TOWARD** THE GREATEST GOOD AND **AWAY** FROM THAT WHICH GIVES LIFE. THIS IS A HELPFUL MODEL UNLESS WE POLARIZE AGAINST PARTS OF OURSELVES OR AGAINST OTHERS.

WHEN WE TALK ABOUT "TRUE NORTH" AS THE HIGHEST GOOD, WE IMAGINE THE MAGNETIC PULL THAT KEEPS US IN ALIGNMENT, MOVING IN OUR DESIRED DIRECTION.

IF ONLY IT WERE THAT EASY. IN OUR PURSUIT OF THE HIGHEST GOOD, OUR INTERIOR INSTRUMENTS OF DISCERNMENT ARE NOT ALWAYS WORKING PROPERLY. THEY MAY NOT BE WELL-MAGNETIZED OR CALIBRATED. THEY MAY BE STUCK BECAUSE OF "UNFREEDOMS":

- + STRONG MEMORIES OF HURT
- + ASSUMPTIONS & MISPERCEPTIONS
- + ENTRENCHED, SELF-PROTECTIVE BLINDSPOTS
- + PREJUDICES ENGRAINED OVER TIME...

THESE ARE **INVITATIONS FOR HEALING** RATHER THAN REJECTION OF SELF OR OTHERS.

POLARIZING AGAINST SELF

IF I AM THINKING THESE "BAD" THOUGHTS AGAINST MY OWN SISTER, I MUST BE BAD, CERTAINLY NOT CHRISTIAN, NOT LOVING.

LATER...
PLEASE HELP ME TO ACCEPT ALL OF ME...



POLARIZING AGAINST OTHERS

I NEED TO STAY AWAY FROM THAT GUY. HE MAKE ME FEEL TERRIBLE WHEN HE CALLS ME ON MY BOSSINESS. IF I AVOID HIM, EVEN THOUGH HE IS MY BROTHER, I'LL FEEL BETTER...

TALK ABOUT A BAD SPIRIT!



AFTER SOME REFLECTION...
OK, I WAS A JERK TO HIM WHEN WE WERE KIDS. WE HAVE "ISSUES." MAYBE IT'S NOT GOOD TO WRITE HIM OFF AS "BAD."

POLARIZATION



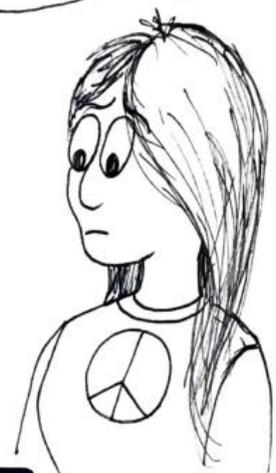
IF WE ARE MORE "NEUROTIC" IN A GIVEN SITUATION WE MAY POLARIZE **AGAINST OURSELVES**, TAKING THE RESPONSIBILITY AND THE BLAME FOR EVERYTHING AND EVERYONE.

TESTING THE SPIRITS MAY MEAN **RECEIVING** WHAT MAY FEEL LIKE "BAD" OR "NEGATIVE" FEELINGS OR THOUGHTS AS MOVEMENTS **TOWARD** OUR HIGHEST GOOD, OUR HEALING. ANGER, FOR INSTANCE, CAN BE A SIGNAL THAT THE DEEPER WISDOM IS PROTECTING WHAT IS SACRED.

OH, I FEEL AWFUL. I WAS SO ANGRY WHEN SHE CALLED MY INTEGRITY INTO QUESTION. I SHOULDN'T BE ANGRY! SHE HAS A LOT ON HER PLATE.

I SHOULDN'T HAVE SAID ANYTHING. I PROVOKED HER. IT WAS MY FAULT. I'VE MADE THINGS WORSE BY CHALLENGING HER PERCEPTION OF ME. I SHOULD HAVE KEPT THE PEACE...

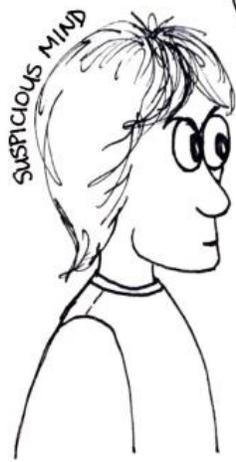
SHOULD THIS SPIRIT BE RECEIVED OR CHALLENGED?



I DON'T TRUST THAT GUY. HE HAS AN EVIL SMILE.

NOTE THE JUDGMENT... MORE ACCURATELY, "I AM UNCOMFORTABLE WITH HIM."

UPON REFLECTION...



MMM... COME TO THINK OF IT... HE REMINDS ME OF MY UNCLE WHO WAS ALWAYS CONTROLLING AND INSENSITIVE.

PERHAPS I SHOULD GIVE HIM A CHANCE AND LISTEN TO HIM.

AS LONG AS YOU GO EASY... HE STILL MAY NOT BE SAFE

VOICE OF CAUTION FROM INNER CHILD

IF WE ARE MORE "PSYCHOTIC" IN A GIVEN SITUATION WE ARE LIKELY TO POLARIZE **AGAINST THE OTHER**, **PROJECTING** THE RESPONSIBILITY **OUTWARD** ON EVERYONE (OFTEN A FAVORITE SCAPEGOAT) & EVERYTHING.

TESTING THE SPIRITS IN THIS CASE MAY MEAN CALLING INTO QUESTION MY IMMEDIATE REJECTION OF THE OTHER PERSON OR SITUATION AS "BAD."

NOTE: THERE MAY ACTUALLY BE A LEGITIMATE REASON NOT TO TRUST ANOTHER. IT MAY BE A SAFETY ISSUE THAT YOU KNOW CONSCIOUSLY, OR INTUIT, BUT TEST THE SPIRITS. TAP INTO DEEPER WISDOM. IT MAY BE AN INVITATION FOR HEALING.

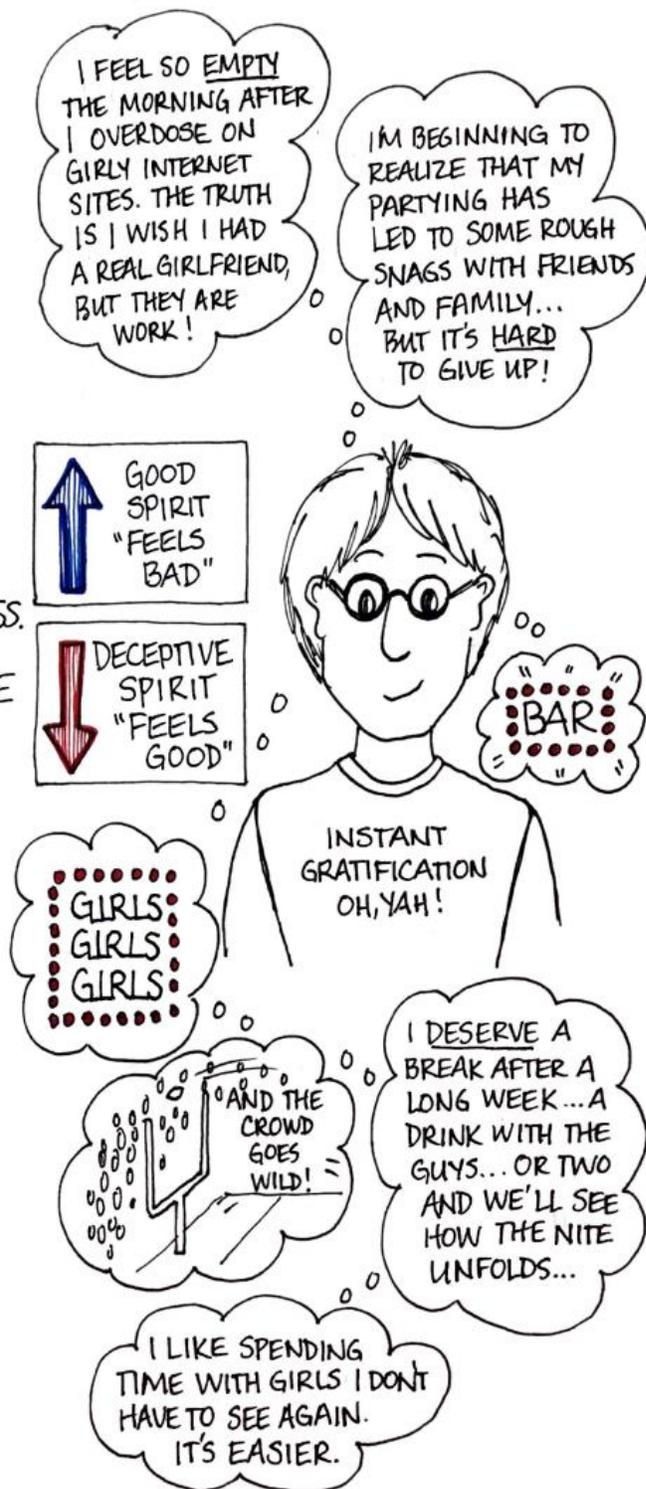
ORIENTATION I

FOR A PERSON WHO IS CAUGHT IN THE WEB OF ADDICTION OR FALSE REASONING, WHO IS STILL STRUGGLING WITH EXTERIOR DISTRACTIONS TO THE DETRIMENT OF INTERIOR CONNECTEDNESS, THE SPIRITS WORK THIS WAY:

THE GOOD SPIRIT OR IMPULSE WILL FEEL **WRENCHING** AND **UNCOMFORTABLE**, AS IT INVITES THE PERSON TO **CHANGE**, TO HEALING & GREATER CONSCIOUSNESS.

THE DECEPTIVE SPIRIT OR IMPULSE TOWARD FURTHER ILL & ILLUSION WILL FEEL **COMFORTABLE** AND **EASIER**, KEEPING A PERSON LOCKED INTO OLD, **FAMILIAR** HABITS AND ATTITUDES.

THIS ORIENTATION USUALLY CORRESPONDS TO A PERSON WHO IS RELATIVELY NEW TO THE SPIRITUAL LIFE, AND IT MAY ALSO BE TRUE OF A VETERAN IN THE SPIRITUAL LIFE WHO IS BLIND OR UNFREE IN A PARTICULAR AREA.



ORIENTATION II

THE SECOND SET

FOR A PERSON WHO IS WELL ON THE SPIRITUAL JOURNEY AND COMMITTED TO THE INNER WORK OF SELF-KNOWLEDGE, ATTENTIVE TO MOVEMENTS OF THE SPIRIT, AND DESIRING TO RESPOND WITH INTEGRITY AND GENEROSITY, THE SPIRIT WORKS THIS WAY:

THE **GOOD SPIRIT** OR IMPULSE WILL PROVIDE **COURAGE, ENERGY, TRUST, CALM AND PEACE**, EVEN IN THE FACE OF DIFFICULTY, IN ORDER TO MOVE ONE **TOWARD** THE GOOD, AND TO RESIST DECEPTION.

THE **DECEPTIVE SPIRIT**, OR IMPULSE TOWARD "ILL", WILL FILL ONE WITH **DIS-EASE, AGITATION, FALSE-REASONING AND INTERIOR "NOISE"** THAT DISSUADES ONE FROM MOVING TOWARD THE GOOD.

THIS ORIENTATION CORRESPONDS TO A PERSON GOING **FROM GOOD TO BETTER**, ONE WHO IS MAKING PROGRESS IN THE SPIRITUAL LIFE BUT IS NOT NECESSARILY A SAINT. RATHER, KNOWING HIS HUMAN WEAKNESS, FREQUENTLY REPEATS HIS DESIRED INTENTION AND SURRENDERS OFTEN. FOR THIS PERSON DESOLATION TENDS TO WORK MORE **SUBTLY**, AS DESCRIBED IN THE SECOND SET OF RULES.

CONSOLATION

I'M STILL A LITTLE FEARFUL OF TAKING THIS NEW JOB, BUT I HAVE BEEN PRAYING FOR **CLARITY** AND I HAVE THE **ENERGY AND ENTHUSIASM** TO MOVE FORWARD... MOST DAYS, EVEN WITH THE UPS AND DOWNS, I DO HAVE A DEEPER **PEACE**.



DESOLATION

THERE ARE MOMENTS THAT I AM IN SO MUCH **PANIC** ABOUT THIS NEW OPPORTUNITY. I **DOUBT** MY ABILITY, AND I'M **AFRAID** OF LEAVING MY COMFORT ZONE (**RESISTANCE**).

SPIRITUAL CONSOLATION

AKA "MOVEMENT"

SPIRITUAL DESOLATION

AKA "COUNTER-MOVEMENT"

NOTE THE ADJECTIVE "SPIRITUAL"



NOTE: SOMETIMES A "CONSOLATION" THAT LEADS TOWARD THE LIGHT WILL FEEL LIKE DESOLATION (DARK). THIS "MOVEMENT" MAY LEAD TO (OR BE PART OF) A BREAKDOWN OF THE FALSE SELF/CRYSTALLIZED WORLDVIEW, AND TO GREATER FREEDOM, INTEGRITY AND CLARITY. THIS IS A "MOVEMENT" TOWARD HEALING, HAVING BROUGHT TO LIGHT THAT WHICH NEEDED TO BE HEALED.

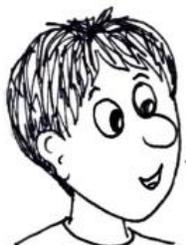


NOTE: IF THE FEELINGS OF DESOLATION LEAD TO DESPAIR AND NUMBING, ADDICTIVE, SELF-PROTECTIVE, SELF-DESTRUCTIVE THOUGHTS AND BEHAVIORS THEY MAY BE "BAD" SPIRITS. IF HEEDED, THE "BAD" SPIRITS MAY LEAD ONE INTO A "DENIAL LOOP" UNTIL AND IF A CRASH OR REPEATED CRASHES LEADS ONE TO CONVERSION, DEEPER SELF-KNOWLEDGE AND SURRENDER.

CONSOLATION

CONSOLATION GIVES STRENGTH, ENCOURAGEMENT AND INSPIRATION. CONSOLATION IS A MOMENT OF DEEP CONNECTEDNESS TO INNER WISDOM AND WHOLENESS, HEART TO HEART.

WHEN A MOVEMENT IS A TRUE CONSOLATION IT CONTINUES TO GIVE LIFE AND ENERGY EACH TIME WE REMEMBER IT... BECAUSE THE SPIRIT IS TIMELESS.



I'LL NEVER FORGET THE FIRST TIME I PICKED UP A GUITAR. IT JUST BECAME A PART OF ME. IT MAKES EVERYTHING ELSE IN MY LIFE BETTER.



FOR ME, IT WAS ABOUT A YEAR INTO MY CAREER, AFTER A ROCKY START... THEN A MOMENT I JUST KNEW I WAS IN THE RIGHT PLACE. WOW.



THERE WAS A MOMENT I KNEW EVERYTHING WAS GOING TO BE OK, EVEN THOUGH THINGS WERE STILL PRETTY DISMAL. THAT GLIMPSE OF LIGHT IN THE DARK NEVER LEFT ME; THOUGH I FORGET, I STILL REMEMBER IT OFTEN, GRATEFULLY.

CONSOLATION IS THE "STUFF" OF OUR LIVES WHERE THE WISDOM LIES, REPRESENTING TIMES WHEN OUR DECISIONS "WORKED OUT," HAVE LED US TO OUR TRUE SELVES, HAVE STOOD THE TEST OF TIME.

IDENTIFY MOMENTS / "MOVEMENTS" IN YOUR PERSONAL HISTORY THAT STILL SPEAK TO YOU, THAT STILL HAVE ENERGY, THAT STILL "CONSOLE" WITH THAT REMEMBERED SENSE OF CONNECTEDNESS. CONSOLATION KEEPS INFORMING **WHO YOU ARE** AND GIVES STRENGTH FOR THE JOURNEY, THE LONG HAUL. THE MEMORY RETURNS YOU TO YOUR AUTHENTIC SELF.

CONSOLATION OFTEN COMES AT A TIME OF SURRENDER ...

EXTRAORDINARY CONSOLATION

ONLY GOD CAN GIVE CONSOLATION WITHOUT PREVIOUS CAUSE, AN EXTRAORDINARY GIFT WE DO NOTHING TO MAKE HAPPEN, AND WE CANNOT RECREATE THE EXPERIENCE ON OUR OWN.

THIS "GOD-TOUCH" WILL BE CLEAR, UNDENIABLE, AND WILL CONTINUE TO "BEAR FRUIT," THAT IS, COMFORT, STRENGTHEN AND GIVE COURAGE WHEN IT IS BROUGHT TO MIND OR THE EVENT IS RETOLD.

STILL, GOD IS EVER RESPECTFUL OF HUMAN FREEDOM. SOMEWHERE THERE MUST HAVE BEEN AN INVITATION, A CRACK IN THE DOOR. THERE IS A COMPONENT OF HUMAN COOPERATION, A SURRENDER, HOWEVER SMALL, THAT PREPARES US TO RECEIVE

INSPIRATION
IN-BREAKING OF THE SPIRIT

WOW! I AM LOVED. FOR THE FIRST TIME I KNOW THIS. I BELIEVE IT. I TRUST THAT I AM UNIQUE AND PRECIOUS. WOW...

SENSE OF ENOUGH-NESS

INSPIRIT
COMFORT & TRUST IN SUFFERING

ALL OF A SUDDEN I FELT A TREMENDOUS PEACE. I KNEW IT WAS GOING TO BE OK EVEN THOUGH THE SITUATION SEEMED HOPELESS, NO MATTER WHAT THE OUTCOME. I FELT DEEP CALM, LIKE I WAS BEING HELD LOVINGLY. I FELT SAFE.

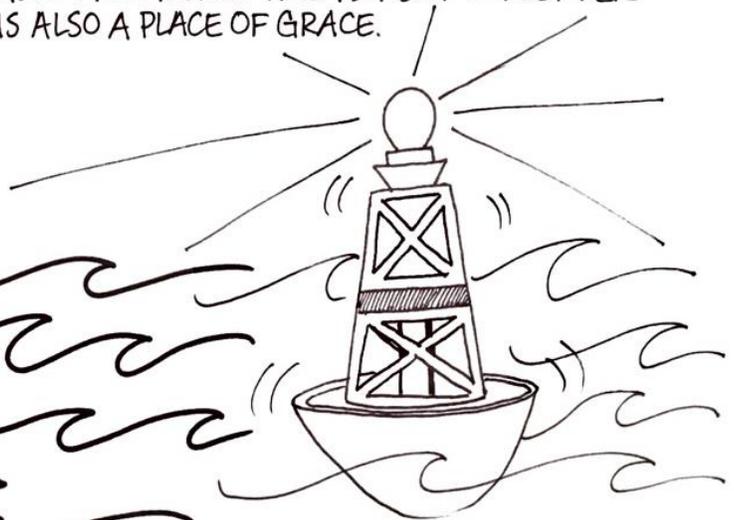
CONVERSION

YEAH, I HAD AN AMAZING CONVERSION. I STRUGGLED WITH ADDICTION FOR YEARS. IT WAS BAD. I HAD PRAYED FOR RELEASE SO OFTEN. THEN, IN A MOMENT I HEARD THESE WORDS, I CRIED TEARS OF GRIEF FOR DAYS. SOMETHING SHIFTED. I'VE BEEN TEMPTED BUT THAT MOMENT AND FRIENDLY SUPPORT KEEP ME SAFE. STILL AMAZED!

CONSOLATION AND SURRENDER



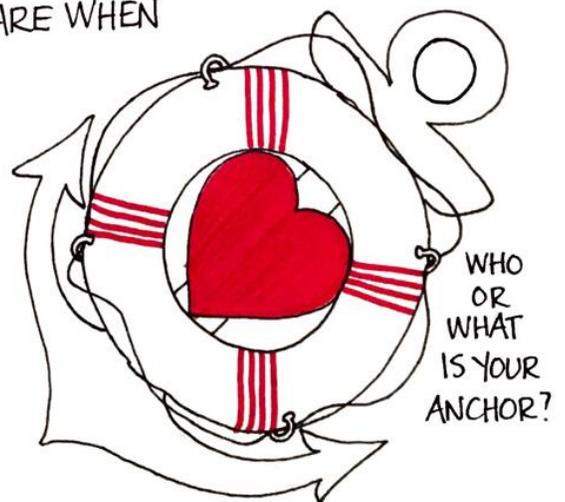
CONSOLATION OFTEN CORRESPONDS TO CIRCUMSTANCES THAT BROUGHT US TO OUR KNEES, TIMES WHEN WE SURRENDERED CONTROL, ONLY TO FIND WE WERE BEING HELD ALL ALONG. THIS PLACE OF SURRENDER IS ALSO A PLACE OF GRACE.



WHEN IN CONSOLATION, TAKE TIME TO REMEMBER AND TO REFLECT HUMBLY ON HOW VULNERABLE YOU ARE WHEN IN DESOLATION... WITHOUT GOD'S GRACE. CULTIVATE GRATITUDE.

IT IS HARD TO PULL OURSELVES UP OUT OF THE MUCK BY OUR OWN DEVICES. GOD CREATED US TO NEED ONE ANOTHER AND THE CREATOR, TO BE IN RELATIONSHIP.

MEMORIES OF CONSOLATION WILL HELP US TO NEGOTIATE DESOLATION, LIKE A BOUY IN THE GREAT OCEAN WHEN WE FEEL ABANDONED.



FACING DESOLATION

DOING WHAT WE CAN...

DURING SPIRITUAL DESOLATION IT IS DIFFICULT TO **REMEMBER** CONSOLATION, WHO WE ARE, AND WHAT WE WANT, BECAUSE OF THE INNER FOG, CONFUSION, DEPRESSION, LACK OF ENERGY OR MOTIVATION. THE TEMPTATION CAN BE: TO ACT RASHLY IN ORDER TO ESCAPE THE DIS-EASE, WITHOUT REFLECTION AND CENTEREDNESS OR; TO REMAIN STUCK IN DESPAIR...

(HOWEVER, NONE OF THESE ARE POSSIBLE WITHOUT GOD'S GRACE... AND ALL WE CAN DO IS SURRENDER...)

IF WE HAVE **SPIRITUAL PRACTICES** THAT ARE A PART OF OUR MORE CENTERED SELVES, THESE MAY BECOME HELPFUL TOUCHSTONES IN TIMES OF CRISIS, TO BRING US BACK TO OURSELVES, TRIED AND TRUE DISCIPLINES SUCH AS...

PRAYER

WHEN I AM SAD OR EXHAUSTED WITH NO WORDS OR DESIRE TO PRAY, THE REPETITION OF THE ROSARY HELPS ME TO FIND MYSELF AGAIN



REFLECTING QUIETLY ON THE WORDS AND STORIES OF SCRIPTURE HELP REMIND ME OF MY GREATEST DESIRE AND RECONNECT ME TO MY ORIGINAL INSPIRATION OF THE PERSON I WANT TO BE.

MEDITATION

EVERY DAY, BEFORE I FALL ASLEEP I ASK MYSELF WHERE I FOUND LIFE TODAY, AND WHAT WAS HARD. I UNBURDEN MY HEART. I ALSO TRY TO BE THANKFUL



EXAMEN

WHEN I'M FEELING THE MOST DEJECTED AND STUCK, IF I RETURN TO THE FOOD PANTRY TO WASH DISHES AND SERVE, IT HELPS ME FIND SOME PERSPECTIVE.

ACTS OF CHARITY

OWNING UP TO MY HUMAN FAULTS & WEAKNESS TO A TRUSTED FRIEND OR PRIEST OFTEN UNSTICKS ME IN MY CONFUSION & SELF-HATRED. IT'S NEVER AS BAD AS IT IS IN MY HEAD.

PENANCE

TIPS ON SPIRITUAL DESOLATION

DURING SPIRITUAL DESOLATION
DO NOT MAKE A CHANGE.
TRUST DECISIONS MADE DURING
CONSOLATION, OR AT LEAST BEFORE
DESOLATION SETTLED LIKE A CLOUD.



I'M GOING TO GIVE
UP ON THIS DREAM. NO
ONE CARES ANYWAY.

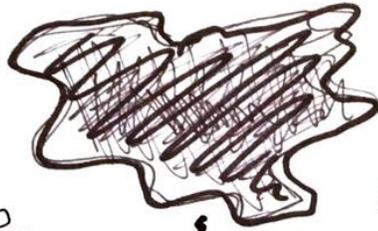


I CAN JUST DROP
ALL THESE MUNDANE
RESPONSIBILITIES
AND MOVE TO AFRICA

DESOLATION CAN
ALSO TEMPT US TO
CHANGE GOOD,
MEASURED DECISIONS
WHEN WE ARE IN A MANIC

OR ENTRANCED MOOD, I.E., OVER-
EXTENDING OURSELVES TO THE
DETRIMENT OF OUR REAL LIFE CALL.

NEGOTIATING DESOLATION



I FEEL LOST,
DARK, ABANDONED.
NO ONE WANTS TO BE
AROUND A SAD-SACK.
I HAVE NOTHING
TO OFFER.

IT'S OK TO
FEEL LOST AND
DARK. I'M DEPLETED.

CAN I STAY WITH
MY SELF IN THIS SPACE?
CAN I STILL BE LOVEABLE
IN MY MISERY? CAN I
BE OK WITH MY OWN
SADNESS? IS GOD
OK WITH ME THIS
WAY?



LISTEN IN THE
DARKNESS TO THE
UNCONDITIONAL
ACCEPTANCE & COMPASSION.
BE HONEST ABOUT HOW YOU
ACTUALLY FEEL. THIS CAN
TAKE TIME AS WE HONOR
WHERE WE ARE SO AS NOT
TO SIMPLY REPRESS
"DARK" THOUGHTS AND
FEELING.

I WANT TO WANT
TO BELIEVE THAT I
AM NOT ALONE.

LATER...

I WANT TO BELIEVE
EVEN THOUGH I DON'T
RIGHT NOW.

LATER
STILL...

I CHOOSE TO BELIEVE
I AM NOT ABANDONED
EVEN THOUGH MY HEART
IS NOT THERE YET.

I DO BELIEVE...
HELP MY
UNBELIEF

PERHAPS,
EVENTUALLY...

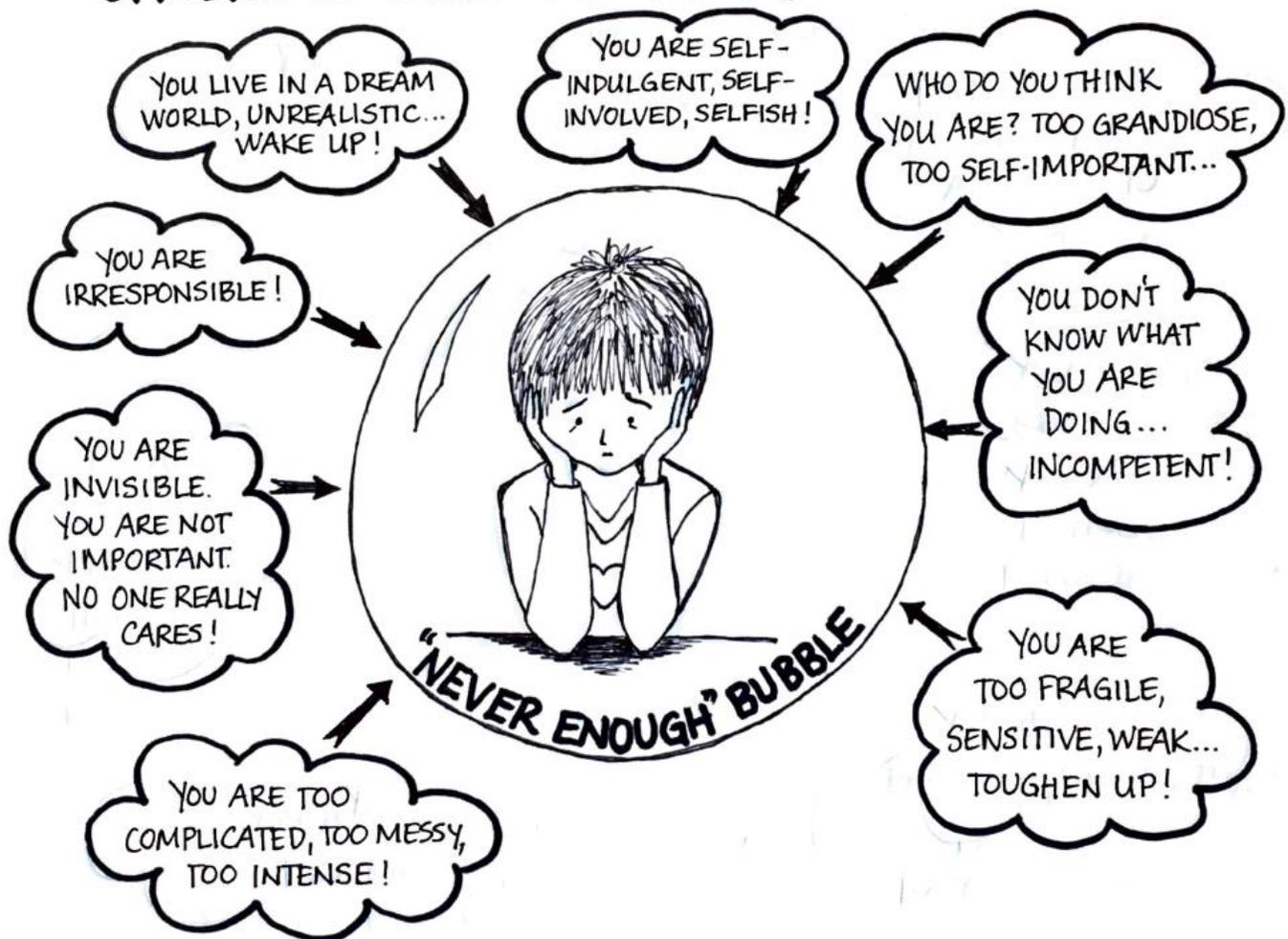
DESOLATION CAN MAKE US **FEEL**
ABANDONED... BUT BY **FAITH** WE MAY
CHOOSE TO REMEMBER:

GOD IS WITH US ALWAYS.

CULTIVATE **PATIENCE** IN DESOLATION.
IT CAN BE A JOURNEY THROUGH A DARKNESS
OF PURIFICATION. REMEMBER TIMES OF
CONSOLATION TO GIVE **HOPE. TRUST. SURRENDER.**

"GO AGAINST" DESOLATION

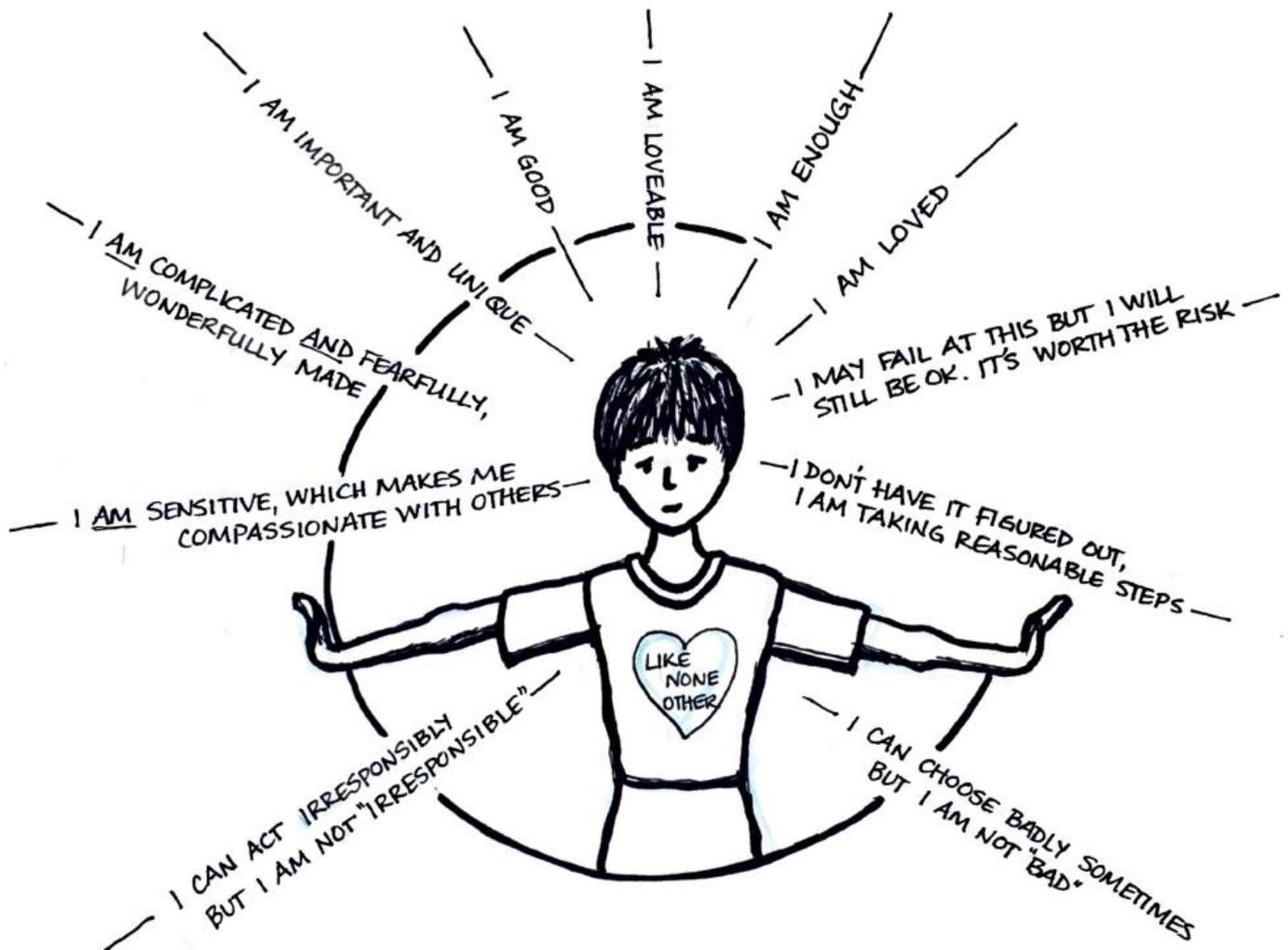
WHEN WE DISCERN AN IMPULSE OR THOUGHT IS AWAY FROM THE HIGHEST GOOD, CHOOSE THE OPPOSITE OR DRAW A BOUNDARY.



CONTRARY SPIRITS OR ATTACK THOUGHTS UNDERMINE HOPE AND FURTHER AN AGENDA OF SEPARATION AND ISOLATION. THEY NEED TO BE "CALLED OUT" WITH A "REALITY CHECK."

"GO AGAINST" II

"REALITY CHECK" MESSAGES... SETTING BOUNDARIES



THESE COUNTER MEASURES ARE AN AFFIRMATION OF THE RELATIONSHIP WITH SELF, GOD AND OTHERS. THEY ARE AN ACT OF FAITH IN OUR BELOVEDNESS AND AN ANTIDOTE TO THE FALSE MESSAGE OF SEPARATION AND ALIENATION.

"GO AGAINST" III

SETTING BOUNDARIES & ACTION

SOME IMPULSES ARE CLEARLY ILL-ADVISED, PARTICULARLY, A COUNTER-PRODUCTIVE ACTION. GO AGAINST THE IMPULSE. STAY AWAY. AVOID THE SITUATIONS THAT TRIGGER INORDINANT (OUT OF ORDER) DESIRE: I.E., ADDICTIVE SUBSTANCES, AND HABITS, INFIDELITY IN COMMITTED RELATIONSHIPS, GOSSIP, SLANDER, ETC.

EVEN THESE CLEARLY "BAD SPIRITS" CAN BE HARD TO RESIST, HOWEVER WELL-ORIENTED WE ARE TO THE "GOOD." A CYCLE OF SELF-DISAPPOINTMENT IN OUR WEAKNESS CAN SEND US AGAIN AND AGAIN BACK INTO UNHEALTHY BEHAVIORS (WHAT'S THE POINT?).



THIS DOES NOT NEED TO BE SO MUCH A "FIGHT" AGAINST OUR DISORDERED IMPULSES AS MUCH A MOVING TOWARD GOD/HIGHER POWER IN **SURRENDER**. THIS MAY BE THROUGH PRAYER, OR REMEMBERING CONSOLATION (THAT I AM LOVED UNCONDITIONALLY, NOT DESPITE MY WEAKNESS, BUT IN MY PRESENT STATE, AS I AM), OR ASKING FOR TEARS. SINCE DESOLATION IS OFTEN LODGED IN THE HEAD WITH FALSE REASONING, CIRCULAR THINKING, AND NUMBING BEHAVIORS, TEARS CAN SOFTEN THE HARDENED SHELL.

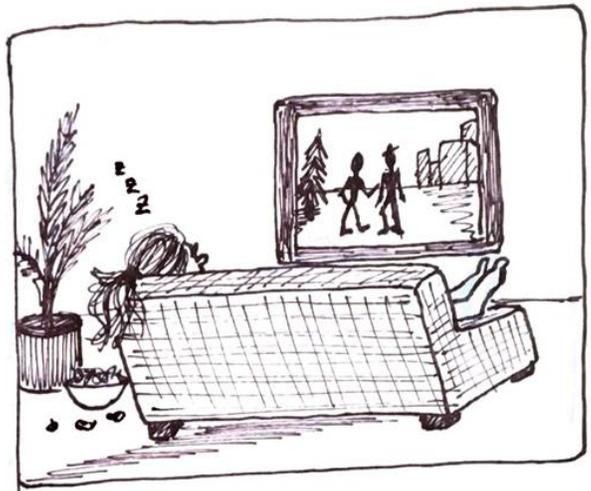
"GO AGAINST" IV

SETTING BOUNDARIES ON SUBTLER ACTION

DISCERNING BETWEEN TRUE DESOLATION AND LEGITIMATE UNMET NEEDS.

SOMETIMES WE CAN JUDGE OURSELVES HARSHLY FOR CHOOSING WHAT WE DEEM FRIVOLOUS, ESCAPIST, LESS-THAN-NOBLE ACTIVITY, ESPECIALLY IF WE TEND TO BE PERFECTIONISTIC, TYPE-A, OR RIGID.

SOMETIMES THE "DESOLATION" IS THE SLAVE DRIVER (NO FREEDOM THERE!). GIVING OURSELVES PERMISSION MAY BE WHERE GRACE LIES... THAT IS, FREEDOM.



GO AGAINST DESOLATION

I CAN'T NOT GO!

I WILL FEEL GUILTY
I WILL BE A BAD CHILD
IF I DON'T CALL.

I CAN'T NOT HELP. IT
WOULD BE UNCHARITABLE
AND BAD.

↑↑
NOTE THE LACK OF
FREEDOM

THOUGHT

I WILL GO FOR
A RUN.

I WILL CALL
MY MOM

I WILL SIGN UP
TO VOLUNTEER.

↑↑
GOODS
IN AND OF THEMSELVES

ACKNOWLEDGE UNMET NEED

I NEED SOME REST.

I CALLED YESTERDAY. I WANT
TO GO AGAINST MY CO-DEPENDENT
RESCUE-MODE TODAY, OR I'LL
GET RESENTFUL.

I NEED SOME DOWNTIME
I'VE HAD SO LITTLE TIME
TO BE ALONE LATELY.

"DESOLATION" AS INVITATION TO MOVE OUT OF STUCKNESS

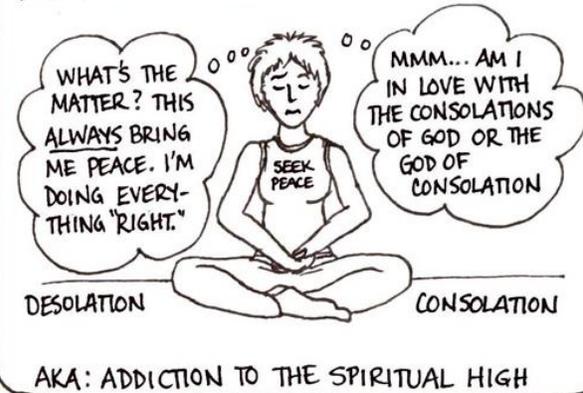
SOMETIMES WHAT FEELS LIKE "DESOLATION" IS ACTUALLY **CONSOLATION** FROM THE SPIRIT THAT DRAWS ONE TO DEEPER AND MORE REAL **CONNECTION** TO SELF, GOD & OTHERS. THREE PURPOSEFUL REASONS FOR DESOLATION INCLUDE:

1) DESOLATION MAY DISLodge US FROM OUR **NEGLIGENCE** IN THE SPIRITUAL JOURNEY, THE INNER LIFE: A WAKE-UP CALL...



EACH OF THESE DIFFICULTIES HAS THE POTENTIAL TO HELP US SURRENDER OUR ILLUSIONS, THAT WE MAY SEE MORE CLEARLY, AND CHOOSE MORE FREELY & WISELY.

2) DESOLATION MAY **TEST OUR RESOLVE** AND MOTIVATION, A CHECK TO OWN EXPECTATIONS IN PRAYER AND RELATIONSHIP.



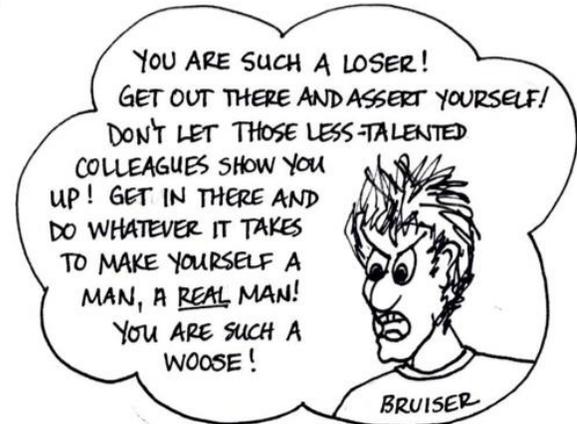
3) DESOLATION MAY BE A REMINDER THAT **ALL IS GRACE**. DESOLATION IS AN INVITATION TO **SURRENDER** THE DESIRE TO CONTROL THE JOURNEY. GOD IS IN CHARGE.



SETTING BOUNDARIES

ON INTERIOR BULLIES

A CONTRARY SPIRIT IS LIKE A BULLY OR A TANTRUMING, DEMANDING CHILD WHO NEEDS FIRM BOUNDARIES AS A REALITY CHECK. EVEN AN ENTITLED CHILD, HOWEVER, NEEDS TO BE CHECKED WITH LOVE RATHER THAN VIOLENCE, OR BEING SHUT DOWN. THERE MAY BE AN UNMET NEED TO BE EXPLORED.



I HEAR THE CONCERN FOR MY FINANCIAL & PROFESSIONAL STABILITY. I AM WORKING WITH INTEGRITY WITH OTHERS. THIS IS WHO I WANT TO BE. I DON'T NEED TO BE TOP DOG. COOL IT.

I CAN HEAR THAT YOU ARE ANGRY FROM THE MEAN THINGS YOU ARE SAYING ABOUT ME. I DO NOT ACCEPT ALL THESE LABELS. I CAN BE ALL THESE THINGS, I AM HUMAN, BUT THEY DO NOT DEFINE ME. HELP ME TO UNDERSTAND WHAT YOU REALLY MEAN WITH THESE ATTACKS.

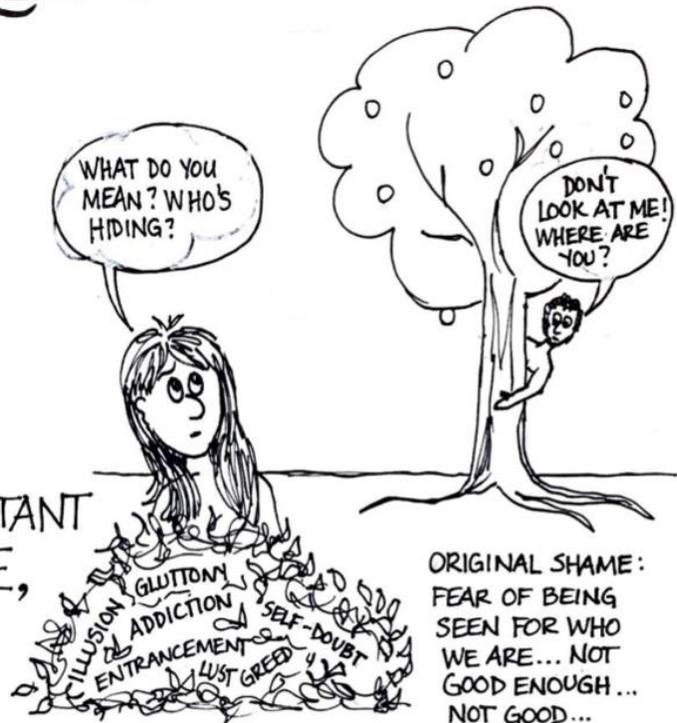


WHILE SETTING THE BOUNDARIES ALSO...
TRY TO DETERMINE THE UNMET NEED, THE BACK STORY

SSSSSECRETS

SPIRIT OF DECEPTION

A SPIRIT OF DECEPTION ENCOURAGES **SECRECY**, ISOLATING A PERSON IN HIS OR HER OWN THOUGHTS AND IMAGINATION. IF **AFRAID** TO SHARE SOMETHING WITH YOUR MOST TRUSTED, LOVING MENTOR/FRIEND/FAMILY/WISDOM FIGURE, IT IS IMPORTANT TO **REVEAL** THE **STRUGGLE**, DISARMING THE POWER OF SHAME AND CONFUSION. ADMIT WHAT IS **TRUE**, NO MATTER HOW EMBARRASSING.



ORIGINAL SHAME:
FEAR OF BEING SEEN FOR WHO WE ARE... NOT GOOD ENOUGH... NOT GOOD...

I HAVE BEEN SPENDING MORE AND MORE TIME WITH MY NEIGHOR'S WIFE. SHE'S SUCH FUN. BUT WE HAVE BEEN MEETING WITHOUT TELLING HER HUSBAND. I HAVEN'T TOLD HER HOW I FEEL ABOUT HER. PERHAPS I SHOULD TALK TO MY BEST FRIEND ABOUT THIS DILEMMA. HE ALWAYS GIVES ME GOOD FEEDBACK. I'M NOT SURE I TRUST MYSELF.

NAAAH! THIS IS NO ONE ELSE'S BUSINESS. I CAN HANDLE MYSELF. NOTHING HAS HAPPENED.

HERE ENTERS A SPIRIT OF DECEPTION

LOVER BOY

NOTE: CHOOSE A TRUSTED SOURCE OF WISDOM AND DISCERNMENT WHO ASKS GOOD QUESTIONS WITHOUT SHAMING SO YOU DO NOT BACK OFF THE TRUTH

WARNING:

IT IS NOT HELPFUL TO REVEAL THE STRUGGLE TO THE OBJECT OF YOUR DESIRE (PARTICULARLY A LOVE/INFATUATION INTEREST) AS THIS FLAMES THE FIRES OF PASSION AND THUS INCREASES THE CONFUSION (ENTER BIOLOGY). CHOOSE TO SPEAK YOUR TRUTH TO A DISINTERESTED, WISE THIRD PERSON.

SSSEDUCTOR SPIRIT OF DECEPTION

SEDUCTION CAN TAKE THE FORM OF ENTANGLING, UNTRUE OBSESSIVE THOUGHTS, AS WELL AS IMPULSIVE ACTIONS THAT HAVE THEIR OWN "REWARD." THERE IS A PAY-OFF OR WE WOULD NOT BE TEMPTED.

SLOW, INCREMENTAL SEDUCTION CREEPS IN LITTLE BY LITTLE, "SUBTLE AND SEEMINGLY IMPERCEPTIBLE." IT'S "NO BIG DEAL" UNTIL IT IS. SECRECY COMPOUNDS THE ISSUE, AS WE BECOME CAUGHT IN A WEB IN WHICH WE FEEL TRAPPED BECAUSE OF SHAME... ANOTHER SECRET.

ACTION

FIRST THOUGHT...

I CAN DO THIS **JUST** ONE TIME. IT WON'T HURT **JUST** THIS ONCE. I KNOW A LOT OF PEOPLE IN MY FAMILY HAVE ADDICTION ISSUES, BUT I'M **DIFFERENT**. I CAN HANDLE MYSELF. I'M **STRONG**. I HAVE A **GOOD** HEAD ON MY SHOULDERS. I'M **JUST** ADVENTUROUS. IT'S **JUST** AN EXPERIMENT.

LATER...

I CAN DO THIS AGAIN. IT DIDN'T DO ME IN LAST TIME. **JUST** ONE MORE...

NOTICE ALL THE "JUST"-IFYING AND THE PRIDE BEFORE THE

FALL



LATER IN EXAMINING MY CONSCIENCE:
WHAT "HOOKED" ME?
WHAT DID I WANT?
ACCEPTANCE? ESCAPE FROM MY DIS-EASE?

THOUGHTS

I JUST **KNOW** THEY KNOW I'M AN IMPOSTER. I DON'T KNOW WHAT I'M DOING. I'M AFRAID ALL THE TIME I WILL BE FOUND OUT!



THE TRUTH IS YOU HAVE A LOT TO LEARN, YES. IN FACT, THEY HIRED **YOU** FOR A REASON. YOU HAVE THE DESIRE AND THE CREDENTIALS.



OH NO, THERE SHE IS. I HATE HER. SHE THINKS SHE'S "ALL THAT," AND I FEEL SO SMALL AROUND HER, BUT EVEN SMALLER FOR BEING SO MEAN AND ANGRY. I HATE MYSELF FOR HATING. I AM SO BAD!



THE TRUTH IS THAT YOU WANT TO FEEL LOVED AND ACCEPTED FOR WHO YOU ARE. YOU FEEL THREATENED BY HER AS YOU HAVE BEEN HURT BY HER CRITICISM AND NEGLECT. IF YOU DIDN'T WANT HER REGARD IT WOULDN'T HURT.



SELF-KNOWLEDGE OF THE ACHILLES HEEL



THE CONTRARY SPIRIT ATTACKS AT OUR **WEAKEST** POINT, OUR ACHILLES HEEL. WE MUST PURSUE SELF-KNOWLEDGE TO BE PREPARED FOR THE DESOLATION.

ACKNOWLEDGING OUR WEAKNESS AND EMBRACING THEM AS AREAS IN NEED OF HEALING, INSTEAD OF DENYING, HIDING, OR MINIMIZING THEM **DISARMS** THE ATTACK MORE READILY.

AREAS OF ADDICTION & TEMPTATION MAY BE **SURRENDERED** TO GOD EVEN IN ANTICIPATION. SET THE INTENTION

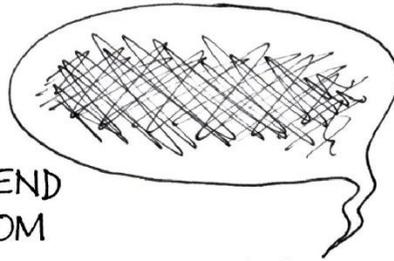


OF WHAT ARE YOU THE MOST **AFRAID** OF ADMITTING TO YOURSELF? OTHERS



ANATOMY OF A MOVEMENT OF DESOLATION TO CONSOLATION

1. INARTICULATE FEELING
2. **CENTER** AND ATTEND TO DEEPER WISDOM
3. NAME THE **FEELING**/MOVEMENT WITHOUT JUDGMENT.
4. WHEN DID THE DESOLATION BEGIN?
5. WHAT IS THE **THOUGHT** BEHIND THE FEELING? WHAT WERE/ARE YOU TELLING YOURSELF?
6. HOW IS THE SPIRIT SPEAKING? DO I **RECEIVE** OR **MOVE AWAY** FROM THE IMPULSE? HOW DO I RESPOND?



① I FEEL ICKY... NOT MYSELF

② ... QUIET MIND ...

③ AHHH... I AM ANGRY AND HURT. WOW. I DIDN'T REALIZE.

④ THIS **SHUT-DOWN*** FOGGY FEELING STARTED THIS MORNING WHEN MY FRIEND SEEMED TO MINIMIZE MY ANXIETY ABOUT THIS UPCOMING EVENT.

* NOTE THE **DESOLATION**, TRYING NOT TO FEEL OR DEAL WITH MESSINESS THAT NEEDS HEALING.

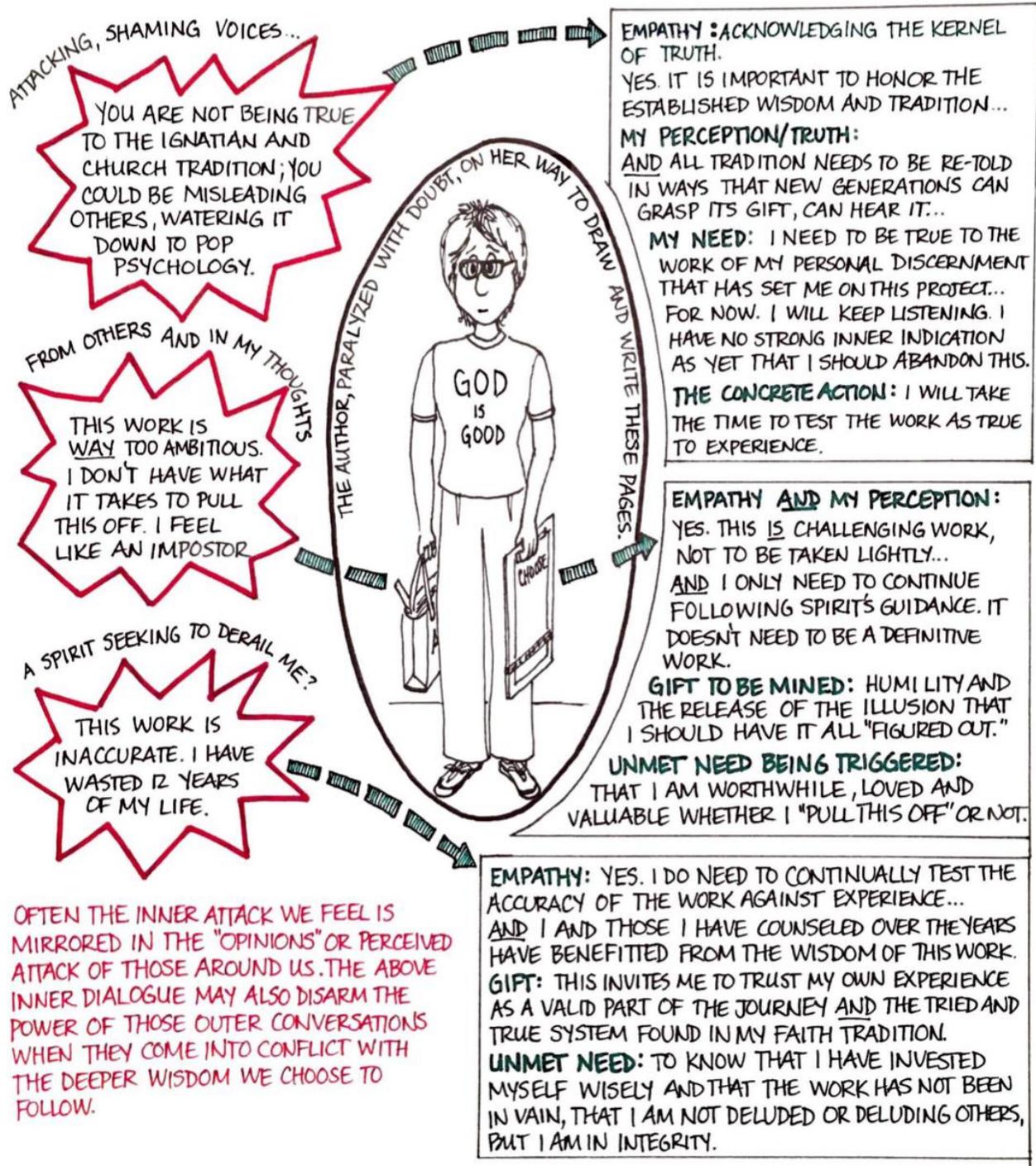
⑥ PLEASE HELP ME TO STAY WITH THIS DISCOMFORT LONG ENOUGH TO UNDERSTAND MY SELF AND ALLOW YOU TO HEAL ME IN THIS DARKNESS. HELP ME TO SURRENDER.

⑤ I FELT DISMISSED, NOT IMPORTANT, INVISIBLE, LIKE I DON'T REALLY MATTER TO ANYONE. THAT'S A TRIGGER FOR ME: YOU DON'T CARE... TO NO ONE CARES! **

IF THIS REALIZATION ** LEADS TO SURRENDER AND A DESIRE FOR HEALING THEN THIS MOMENT OF TRUTH IS ACTUALLY A **CONSOLATION**, SHINING LIGHT ON A CORE BELIEF OF INVISIBILITY IN NEED OF HEALING FROM SPIRIT

AN INTERIOR DIALOGUE

MODELING NON-VIOLENT COMMUNICATION



"ANGEL OF LIGHT"

FOR A PERSON STRIVING TO LEAD A "GOOD" LIFE, A DECEPTIVE SPIRIT OFTEN APPEARS AS AN "ANGEL OF LIGHT," THAT IS, A "GOOD" IMPULSE. THIS PERSON, ATTUNED TO THE INNER LIFE, QUITE EASILY RECOGNIZES A FRONTAL TEMPTATION, SO A DECEPTIVE SPIRIT IS **DISGUISED** AS A "GOOD" **THOUGHT**, THAT LEADS ULTIMATELY TO ILL, A DISTORTION OF THE ORIGINAL INTENT.

THIS IS OFTEN A PITFALL FOR THOSE WHO ARE ZEALOUS AND ACTIVE, THOUGH THE DECEPTION CAN ALSO TRIP THOSE WHO FEEL MOVED TO A DEEPER INTERIOR LIFE.



"IF ONE DAY A MONTH IS GOOD, MORE IS BETTER," I THOUGHT. SO I STARTED WORKING EVERY SATURDAY

DERAILING THOUGHTS

"NO ONE CAN RUN THIS PANTRY AS EFFICIENTLY AS I DO." I GETS LOTS OF KUDOS. THAT'S "CONFIRMATION."

RED FLAG

THE ORIGINAL INVITATION WAS CONFIRMED AS A CONSOLATION.

I THOUGHT I WAS DOING GOOD, BREAKING OUT OF MY SELFISHNESS & CAREFULLY CONTROLLED WORLD. IT WAS SO CLEAR WHEN I WAS MOVED TO VOLUNTEER AT THE SHELTER BACK IN DECEMBER. THERE WAS A DEEP SENSE OF PEACE ... CONFIRMATION

WHERE THE DECEPTION ENTERED...

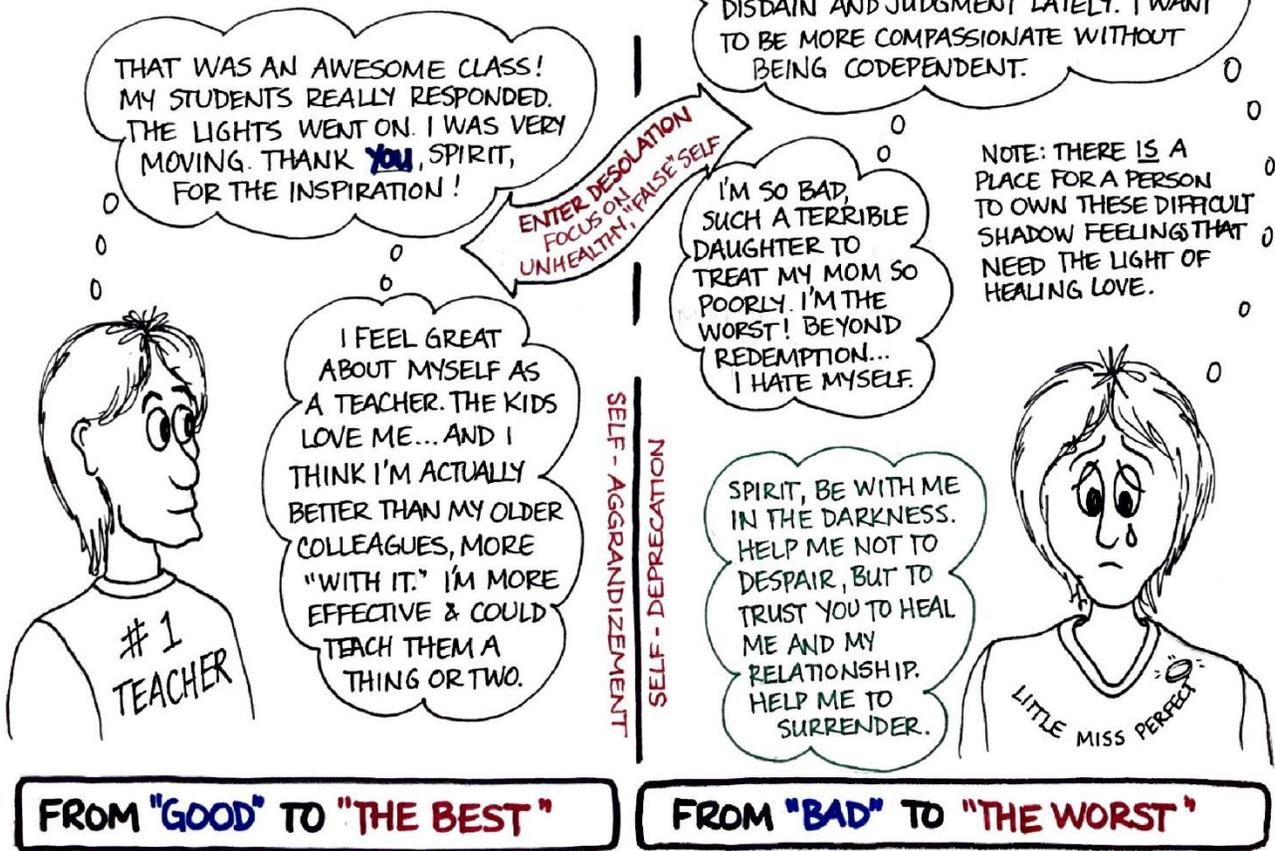
BUT THEN I STARTED LOOKING AT OTHERS AROUND ME WHO WERE DOING FUN THINGS ON SATURDAYS, AND I WAS JUDGMENTAL... AND THEN RESENTFUL, NO LONGER FOCUSED ON THE PEOPLE I WAS SERVING, BUT ON WHAT I WAS MISSING. I'M EXHAUSTED. I HAVE **NO TIME TO PRAY OR ATTEND** TO WHAT'S GOING ON IN ME..

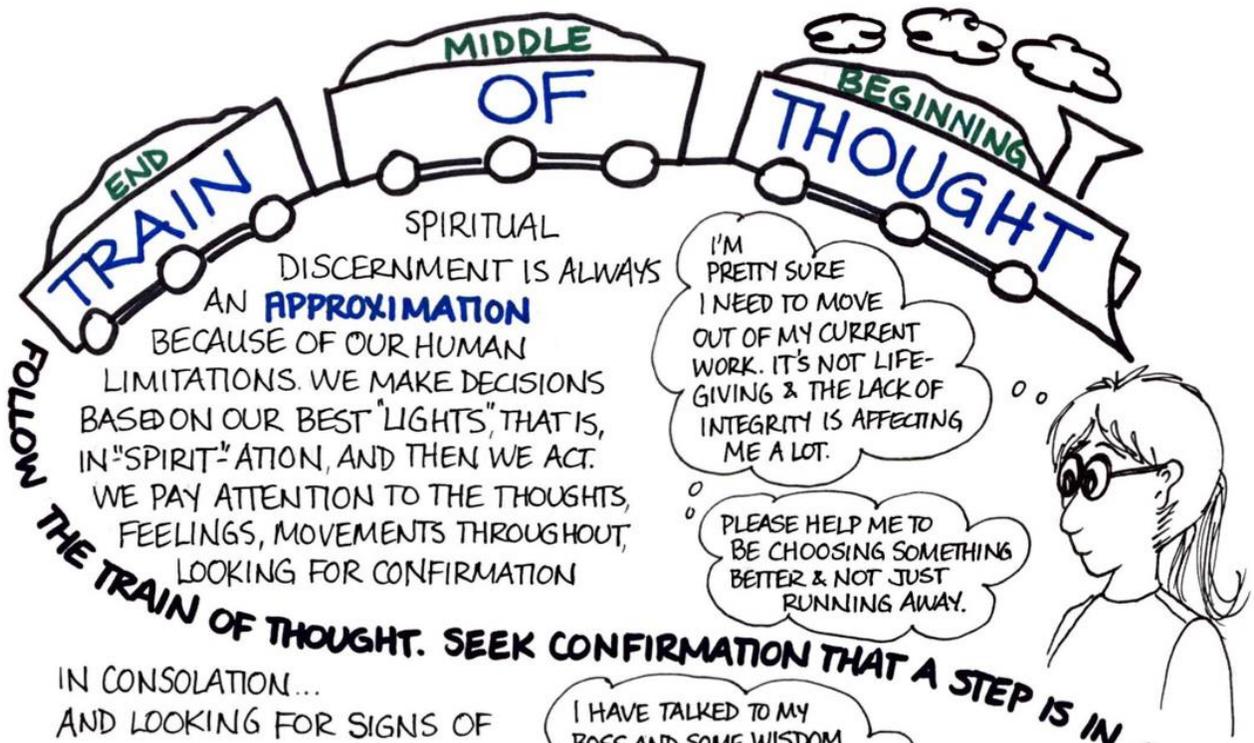
"ANGEL OF LIGHT"

"ANGEL OF LIGHT" IS A **DECEPTIVE** SPIRIT THAT MAY CAUSE A CONSOLATION ONLY TO HAVE A **HOOK** LEADING BACK TO **UNHEALTHY "SELF"**: GRANDIOSITY, MISPLACED ZEAL OR RESPONSIBILITY, EVEN SELF-HATRED AND SELF-DESTRUCTIVE BEHAVIORS.

THIS "CONSOLATION" MAY LEAD US TO ACKNOWLEDGE THE "GOOD" DONE THROUGH US, FILLING US WITH GRATITUDE, AND THEN NUDGE US FROM THESE "GOOD" FEELINGS, THOUGHTS OR IMAGININGS TO FOCUS ON OUR OWN **SUPERIORITY**.

A TRUE CONSOLATION MAY ALSO BE AN INVITATION TO **CONVERSION** THAT CAUSES LEGITIMATE **REMORSE**, THAT IS, DIS-EASE, UNCOMFORTABLE FEELINGS FOR HAVING CAUSED OR CONTRIBUTED TO SOME "ILL." THE "ANGEL OF LIGHT" MAY THEN SUBTLY NUDGE US FROM ACKNOWLEDGING THIS "ILL" THAT NEEDS CONVERTING TO FOCUSING ON OURSELVES AS THE "WORST" LEADING US TO DISCOURAGEMENT AND DESPAIR.





FOLLOW THE TRAIN OF THOUGHT.

IN CONSOLATION... AND LOOKING FOR SIGNS OF DESOLATION AND CONFUSION ANYWHERE ALONG THE PROCESS THAT CAUSED OR MAY CAUSE A DERAILMENT (I.E. SHORT CUTS, "SLIPPERY SLOPES", RATIONALIZATION, SELF-JUSTIFICATION, ETC.)

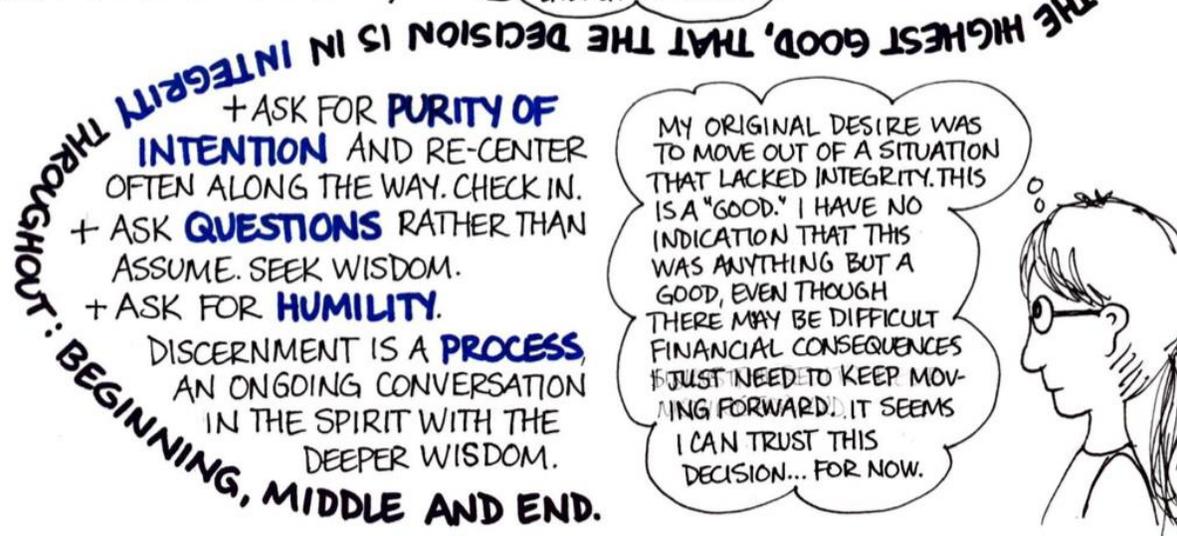
I'M PRETTY SURE I NEED TO MOVE OUT OF MY CURRENT WORK. IT'S NOT LIFE-GIVING & THE LACK OF INTEGRITY IS AFFECTING ME A LOT.

PLEASE HELP ME TO BE CHOOSING SOMETHING BETTER & NOT JUST RUNNING AWAY.



I HAVE TALKED TO MY BOSS AND SOME WISDOM PEOPLE ABOUT MY CONCERNS. I WANT TO BE UP FRONT ABOUT LOOKING FOR OTHER EMPLOYMENT. SCAREY.

I FEEL ANXIOUS ABOUT MOVING ON TO SOMETHING NEW BUT I ALSO HAVE ENERGY AROUND IT.



DISCERNMENT IS A **PROCESS**, AN ONGOING CONVERSATION IN THE SPIRIT WITH THE DEEPER WISDOM.

+ ASK FOR **PURITY OF INTENTION** AND RE-CENTER OFTEN ALONG THE WAY. CHECK IN.

+ ASK **QUESTIONS** RATHER THAN ASSUME. SEEK WISDOM.

+ ASK FOR **HUMILITY**.

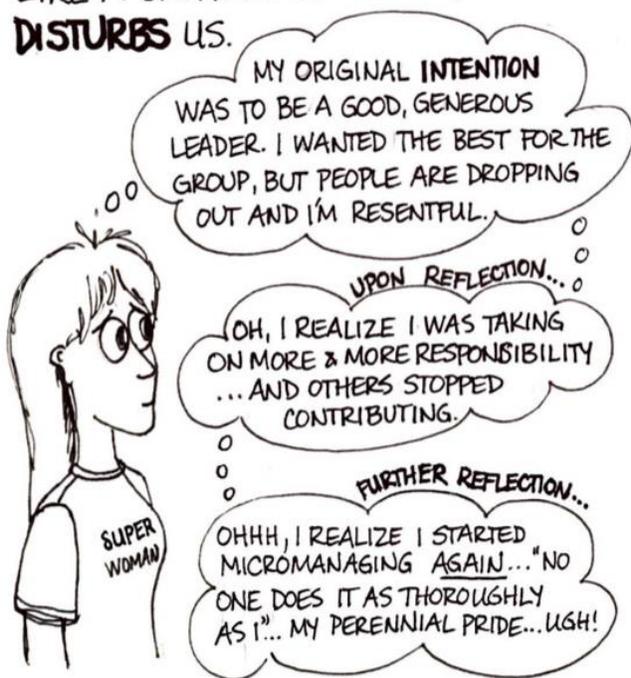
MY ORIGINAL DESIRE WAS TO MOVE OUT OF A SITUATION THAT LACKED INTEGRITY. THIS IS A "GOOD." I HAVE NO INDICATION THAT THIS WAS ANYTHING BUT A GOOD, EVEN THOUGH THERE MAY BE DIFFICULT FINANCIAL CONSEQUENCES ~~JUST NEED TO~~ KEEP MOVING FORWARD. IT SEEMS I CAN TRUST THIS DECISION... FOR NOW.



CATCH A THOUGHT BY ITS TAIL

THE "SNEAKY," DISTURBING SPIRIT ACTS IN SUBTLE WAYS: IN **SMALL MOVEMENTS** LIKE THE FLICKER OF THE "SERPENT'S TAIL", LITTLE BY LITTLE THE INTENTION AND THE OUTCOME SHIFTS SLIGHTLY, ULTIMATELY LEADING US **OFF COURSE**. WE WOULD HAVE RECOGNIZED BIG INCONGRUENCIES.

SOMETIMES WE NOTICE SOMETHING OUT OF PLACE OUT OF THE CORNER OF OUR EYE (OUR CONSCIOUSNESS), A MOVEMENT LIKE A SKITTERING MOUSE, AND IT **DISTURBS** US.



FIND THE **BEGINNING** OF THE DESOLATION, THE FEELING AND THE THOUGHT. WHAT WERE YOU SAYING TO YOURSELF? WHAT WERE YOU HEARING? WHAT WAS THE TRIGGER INCIDENT? WHAT WAS THE PROGRESSION FROM GOOD INTENTION TO **FALSE PERCEPTIONS** AND/OR ACTION? USE THIS **SELF-KNOWLEDGE** PATTERN FOR FUTURE REFERENCE AND SELF-UNDERSTANDING.

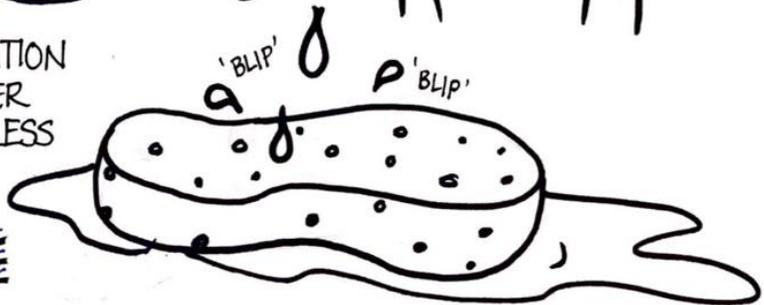
THE SOUND OF WATER

FOR A PERSON MAKING PROGRESS IN THE SPIRITUAL LIFE, GAINING IN INTEGRITY, FREEDOM AND CLARITY, THE SUGGESTIONS OF THE "GOOD" SPIRIT WILL SOUND LIKE A **DROP OF WATER ON A SPONGE: SOFT, GENTLE, DELICATE**, LIKE A "COMING HOME," EVEN IF THE ACTION MAY BE DIFFICULT.

I KNOW I AM SUPPOSED TO BE WITH MY AUNT THIS WEEKEND RATHER THAN HELPING THE HOMELESS, MY USUAL SATURDAY COMMITMENT WHERE I'D RATHER BE. SHE CAN BE A HANDFUL, BUT MY UNCLE REALLY NEEDS A BREAK. I **KNOW** THIS IS RIGHT... BUT HELP ME.

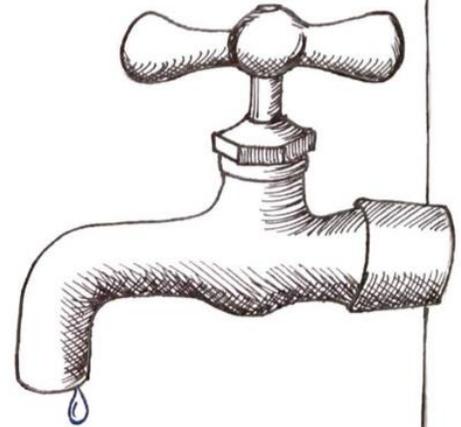
I'VE BEEN SO RESISTANT TO MAKING THIS JOB CHANGE, BUT IT DOESN'T FEEL SO OVERWHELMING LATELY. I HAVE A GREATER SENSE OF CONFIDENCE AND LESS FEAR, A SENSE OF POSSIBILITY RATHER THAN DREAD LATELY. I THINK I NEED TO MOVE ON IT, EVEN THOUGH IT IS A BIG JUMP FOR ME.

MOVEMENT TOWARD CONSOLATION WILL CORRESPOND TO A DEEPER PEACE AND WISDOM, REGARDLESS OF SHALLOWER AGITATION.



THE SOUND & WATER

FOR A PERSON BASICALLY IN ALIGNMENT WITH THE SPIRIT AND ONE'S DEEPEST SELF, THE SUGGESTIONS OF A CONTRARY SPIRIT WILL SOUND **"NOISY," VIOLENT, DISTURBING, CONFUSING, LIKE WATER HITTING HARD ON STONE.** THE "NOISE" CAN DEAFEN US TO A DEEPER WISDOM. RECENTER. DO NOT MAKE A DECISION WHEN IN DESOLATION. WAIT FOR THE NOISE TO SETTLE.



THERE ARE SO MANY COMPETING VOICES IN MY HEAD. THE DEADLINE IS COMING AND I DON'T HAVE CLARITY. I FEEL ANXIOUS. THIS OPPORTUNITY MAY PASS ME BY... BUT I DON'T REALLY WANT THE RESPONSIBILITY

WHAT IF I NEVER GET ANOTHER OFFER LIKE THIS? I COULD BE RUINING MY CAREER POSSIBILITIES FOR THE REST OF MY LIFE!

SLOW DOWN. BREATHE. I KNOW I'M CAUGHT IN MY HEAD WITH CIRCULAR THINKING. HELP ME TO CENTER... SILENCE THE DIN.

OMG!
THAT IS SO ANNOYING!
CAN'T SOMEONE TURN THAT THING OFF!?

"CONTAIN" THE DIN WITH PRAYER & SURRENDER AND/OR PLACE THE CONFLICT OUTSIDE YOURSELF BY ADMITTING (CONFESSING) TO ANOTHER TRUSTWORTHY PERSON THE INTERIOR STRUGGLE. SPIRITUAL JOURNALING ALSO HELPS TO "CALL OUT" THE FALSE REASONING: NOT JUST SELF-ANALYSIS BUT A CONVERSATION WITH GOD.



"AFTERGLOW"

YOU EXPERIENCE A REAL CONSOLATION THAT OFFERS DEEP PEACE AND ENERGY, A PURE **GIFT** FROM SPIRIT. YOU DIDN'T CONJURE THIS GIFT; YOU ARE NOT "BLISSED OUT." BUT **YOU** WANT TO SUSTAIN IT. IT FEELS GOOD. YOU ARE "EN-THUSED" (IN-SPIRITED) SO YOU MAKE ALL KINDS OF PLANS, RESOLUTIONS AND PROJECTS - ENOUGH TO EXHAUST YOU. AS YOU RELY ON **YOUR** ENERGY RATHER THAN ON THE **SPIRIT** WHO GAVE THE INITIAL CONSOLATION.

I FINALLY HAVE REAL PEACE ABOUT THIS BOOK PROJECT. IT FEELS LIKE A REAL INVITATION FROM SPIRIT, LIKE WHAT I AM MEANT TO DO.

IF I'M MEANT TO BE A WRITER, AND I'M NOT AFRAID ANYMORE PERHAPS I SHOULD START THAT OTHER RESEARCH PROJECT AS WELL, SINCE I HAVE THE ENERGY. I DON'T WANT TO LOSE MOMENTUM!

SHINY "AFTERGLOW"

POOF!

CONSOLATION UNDERMINED!

UGH. I'M STARTING TO FEEL OVERWHELMED. I KNEW I WASN'T CUT OUT FOR THIS. IT FEELS HOPELESS.

LATER...

AFTERGLOW

THE TEMPTATION IS TO "MAKE A RETURN TO GOD FOR ALL THE GOOD GOD HAS DONE FOR ME" (PSALM 116) ON MY OWN TERMS. GOD FORBID WE SHOULD OWE ANYONE ANYTHING, LEAST OF ALL THE CREATOR. PURE GIFT CAN MAKE US NERVOUS ABOUT CONTROL. WE WANT TO LEAP INTO THE DRIVER'S SEAT WITH LINGERING ENERGY FROM GOD'S CONSOLATION, **GOD'S** INITIATIVE, AND RUN AWAY WITH OUR **OWN** BRIGHT IDEAS... THAT MAY LEAD TO DISCOURAGEMENT.

ENTER A TINGE OF PRIDE?

I WANT TO DO SOMETHING GREAT, SOMETHING MEANINGFUL WITH MY LIFE. I FEEL SO BLESSED!

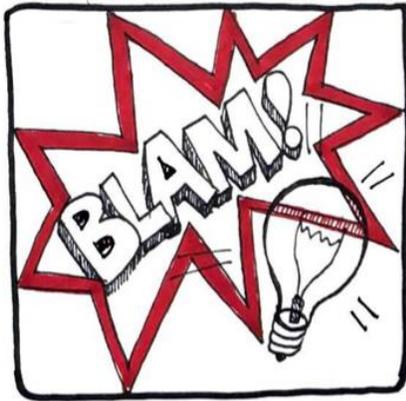
THIS DID START AS AN AUTHENTIC CONSOLATION

I WONDER IF I SHOULD BE A MISSIONARY, OR A DOCTOR FOR DOCTORS WITHOUT BORDERS, OR A PRO BONO LAWYER, OR AN INNER-CITY TEACHER, OR AN ORGAN DONOR...

THESE ARE ALL "GOODS." PEOPLE WHO SEEK GOOD ARE TEMPTED BY RUNAWAY GOODS!



INTRODUCING THREE WAYS of MAKING a DECISION

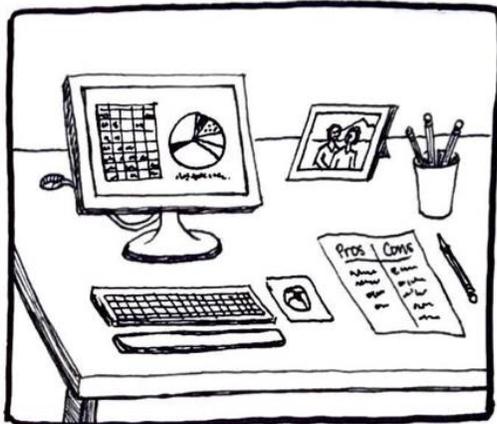


FIRST WAY: GRACE BLAST

YOU ARE IN-SPIRED (THE SPIRIT IS IN YOU) AND YOU "KNOW" WITH YOUR WHOLE BEING (NOT JUST YOUR HEAD) WHAT TO DO OR THE WAY FORWARD. THIS IS A RARE OCCASION OF CLARITY TO MOVE YOU TOWARD THE HIGHEST GOOD AND THE WILL TO FOLLOW THROUGH. NOW THIS IS CONSOLATION!

SECOND WAY: DISCERNMENT OF SPIRITS

IS A PROCESS OF INNER LISTENING TO THE MOVEMENTS OF CONSOLATION AND DESOLATION IN CONVERSATION WITH THE SPIRIT. YOU TUNE IN TO DEEPER WISDOM AS YOU SEEK THE LIGHT, THE HIGHEST GOOD MOMENT BY MOMENT.



THIRD WAY: DATA ANALYSIS

WHEN THERE ARE NO "MOVEMENTS" IN THE SPIRIT, NO SENSE OF CONSOLATION OR DESOLATION, YOU WEIGH ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES AND MAKE A REASONED DECISION. IN ORDER TO MAKE A SPIRITUAL DISCERNMENT, ONCE A CHOICE IS MADE YOU LOOK FOR CONFIRMATION.

PREPARING A PROPOSAL

1. SET THE INTENTION
2. CHOOSE AMONG OPTIONS
ONE CONCRETE, SPECIFIC STATEMENT

RATHER THAN MANY POSSIBILITIES AT ONCE.

WHO? WHERE?
WHAT? WHEN?

DEPENDING ON DEADLINES TEST THE PROPOSAL OVER A SPECIFIED TIME (DAYS, WEEKS, MONTHS). WE OFTEN SET ARTIFICIAL DEADLINES THAT HEM US IN AND MAKE US UNFREE WITH LITTLE ROOM FOR THE SPIRIT... OR WE PROCRASTINATE SO WE DO NOT CHOOSE AT ALL.

TEST THE STATEMENT OFTEN. ATTEND TO THE "DATA" THAT INCLUDES:

INTERIOR WORK

REASONING
MEMORY
IMAGINATION
FEELINGS
BODY/GUT RESPONSE

EXTERIOR WORK

RESEARCH/EXPERTS
FRIENDS/MENTORS
WISDOM PEOPLE
CHURCH/TRADITION
HOLY WRITINGS
(FOR YOU)

3. JOT DOWN OR TRACK THE RESULTS AS THEY CHANGE.

A DIRECTION IS LIKELY TO EMERGE OVER TIME IF YOU CONTINUE TO CHECK IN TO ALL THESE SOURCES OF WISDOM.

4. THE "ANSWER" WILL BE...



OR



OR



PROPOSAL: I will begin the L.A. zoo internship in September.

PROS	CONS

5A.  **PURSUE THE GOAL**
AND SEEK CONFIRMATION (CONSOLATION) IN THE SPIRIT... IF YOU TRULY WANT TO MAKE A SPIRITUAL DISCERNMENT.

5B.  **CHOOSE TO TEST ANOTHER OPTION...**

NEW PROPOSAL: I will return to UCLA fulltime in September.

OR

5C. DEFER A DECISION. GIVE YOURSELF & SPIRIT MORE TIME FOR CLARITY...

IF YOU HAVE THE TIME, WHICH WE OFTEN HAVE... MORE THAN WE ADMIT, IF WE ARE UNCOMFORTABLE WITH THE AMBIGUITY OF PROCESS.



REASONING WITH PROS & CONS

PROPOSAL: I will begin L.A. zoo internship in September

PROS	CONS
Want to be zoologist	Far from home, friends
Very prestigious position	Expensive gas unreliable car
Mom proud	Not enough time to study
Brother jealous!	Allergic to most animals
Girlfriend will be there	Dad wants me to take over butcher business
Passion for animals & species preservation	Internship doesn't pay - more student loans \$\$
Educated for this	
Support & encouragement from faculty	
Can start at higher salary #	
Foot in the door	

I'M NOT SURE IF I SHOULD INCLUDE MY GIRLFRIEND OR BROTHER IN THE LIST.

I'VE WANTED TO WORK AT THE ZOO MY WHOLE LIFE!

MY DAD IS THE MOST IMPORTANT PERSON IN MY LIFE. I DON'T WANT TO DISAPPOINT HIM OR HURT HIM!

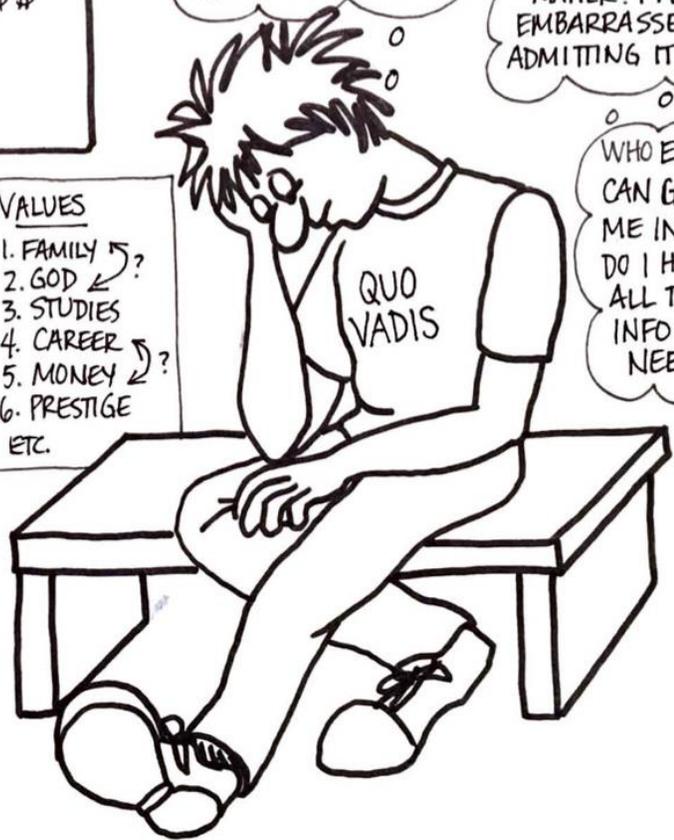
SHOULD PRESTIGE EVEN MATTER? I FEEL EMBARRASSED ADMITTING IT DOES.

WHO ELSE CAN GIVE ME INSIGHT? DO I HAVE ALL THE INFO I NEED?

THE DECISION IS BASED ON MORE THAN THE NUMBER OF LISTS PROS AND CONS. SOME "WEIGH" MORE THAN OTHERS BECAUSE OF **YOUR HEIRARCHY OF VALUES**. SOMETIMES THIS HEIRARCHY WILL BE CALLED INTO QUESTION AND RE-ORDERED.

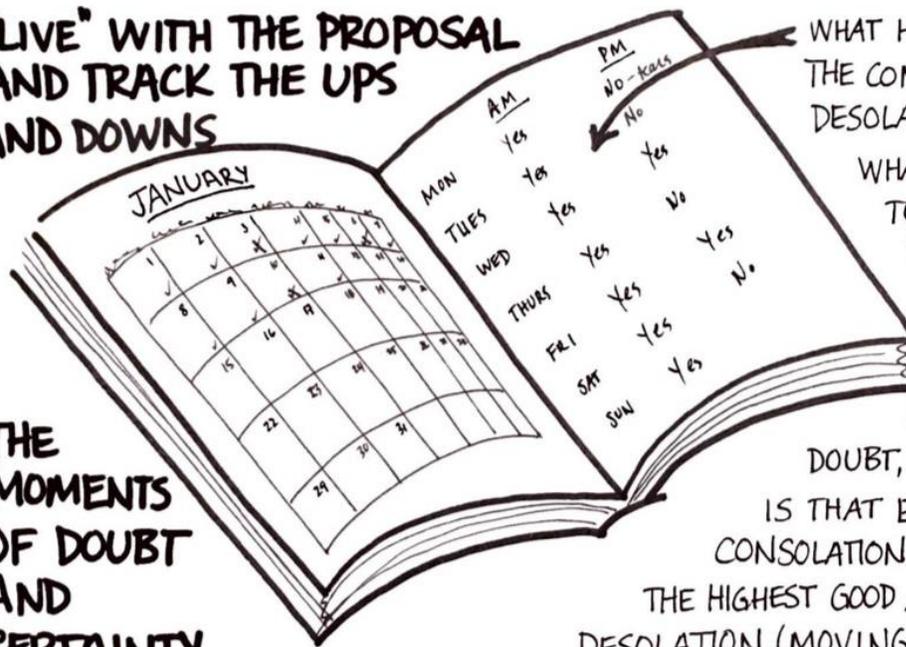
- VALUES**
1. FAMILY ↗?
 2. GOD ↖?
 3. STUDIES
 4. CAREER
 5. MONEY ↘?
 6. PRESTIGE
- ETC.

BE HONEST ABOUT THE PROS AND CONS. YOU MAY BE TEMPTED NOT TO ACKNOWLEDGE THOSE YOU DEEM SELFISH OR LESS "NOBLE." THE PROCESS WILL ONLY HAVE INTEGRITY IF YOU ARE HONEST WITH YOURSELF. IT HELPS TO SET THE INTENTION OFTEN.



TRACKING "MOVEMENTS" AROUND A PROPOSAL: DATA ANALYSIS

"LIVE" WITH THE PROPOSAL
AND TRACK THE UPS
AND DOWNS



WHAT HAPPENS BETWEEN
THE CONSOLATION AND
DESOLATION?

WHAT SHIFTED? WHEN?
TO WHOM DID I SPEAK?
WHAT DID I DO?
WHAT HAPPENED
IN MY DAY

BETWEEN THE
CERTAINTY AND THE
DOUBT, THE "YES" AND THE "NO"?

IS THAT EVENT/ENCOUNTER A
CONSOLATION (MOVING ME TOWARD
THE HIGHEST GOOD AND BEST SELF) OR A
DESOLATION (MOVING ME AWAY)?

THE
MOMENTS
OF DOUBT
AND
CERTAINTY.
WHAT ARE THE PATTERNS?

I FELT FINE THIS MORNING, REALLY EXCITED ABOUT THE PROSPECT. BUT THEN I TALK TO MY SISTER. MMM. I DIDN'T TALK TO HER ON WEDNESDAY OR FRIDAY. WOW. I'M REALLY AFFECTED BY HER PERSPECTIVE! SHE KNOWS ME REALLY WELL. I TRUST HER... BUT DO I TRUST MYSELF?



WHAT DO I WANT, REALLY?

IS THERE ANYONE ELSE I SHOULD BE CONSULTING?

EXPANDING THE DATA: IMAGINATION: THE MOVIE

WE ARE CAPABLE OF IMAGINING POSSIBLE ALTERNATIVES AND CONSEQUENCES, ALLOWING US TO CHOOSE AMONG OPTIONS THAT MAY LEAD TO THE HIGHEST GOOD.

THE MOVIE : PLACE YOURSELF IN THE SCENE AND ACTUALLY "LIVE" THE POSSIBLE PROPOSAL. WHAT DOES IT FEEL LIKE ? SMELL ? TASTE ? SOUND ? WHAT ARE THE LIKELY CONSEQUENCES ? ARE MY EXPECTATIONS GROUNDED ? REALISTIC ? CATASTROPHIC ? ROMANTICIZED ? CYNICAL ?



WHAT TO DO WITH THIS DATA

DISCERNING THE SPIRITS

IMAGINATION THE MOVIE SCENE FOR THE M.B.A.

SCENE = YES TO M.B.A. = GOOD SPIRIT = NO TO M.B.A. = CONTRARY SPIRIT

SERVICE AWARD


I am consoled (WITHOUT BEING ATTACHED) serving the community. It is mutually life-giving and fun for me. This will give me more access to make a difference.

I love it when people notice me & think well of me. I don't really care about the service or the people, just the recognition.

There are other ways I can contribute to the community. Business-kinds of leadership is not my thing!

There is no way I am going to take on service. I only serve myself... ever. Who cares about making a contribution

↑ IF THIS IS THE TRUTH OF SELF-KNOWLEDGE, IT MAY BE A CONSOLATION (GOOD SPIRIT) THAT MAY CHOOSE NOT TO PURSUE THIS GOAL. OUR MOTIVES ARE OFTEN MIXED.

I realize I am pursuing this for false, ungrounded reasons.

THIS MAY BE A TRUTH, A TRUE CONSOLATION THAT DISLODGES FALSE VIEWS OF MYSELF, LEADING TO GREATER GROUNDEDNESS... EVENTUALLY



I have gifts of leadership, as others have told me, and I too recognize. I am willing to use those gifts so as to serve the common good. But it's also OK if I never make CEO. (NOTE THE FREEDOM)

I love power. It gives me a kick think of my name on the door and not having to answer to anyone over me. I need this degree to make this happen. (NOTE THE ATTACHMENT/LACK OF FREEDOM)

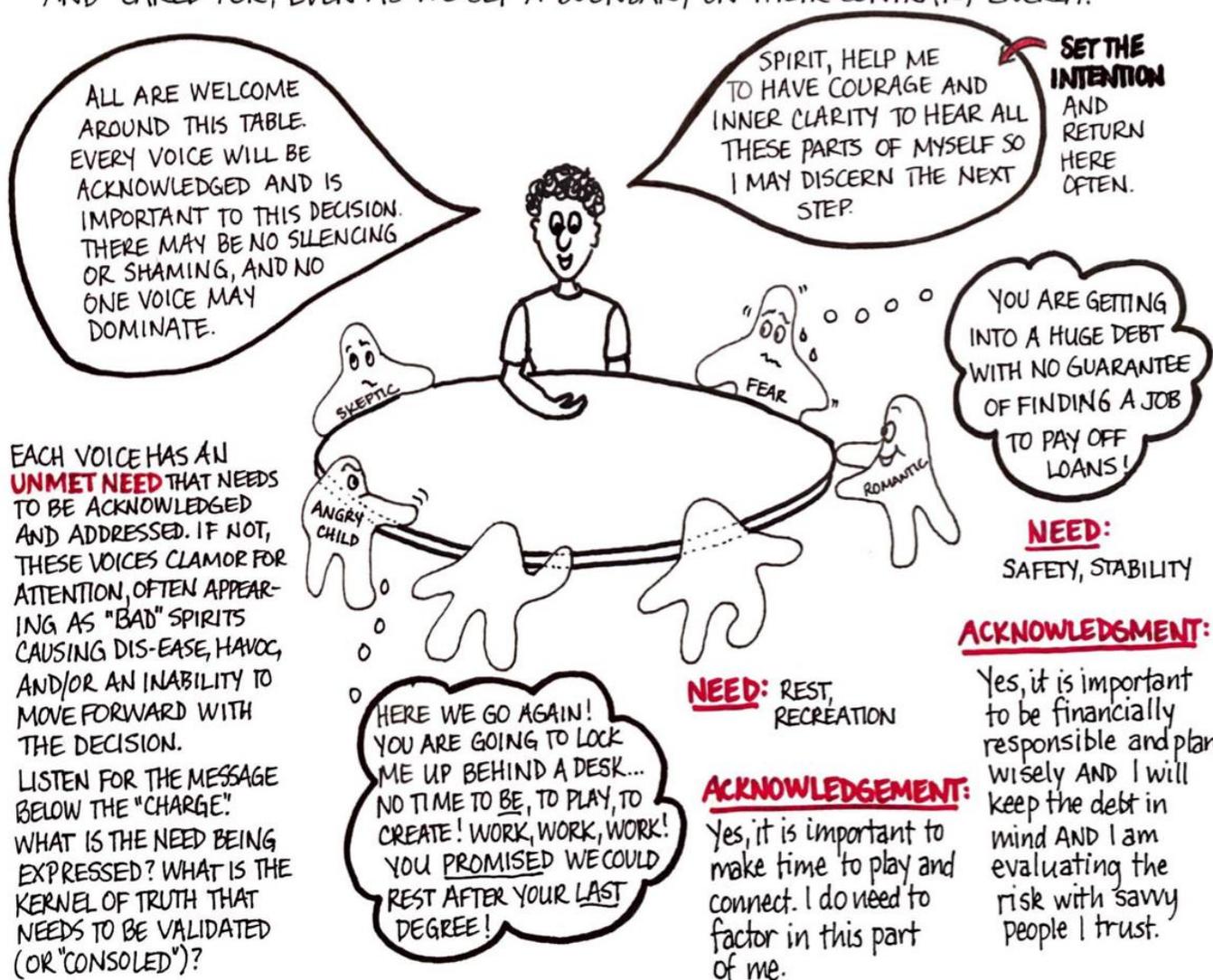
I am a good enough leader without the degree and I don't have the temperament to be CEO. I prefer being part of the rank & file. I'm a better support person.

I hate leadership. Too much work. I don't want the responsibility. I'll just resent all my incompetent underlings anyway.

EXPANDING THE DATA:

IMAGINATION: THE TABLE

AS WE PONDER A GIVEN PROPOSAL WE MAY ALSO IMAGINE THE **PLAYERS/ACTORS** IN THE INTERIOR DRAMA THAT UNFOLDS. IDENTIFY THE VOICES IN THE INTERIOR DIALOGUE SO THAT ALL ARE HEARD AROUND THE "TABLE" OF OUR CONSCIOUSNESS. SOME VOICES MAY SEEM LIKE CONTRARY SPIRITS - WHICH THEY MAY BE - BUT THEY MAY ALSO BE PARTS OF OURSELVES THAT NEED TO BE ACKNOWLEDGED AND "CARED FOR", EVEN AS WE SET A BOUNDARY ON THEIR CONTRARY ENERGY.



MORE DATA...

THE INTERIOR WORK

WHEN I PONDER A PROPOSAL, I NOTICE MY REACTION...

BODY THE PRESENT



DO I HAVE A VISCERAL REACTION? TIGHT STOMACH TENSION HEADACHE? ENERGIZED? TIGHTNESS IN THE CHEST (PROTECTING THE HEART)? TEARS OF FEAR OR PANIC? TEARS OF RELEASE OR RELIEF? FIGHT, FLIGHT OR FREEZE RESPONSE?

WHAT HAPPENED LAST TIME I MADE A DECISION LIKE THIS? IS THIS A PATTERN IN MY BEHAVIOR? IN MY LIFE? HAVE I EVER REACTED THIS WAY BEFORE? DO I HAVE A SPECIFIC MEMORY ASSOCIATED WITH THIS FEELING?

AM I GETTING TO FAR AHEAD OF MYSELF? AM I BEING REALISTIC OR GRANDIOSE OR ROMANTIC?

MEMORY THE PAST

THE LAST TIME THIS HAPPENED I WAS SUCCESSFUL. THIS SEEMS A GOOD OPTION. I TRUST MYSELF IN THIS.

THIS REMINDS ME OF THAT TIME I PANICKED AND FAILED. I DON'T TRUST THIS WON'T BE A REPEAT.

THIS IS GOING TO BE A DISASTER. I'M GOING TO FAIL MY CLASSES, DROP OUT, THEN END UP HOMELESS.

THIS DEGREE IS GOING TO MAKE ME RICH. I'M GOING TO BE SET FOR LIFE.

DECIDE PLAN
IMAGINE CONTROL SENSE
REMEMBER
FIGHT FLIGHT
VISUALIZE

IMAGINATION THE FUTURE

WHAT TO DO WITH THIS DATA DISCERNING THE SPIRITS

MEMORY THAT CAUSED **BODY** REACTION:
CAUSED TENSION

PONDERING THE PROPOSAL OF BEGINNING THE MBA :

MEMORY "I HAVE ALREADY FAILED FINANCIALLY ONCE..."
IS THIS A "GOOD" SPIRIT OR A "BAD" SPIRIT ?



"BAD" SPIRIT
THAT REJECTS PROPOSAL

- Yes. You are a failure. What makes you think this time will be any different? You are just not smart enough and never will be.
(NOTE SHAMING TONE)

"BAD" SPIRIT
THAT ACCEPTS PROPOSAL

- Yes, but I have this in the bag. I got bailed out last time and I can manipulate the circumstances again if I have to. I will be nobody without this degree. It's my ticket. I want what I want. (NOTE THE LACK OF FREEDOM)

"GOOD" SPIRIT
THAT REJECTS PROPOSAL

- Yes. But this does not mean that you are a failure. It seems unwise, however, at this time - or perhaps even given your current circumstances & temperament. This may be your family's dream more than yours.
(NOTE LACK OF FEAR AND SELF-HATRED)

"GOOD" SPIRIT
THAT ACCEPTS PROPOSAL

- I do need to be careful but I am not the same person I was then. I'm more grounded and prepared. There seems to be sufficient evidence that this is a good option, and there are enough resources.

FOLLOW THE CONSOLATION (**GOOD SPIRITS**)

EXPANDING THE DATA: THE EXTERIOR WISDOM

MOVING FROM INTERIOR MOVEMENTS (CHECK "IN") TO CHECK "OUT" THE WISDOM BEYOND MYSELF, ESPECIALLY ON BIGGER CONCERNS.

FRIENDS / MENTORS
RESEARCH / EXPERTS
WISDOM PEOPLE
CHURCH / TRADITION
"HOLY" WRITINGS (FOR YOU)

WHEREVER WE PUT OUR "FAITH," SOME OF THESE SOURCES "WEIGH" MORE THAN OTHERS IN OUR CONSCIOUSNESS.

TO WHOM DO YOU LIKELY TURN FOR EXTERNAL AUTHORITY AND WISDOM IN YOUR LIFE? WHOM DO YOU ADMIRE?

EACH PERSON DISCERNS HIS OWN "SAFE" TRUSTWORTHY NETWORK.

SPIRIT,
HELP ME TO KNOW
WHAT EXTERNAL WISDOM
IS MOST LIFE-GIVING AND TRUE
IN THIS INSTANCE. GUIDE ME.



IF YOU TEND TO OVER-THINK, IT MAY BE A GOOD EXERCISE TO TRUST YOUR INTUITION MORE. IF YOU TEND TO TRUST ONLY YOUR INNER LIFE TO THE EXCLUSION OF THE OUTSIDE REALITY, IT MAY BE GOOD TO ENGAGE RESOURCES OUTSIDE YOURSELF AS A CHECK TO SELF-DELUSION. CULTIVATE THE VIRTUE OF HUMILITY.



