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# Notice the Journey

Spiritual Direction,  
Coaching & Restorative Yoga

@NoticeJourney



Shannon Michael Pater

@NoticeJourney

*A Miksang Moment in Mumbai*

# NOTICE NOTES

The Monthly Newsletter of **Notice The Journey**

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## Hello from the Himalayas

Hello, Dear Hearts,

I hope this finds you safe and well. Thank you for subscribing to my monthly newsletter!

I'm still tucked away in McLeod Ganj, a small mountain village in the Himalayas of northern India; it is true that the Dalai Lama lives just down the street a few kilometers. This is where I spent nearly three months on sabbatical in 2014 and I have now spent that much time here in "lockdown." Curiously, the space still nourishes me profoundly most days. I've been adopted by a "street dog" and I live with monkeys— there will be clicks and videos appearing on Facebook soon and probably some poetry and stories to go with them.

By now you might have seen that I substantially updated my website, [www.noticethejourney.com](http://www.noticethejourney.com). I have two primary goals for this ongoing online project:

First, it's a space where I share my personal practice. I've started posting a **blog** of original prose and poetry (see a few links below), you can see my **contemplative photography (Miksang)**, and I intend to keep building the resource section. It really is an ongoing project.

Second, it is also the "storefront" of my professional practice. For 15 years I have

been coaching clergy and non-profit leaders; in recent years, my professional practice has expanded to include spiritual direction and restorative yoga. My primary “practice lenses” is “trauma-informed,” which means I focus on helping folk rediscover and reconnect to their core self, others and the planet through an integration of spiritual practices and neuroscience. You can read a short description below and [more on my website](#).

I only allow myself so much “tech time” a day so that I do not fall into an assumption that this period is “meant to be productive.” My mantra words have been “surrender and survive,” not “produce and accomplish.” So, the projects that I select are developed slowly and intentionally.

That said, I have been working on producing audio files of guided meditations and possibly a future podcast of centering meditations similar to what I did at Central. I’ve been researching and learning the technology and I located a piece of equipment for the task. The most exciting news: Todd Norian gave me permission to use his music! (Those who have practiced with me before will recognize his work.)

I hope to have sound files posted in the month of June and will include links in the July Notice Notes.

One of my core beliefs is that until we know what we know and feel what we feel, we will never be whole. The pandemic has shaken what we know (or don’t) and unleashed a torrent of feelings in us. Be curious and compassionate with yourself. If I can be of support, please let me know.

In hopes of shalom, shanti, and salaam.

Shannon Michael Pater, Psy.D.  
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## My Blog: Poems, Pics & Prose

Toward the bottom of the front page of my website you will find a "slider" of my blog posts. You can also find them on their dedicated page under the "Resources" menu ([click here](#)). In both spots, you will find "categories" that you can click to see the posts I wrote with those headings. You can click either of the titles below for two recent postings.

### Blog Post: Our Grief Needs Lament

*When teaching meditation or other spiritual practices, I often say, "What we resist, remains, and often acts out." What I mean is, when try to force undesired thoughts from our minds or exile uncomfortable feelings, they usually stay longer and grow bigger. You have to know what you know and feel what you feel in order to be whole. Lament helps us metabolize the loss that otherwise metastasizes.*

### Blog Post: If I Hate Him, I'm Not Okay

*Years ago, while working through some terrors of childhood, I came to a central claim for my own journey: I love and forgive for my own spiritual well-being; not for the sake of the perpetrator. I practice these spiritual disciplines for the care of my own soul. The notion set me to a path of liberation.*

*I confess that I often do not know how to be loving or forgive and that I too often fail in my efforts. That's why these are articles of faith, for me. Faith is a lived experience, steeped in mercy, grace, and discovery.*

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If you suddenly and unexpectedly feel joy,  
don't hesitate.

Give in to it.

There are plenty of lives and whole towns  
destroyed or about to be.

We are not wise, and not very often kind.

And much can never be redeemed.

Still, life has some possibility left...

Joy is not made to be a crumb.



from "Don't Hesitate," *Swan*,  
Mary Oliver

## Mary Oliver Poem Quotes

In 2016, I spent several months rereading the work of Mary Oliver (and finding a few collections I had never read). As part of that project, I posted a daily selection with citation on Facebook and used those poems in a restorative yoga series during Lent. Most of the pic-poems can now be [found under the "Resources" menu](#).

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## Spiritual Direction, Coaching & Restorative Yoga

My professional practice includes three primary support options:

Trauma-informed **spiritual direction** is for anyone who wants a compassionate witness and companion to help you explore a deeper connection with your sacred core, to wonder with you as you sort and sift your life, or to journey with you as you “bring the exiles home,” those parts of ourselves we reject.

Spiritual direction can focus “simply” on the journey itself or on developing a spiritual

practice (mindfulness, meditation, breathing, etc.). Often folk do both. [Click here for more information on spiritual direction.](#)

**Coaching**, while grounded in the core practices of compassion and non-judgment of spiritual direction, adds goal-setting, developing skills and best practices, and implementation as a focus. In this relationship we partner together to move “from awareness to action.” [Click here for more information on coaching.](#)

**Restorative yoga** is “embodied spiritual direction;” your breath is your primary director. This practice involves a deep noticing of our bodies in an attempt to befriend the parasympathetic nervous system (“rest and digest”) through breathing techniques, mindfulness, and guided meditations (savasana and yoga nidra). [Click here for more information on restorative yoga.](#)



## Centering Meditation

Reflection Question:

In what ways are you aggravating your own nervous system?

The autonomic nervous system, the "operating system in the background" has two parts: the sympathetic and the parasympathetic.

The sympathetic nervous system includes the reactionary responses of reptiles: fight, flight, freeze, feed, and fornicate." They are not "bad choices," but they can become very automatic and unhelpful. For example, how much news are you reading/watching and is that helpful to you or not?

The parasympathetic nervous system is the "rest and digest" response where renewal, repair, and "resurrection" happens. Many of the spiritual practices of the Wisdom Traditions on a neurological level are about partnering with the parasympathetic nervous system to increase our sense of calm and compassion.

By noticing our journey, we can befriend our breath and strengthen our relationship with the parasympathetic nervous system.



## Social Media Links

My social media links are below. I'm starting to post more regularly and "likes, loves, comments and follows" are always helpful.



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