



The Sharing by JK



The Sharing

By James Kozlik

In the vast wilderness that we live in whether it is in urban jungles or rural landscapes surrounded by wild environments we generally always come back to our conscious minds. Minds that can be “crazy as a Loon’s” with dreams and hopes as we grasp for meaning through our contemplations.

We must be like a Loon as knowledge becomes crazy wisdom. The water color (see cover) that I created many years ago, is of a loon anchored in the snowy meadow as it gazes staring at the Brooks Mountain Range of Alaska. According to legend a Tsimshian story claims that a Loon restores a blind man’s sight. (AI) The top photo is from a Vietnamese Paper Quilling card.

And so I Joseph Petra, a once decorated university professor of psychology, became tired or shall I say bored, teaching the old traditional thinking of western psychology. Very soon in about two hours I have the supposed honor of teaching a small post graduate class so that the students who have come to me to get more knowledge will be able to advance their careers. In other words make more money because of a higher degree of wisdom. Unbeknownst to them I Joseph Petra is about to yodel a wild warning call of introspection. What do I have to lose at this point in my life, maybe the students will think of me as an aging, mad lunatic. I, on the other hand, will be amused at the outcome of this semester. Will the students adapt to my non-sense? What resistance might I encounter? Then again why do I want to have any projections about my final experiment. I am as curious as a child today. It’s time, I better get over to the lecture hall, where no lectures will be taking place. We will share and our personal beliefs might be shattered into enlightened experiences, if there is such a thing.

The Sharing

This is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places, and incidents either are the product of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously. Any resemblance to actual persons, living or dead, events, or locales is entirely coincidental.

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“But even when we turn our attention to events people have often experienced, they make mistaken predictions about how the events in question will affect them in the future. This is because of the psychological phenomena known as adaption: we tend to get used to what we have and therefore like it less with the passage of time.”

On Desire by William B. Irvine

Chapter 1

Dartmouth 2023

She came to speak at an event with the promise of enlightenment. When she left, the college and most of us that attended had a buzz of excitement cursing through our being. This small statured woman from India, with a large charisma and a simple message, the Guru, said that there are only two states. You are either suffering or you are not suffering. That's when I realized that for many years of living my life filled with none ending desires had me trapped in a suffering state. Now as my tenured professor of psychology career is coming to a close, and as I am part of a large aging generation, I seek change. Finally, I desire to make a difference with my new life. There's that thought again...to desire something.

Joseph Petra has arrived at his crossroads. Let's see, room 217 here it is. Okay a day of reckoning. Oh, they have me on a little stage, with an overhead projector. Good, how many students, let's see fifteen according to my list. Looks like quite a cross section of age and the ratio of male to female appears almost equal. I have fifteen minutes and I don't need time to read over notes. I'm going to be spontaneous with my presentation today. I have time, I desire a cup of coffee. There's a coffee machine around the corner at the end of the hall.

The professor leaves the room and goes to the coffee machine. Meanwhile a few post grad students make their way to the small desks that have a small desk top where they can place their note pads. The room fills up with some chatter and becomes quiet as the professor arrives with coffee in hand. He walks up one step and onto the small stage. He places his coffee down on a table and writes his name on the overhead screen. Then he grabs his syllabus and rips it in two. He observes the varied expressions of the post grads. He sheepishly smiles, shrugs his shoulders and opens up the dialogue.

"We are about to embark on a journey of personal inquiry. Rather than discuss Freud, Jung, Gestalt and all these other western psychologist and neuroscientist, we are going to do something different."

"That's not what I paid for!"

The professor looks in the direction of the retort, "your name please."

"Johnathon, Johnathon Blank. I paid for a specific curriculum that will give me the credentials I need for more work. That is what I want to make sure I get out of this class."

Joseph looks around the room and observes varied body language and expressions. He looks down at the torn syllabus then up at the class.

“There are fifteen people here, unless Johnathon decides to quit. The intention I have in mind is to create a semester where all of us become aware of our interconnection with each other and how our inter dependent nature either supports the whole of humanity or contributes to it’s separation.”

Johnathon scans the class. And a young woman in the front speaks up, “Hi, I’m Penelope, what is it that you have in mind professor?”

Joseph hadn’t even thought of a new syllabus. “Uh, well, inner work. A semester where we as therapist or psychologist move from our formal practice of passing on knowledge. When the semester is over, you will have a new approach and a more personal connection with your clients. Rather than a clinical approach you might have a more compassionate connection with the people you meet. You might not refer to them as clients anymore. In fact you might be doing as much self inquiry as the people you serve.”

Bertha, a forty year old well known professional therapist asks, “and how will we accomplish this? Do you have a plan?”

“I have a thought that comes to me in waves. In general the class will be called ‘The Sharing’ and it will be based on the wisdom we acquire along the way when we are open, honest and share our truth. We will commit to being venerable.”

Johnathon is skeptical, “so now this seems more like Jungian theory.”

“Perhaps, in the end you might get that sense. Did anybody here attend that event with Sri Preethaji?”

A few hands raise.

“What she talked about was that there are only two states that we experience suffering or non-suffering. That is what we will explore. And how, whatever state we choose to be in, impacts our interconnection with the whole. I am leaving now, there is still fifteen minutes remaining. You can discuss amongst yourselves how you feel and whether or not you want to continue with this experimental post graduate class. The ‘Catch-22’ is to not be swayed by another’s opinion. It is to make your own choice. So you might want to do the self inquiry method of Byron Katie. I will share with you how this class will unfold next week. Thank you for your attendance today.”

And with that last statement of gratitude, Joseph walks off the stage past the class and out the door with coffee in hand.

Initially there is a quiet moment that doesn't last long. A voice from the back of the room breaks the silence. "I sense that we are all attending this class for various reason. Some of us are needing credits towards another major or padding out credentials, maybe we get to brag that we took Joseph Petra's class. Maybe we can take a quick consensus and find out what we are hoping to achieve by taking this course. What were our expectations?"

There's a suggestion coming from another section of the room, "how about rearranging our seats and forming a circle so we can face each other."

Bertha chimes in, "yes, I like those ideas. Petra obviously is leaving it up to us whether or not we want to continue in this farce."

Another voice rises to the task, "maybe we will be in for a surprise. Come on let's 'circle the wagons'."

It doesn't take long, there's a resemblance of a circle. They all resettle in their places.

Johnathon is the first contributor, "how about a brief introduction?" I can start. "Hi, I'm Johnathon Blank, I do therapy and counsel management and downline management for a corporation that is paying for this class. Once completed I get a nice raise"

The woman to his right goes next, "I'm Rachel, I just need this as a requirement towards my social services degree."

"Peter here, I'm just filling a void so I can get a credit."

"Benjamin, I have had a practice, going on twenty five years now. I took Joseph's class some twenty years ago. I was curious to find out if he has anything new to contribute."

"Humm, okay, my name is Julie, I'm a writer looking for a new subject. Mr. Petra is well known in certain circles. I actually went to the event he spoke of. I happened to know that he has written several books, many of which are contrary to some of the norm of taught psychology."

Henry is looking at Julie, "I'm Henry, a psychologist and practicing therapist. I know of Petra's work. I must say I am fascinated by his demeanor this day. Is he mad? To tear up this syllabus, and expect us to just go along with his whim?"

And the rest of the classmates contribute their short introduction. Once the last person speaks, there is a pause. Some throats clear, and anticipation is in this field of energy.

Then Penelope speaks, “so I for one am intrigued and I am willing to see where Joseph Petra is going to take us. His line concerning how we are interconnected and inter dependent was nothing short of a bold statement. If one or several of us decides to bail, it will impact the whole of this group. When I applied for this class there was a limit of fifteen students. I suspect this intimate class might be part of something special.”

There is another pause, that last for a few minutes. The classmates are connecting with their body language and expressions. Bertha clears he throat, “I’m in, I want to see what he has planned next week. I’ll give him that much before I walk.”

Johnathon’s next, he utters, “one more week, it better be good and worth my while.”

As others have their say, the final consensus is to wait it out until a plan or new syllabus is presented at the next lecture. As people are leaving, Julie walks up on the small stage and looks at the torn syllabus laying on the table. She picks it up and packs it into her shoulder bag. She watches the last person exit. She stays where she is standing and tunes into the energy of the room. What is it that I am in touch with right now? She turns and looks up at the overhead screen and Joseph Petra’s name scribbled on it. She turns off the overhead and leaves.

Chapter 2

The following week as the students are entering the little lecture hall, on the overhead screen is scribbled “If life were like a game, what would you do when the rules change? Will you quit, or will you have fun?” K

Joseph is not in the room, he retreated out of the room and down the hall to get his cup of coffee from the coffee machine. He is looking out a window and at a student cafe across the street. *I wonder if I have enough time to go grab a better cup of coffee. I’d probably be late for class. I wonder if I can count on getting a quick cup over there and make it back here in time. Okay, let’s do it, why not. After all this is my grand finale, last class...final semester!*

Meanwhile the room is starting to fill up. There’s a little bit of chatter as some people are discussing what exactly this professor has in mind. Has he lost his mind? After all he is up there in age. He might be well known at this college, but...

Ten minutes have passed when Joseph Petra makes his grand entrance, coffee in hand and a smile on his face. Heads turn as Joseph sets up onto the stage. He places his coffee cup on the table picks up the grease pencil and starts printing names on the overhead.

Johnathon Blank
Penelope Smith
Julie McCann
Sylvia Wilkerson
Henry Axelrod

Rachel Berkheart
Benjamin Holt
Peter Lofton
Bertha Worthington
Ralph Franklin

Melody Sunshine
Red Feather Hawk
Ja Dev Singe
Alicia Button
Anjali Kuer

“You all can keep chatting while I am putting these groups together.”

One of the conversations is about the professor using this overhead projector instead of power point! Another is wondering if this is a way for him to remember names. Bertha is convinced that Petra does not have a plan. He finishes, turns, takes a sip of coffee and the room is quiet.

He silently counts heads, “good you’re all here. Has there been any discussion about the quote? Anybody, speak up...”

Some people are reading it for the first time. Other’s just cock their heads and a few roll their eyes. Nobody is jotting it down in their note pads.

After a minute or two Henry speaks up, “I wonder professor, are you having fun?”

Bertha quickly pipes in, “at our expense?”

Melody Sunshine chimes in with her cherie voice, “I’m having fun just trying to figure out the jest of this class material. Especially since you ripped up the syllabus. So cool!”

“Thank you Melody, for sharing something related to the quote.”

“Ralph asks, “who is K?”

“You will see, throughout this semester a K or P after each quote I post. K for Krishnaji and P for Preethaji.”

Anjali contributes, “I have heard of them, husband and wife Gurus from southern India.”

Johnathon remarks, "I'm not sure how my corporate team manager is going to respond if I'm not coming back with any new western psychology breakthroughs."

Bertha again, "so what's the plan? The new syllabus?"

"The groups will be considered break out groups whenever we are in class or have a class on zoom. The book we will be referencing throughout this semester will be "Letting Go; The Pathway of Surrender" by David R. Hawkins. M.D., Ph.D.. Each group will rotate once every third Saturday and we will meet at my cabin along the Vermont - New Hampshire state line at White Lake State Park. I live on a pond near by the lake, we will study Loons and share our true emotions that arise from our unconscious conflicts and old patterns."

"How do the quotes fit in with this course of action. Psychoanalyst, I mean you're talking about Freud and Jung aren't you? And Hawkins, is he a certified psychoanalyst? I doubt if your Gurus are."

"Let's look at this quote;

'If life were like a game, what would you do when the rules change? Will you quit, or will you have fun?' K

Comments are welcome..."

Sylvia, "when a 'rule' as you put it, changes I end up with perceptions of the one changing the rules. I ask my self, is it for their benefit? Will I be the inferior person as a result? I might not quit, I certainly won't have fun. I might have projections towards the rule changer."

"The rules of nature always change. I enjoy witnessing the changes. Is witnessing fun or is a tomahawk throwing contest fun?" A challenging comment comes from Red Feather Hawk.

Benjamin has a share, "I went back to my home town a few weeks ago. I hadn't been there in years. I had an appointment to renew my drivers license. The town has become a small city and things changed. Including the location of the MVD. I got lost and was angry at google maps, the city and myself. Then my friend said, maybe you can celebrate the fact that now you know how to get here. And I did just that, I was grateful for learning of it's location and the process that I'll need to go through when I reschedule my appointment. I would say I was encouraged, it wasn't necessarily my kind of fun. However, in retrospect the fun came from changing my state as you call it."

“Very good, honest shares from all of you who shared. This will be a typical process as we move forward. This coming Saturday the first group of Johnathon, Sylvia, Julie, Penelope, and Henry will meet at my cabin. I might suggest you all share a ride together if you can.”

“Will Saturdays include biology lessons about Loons?” Retorts Ralph. There is laughter as the class starts to leave the room.”

“Wait, wait,” Bertha blurts, “what if someone doesn’t show up? How will we be graded? What about our credits for taking the class?”

Everyone stops in their tracks and their attention is on Professor Joseph Petra, the guy changing the rules of the game! “Uh, hum, okay, there will only be completed or incomplete for the course. You will be considered complete or incomplete based on your attendance and participation, or shall I say contribution.”

Alicia, “what are we contributing to?”

“To your well being and everyone else’s in your group. We will refer to a group as being a family. Periodically we will gather as a social group or a raft.”

Red Feather Hawk chuckles and asks, “will we look for fish. More eyes to find them.” (note: When a large group of Loons meet it is called a raft, and yes they fish together)

There is laughter. “Maybe we can have a pot luck diner when we gather,” remarks Peter.

Now even Joseph has a guttural laugh! “Okay, I love it, we’re all adjusting to the new rules. If you change your mind set, maybe you all will enjoy this class and connect with each other in a different way. Have a beautiful day, in a beautiful state.”

As people are leaving with smiles and chuckles, Sylvia holds her place in the back of the room, near the door, and has her eyes fixated on Joseph. *I sure do like a man who thinks on his feet. And interpreting quotes as a curriculum...hum, hell I don’t need any credits, I need a man that has some depth.* She gathers her shoulder bag and as she gets ready to exit she notices Julie approaching the professor. She waits a few seconds and feels a tinge of concern. She sizes up Julie’s youth (*forty something?*), beauty and body language. She exits the room.

Julie sashays up to the stage and patiently waits for Joseph to finish erasing the grease pencil from the overhead. He takes a sip of his coffee and then realizes he is being watched. He turns a little startled raises an eyebrow, “Julie right?”

“Yes professor, or can I call you Joseph?”

“Joseph works, soon we will know our group in an informal way.”

“You mean family, like the Loons is what I’m guessing. I never did get to share today. I like the quote in a simplistic form. I love playing games and especially when jungle rules or should I say house rules apply. It sure makes life fun.”

Joseph smiles at that comment, and with his right eyebrow still raised he has that famous, alluring, Jack Nicholson look. He becomes self conscious of how he is looking at Julie and how he is reading her body language. “Explain to me what you mean by jungle rules.”

“It’s kind of like what Red Feather shared, nature is always changing.”

“So how can I help you Julie, is there a question you have for me?”

“Umm, well not really our first family meeting is this coming Saturday. I’m guessing you’ll be emailing time and location. You really are making things up as you go, is that true? Did Bertha call your bluff?”

“That is a pretense that Bertha put forth. Let’s consider this an experiment so that you and all of the others can experience building relationships and connection by truthfully sharing your state of mind. Hopefully you will have a new experience. Let me ask you, “if your thinking is old, how can you have a new experience of life?” That is a Krishnaji quote.

“Oh, I get to respond to two quotes today. Okay, my thinking might be stagnated. My relationships haven’t changed. I’m bored with my love life. But I’m here, taking your class, which I thought might include some psychoanalysis. So maybe you can tell me how will I have a new experience?”

“What emotions are derived from your thoughts. Do you obsess about your emotions? Are they desires or cravings? Do they relate to past experiences or are you projecting for a future experience that hasn’t happened yet? These are areas we will be exploring, together.”

“You too, Joseph, will you be facilitating or exploring with us?”

“I love a life of experimental and experiential discoveries. I am not a static person. At this point in my life I have become more social, desiring to explore new relationships. I am constantly aware of surrendering to the flow of the day and to what transpires between me and another, whether in human form, animal form or plant form.”

“Thank you for sharing. I better be on my way.” Julie hesitates for a few seconds then unabashedly asks, “can I get a hug?”

That throws Joseph for a loop. Now what, is this a trap? A scandal in the making? During my last hooray, I might be viewed as a manipulative professor, even though she's in her forties. What's her motivation behind the hug?

“Julie my dear, you have me in a bind of old thoughts, an emotion of fear and a projection of possibly a future scandal in the making.”

“I guess that's a no for now. But thanks for your honesty, I think our Saturdays are going to be interesting.”

“Thanks for your understanding, and for not applying your jungle rules just yet.”

We both laugh and our eye contact is magnetic. I extend a hand out to Joseph and he takes it and gives me a shake. A shake of the hands, like we have some sort of agreement until the rules change.

Chapter 3

Julie - Jungle rule number one, I do not need to ask permission from, or tell Joseph that he is about to be the subject of my story. As I am driving to the address near White Lake I am listening to one of Preethaji's teachings on utube. She is referencing the two states that the premise of her teachings are based on. I am recognizing how I might think all is well in my world, but truly I am suffering. I tell myself and others that I don't mind not having a mate or partner. I'm not lonely, when I had a partner things would get complicated, just relating too or not necessarily doing what I wanted to do. Now I note that Joseph Petra lost his wife two years ago. He is up there in age, but he is still handsome enough to cause an attraction. And he is having fun with whatever it is he's connecting too. And so my suffering is the desire I have to get close to him and be in his new world. And I don't even know the man, just his persona. And now Preethaji is talking about craving of wanting and not wanting. I don't want a partner, but I am desiring Joseph, perhaps. Perhaps I am just playing with my jungle rules. I'm suffering and wanting to create a slanderous story. Whoa, what kind of thought is that. Well Joseph had the same fear. I can't help but smile.

The Cabin at White Lake Pond, there's his sign. Park here. It's along the road and has quite a gracious parking lot. Enough for at least eight vehicles. There's already a couple of cars parked. I have my bag and note book. There's a pathway to follow, through the woods. I can see a clearing up ahead, about a hundred yards is what it appears to be. I reach the opening and in the small meadow is a solitary cabin with a pond about thirty yards past it. It is enchanting to say the least. Nothing fancy, it looks well kept up. The natural landscaping fits the home site. I knock on the door.

The door is opened and it's Joseph, with a smile, "welcome Julie, come on in. Sylvia and Henry are here." He looks over Julie's shoulder, "ahh, here comes Johnathon and Penelope"

Eventually we are all settled in admiring the quaintness of the cabin and the view out of a large bay window over looking the pond. There is a small dock with a square tipped row boat tied to it.

"Thank you all for showing up. Out there in that pond are two Loon families called a brace or wedge. Typically the males will defend their territory, sometimes fighting to the death. They peck at each others chest. The male chooses what he thinks is the best place in the pond for his brace to survive. In this pond two braces have learned to share this coveted territory."

Joseph pulls a white shade down that covers the window. He turns on his overhead projector and there are two quotes that are shown on the window shade.

"You cannot bless from your divided mind, blessings can only happen from a unified consciousness." P

"Forgiveness is not weakness it is intelligence. It is a State of mind that permits freedom happiness and love in relationships." P

"Today we will share how these two quotes from Preethaji impact you. Do not relate them to any of your clients if you are a therapist. Today we become the subject of our own inner state. You can think of this as self processing, so be honest with your truth. Whether you are in conflict with your self or someone else, how do these quotes affect you."

"Let us start by closing our eyes and take three conscious breaths. Fill the diaphragm, then the lungs inhaling through the nose then exhaling through the mouth, slowly so that your exhale is slower than the inhale."

There's a few seconds of quiet. Then there is a sound of a Loon a type of wailing. Joseph continues, "take in your surroundings, the view from the window that we viewed awhile ago. Listen to the wailing, Someone is calling a family member. Now take another full conscious breath, and when you are ready slowly open your eyes."

The room is quiet, I am intrigued by this man. Joseph invokes a sense of freedom. I'm not sure what to share, not yet anyway. "Joseph, I have a question."

"Yes, Julie, go ahead what is your question."

"That first quote, whom are we blessing and can you define what is meant by a unified consciousness."

"For me if I want to bless some one, give them a blessing maybe verbally - 'May you be blessed' - if I am judging them or feeling superior to that person, maybe I am suffering, then my mind is divided and my blessing is not sincere. I am not unified with the other person. I don't see us as one consciousness striving for the same outcome of peace, or forgiveness, or love."

"Professor, you don't mind us calling you by your first name?" Asks Johnathon.

"No, you have my blessing, pun intended, to use my name rather than title."

"Joseph, I want to refer to the second quote, 'Forgiveness is not weakness it is intelligence. It is a State of mind that permits freedom, happiness, and love in relationships.' Referring to a state of mind that permits...my state of mind has always been as a superior towards my 'clients'. From a clinical standpoint, I have the knowledge that they need. I convey my learned knowledge as a remedy to their problem. I am not feeling what they are feeling. There is no real compassion that I inwardly feel. My responses might seem like compassion, in reality my mind is divided. Now I see how I have a conflicted mind, stuck in ego. And for me to want to participate in this class, I had to forgive you for changing the syllabus and doing something unheard of especially coming from a tenured professor. You are willing to abandon your routine and be a force of change. I think I can share more later. I need to process more of what I am feeling emotionally."

“Thank you Johnathon.” There’s a stillness in the room, then a breeze picks up outside, chimes can be heard, each pipe with a resonating frequency.

Sylvia shares, “I can’t recall when I have ever blessed anyone. The phrase ‘you can not bless from a divided mind...’ takes me to a state of regret. I have had several partners during my life of sixty-seven years. I have regret now since I never really showed the gratitude for how they contributed to our relationship. I was in so much judgement that I was in pain. I did not have true happiness and love had a physical meaning. As a result I can see how I shut out the sense of freedom to just be. By judging my partners I never experienced the unified consciousness that is mentioned in the first quote. Without gratitude how could I bless those relationships. I always had to look for a new relationship thinking that the next one would bring me happiness and fulfill my needs.” Sylvia has her eyes closed and she is subtly shaking her head side to side. There is a tear forming in her right eye. She reaches in her pocket for a tissue and wipes away the tear, smiles and opens her eyes.

The chimes give off their tones. And the Loon’s wailing can be heard again. This time a bit louder.

Joseph is crying. All eyes are upon him. In a choked voice he shares, “I am feeling grief right now. I can sense Gwen’s presence in this room, this space that is being created. Guinevere Petra-Hansen was once married to another man, a good friend whom I had a great love for. I was always there for him, when he needed help whether financially, physically or just to comfort. At some point Gwen and I had an affair that eventually turned into marriage. My trusted friend became grief stricken. He had the courage to forgive Gwen and allow her the freedom to fulfill her love for me that gave her joy. He surrendered to what was meant to be, he told me once that he loved Guinevere so much that he never wanted to possess her. He wanted her to feel her freedom to choose her life. He said that he had to forgive himself first. He knew that he loved himself enough that he could forgive us. He showed me what forgiveness truly is. And in that way he was able to bless us. He is gone from my life now and so is Gwen. I have forgiven myself long ago. I don’t feel the loss anymore, I realize that what my friend showed me. By releasing Guinevere from his life, he also transitioned from identifying with Guinevere as an extension of himself. The emotion of his grief dissolved his dependency and his fear of loss was gone.”

Joseph is crying and laughing at the same time, “gosh this feels so good to process that again.” He gets up and lifts the window shade and gazes out at the pond in the direction of the northern shoreline.

When he turns back to the “family” his tears have stopped and he seems younger to me. I am feeling privileged to be here and I know I have picked the right subject for my story. And it’s not just about Professor Joseph Petra it’s going to become more than the physical man I am feeling his pain and joy. Penelope opens up, she is the youngest of our family.

“What comes to me is this little song I sing when I wake up. (She sings) ‘This little light of mine, I’m going to let it shine, This little light of mine, I’m going to let it shine, this little light of mine, I’m going to let it shine, let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.’ (She giggles) It puts me immediately in the beautiful state that Preethaji talked about at the event. I was there. That unity consciousness, well it’s being one with all that is. I may sound like a bunch of new age cliches, however what are we other than energy. That divided mind, yeah I get it that’s why I sing that song, because sometimes I wake up or at some point in the day depression sinks in and I take a nose dive into darkness, or confusion, or anxiety and that song reminds me that I desire to be a light, a beacon of love for others. As for the other quote it is what I do to help me get out of my dark mood. I forgive myself first, then I forgive whatever it is, what ever external circumstance changed my mood into suffering. The pain of an emotion that I do not want to be attached too.”

Henry surveys the room, “well, I am humbled by what all just transpired. I’m somewhat at a loss for words. I feel guarded, like I’m not wanting to show my feelings. In reality, my feeling world is stuck somewhere deep into my consciousness. I have a difficult time being in touch with my loving self. I ask myself many times, why am I interested in psychology and psychoanalysis? I don’t seem to be making any headway connecting to my self. Yet I attempt to help others...with a divided mind. As we continue, I hope to loosen up and check what is holding me back.”

The shares abruptly end. The session is over. Joseph thanks us for our honesty. He assures Henry that we all enter into spaces of being stuck. With a wry smile he thanks us again and reminds us that we will meet at the lecture hall on Tuesday with the others. Johnathon, Penelope and Henry start down the pathway, back to their cars. Sylvia and I walk the pathway together, following the others at a distance.

“Sylvia, I’m not sure how you will take this observation I had today. Can I take a chance to be straight forward with you?”

“That’s very courageous of you, go ahead, I pride myself in having good armor.”

“Hum, okay then...I sense that you have a desire to become Joseph’s next Guinevere.”

Sylvia let’s out a cackle. “I watched you the other day, approach Joseph as we all left the lecture hall. What was that about?”

“Let’s just say, we had friendly banter and that I asked for a hug. He would not oblige he has his student-professor ethical relationship to consider. Especially since he is still tenured. He feared a scandal.”

Sylvia has a surprised look. She stops and turns towards me. She looks at my whole being before responding.

“Julie let me guess, your in your mid forties?”

“Forty-Three”

“You are beautiful in your appearance, that man could be your father. I’m sixty-seven and I desire a partner. Let me ask you, are we two Loons fighting over territory?”

At this moment I was relishing a saucy story of romance and betrayal. Then I realized my divided mind. And I knew right there I needed to let go and surrender my fantasy of physical love with someone I was getting to know as part of a ‘unified consciousness’. I thought, we are beings here for a mutual reason. The story really becomes the subject matter not the subject - Professor Joseph Petra, he is just the form. Maybe Sylvia and I are just experiencing the sensation of the body and it’s being experienced in the mind. The mind cannot experience it’s own mind-ness. But then Hawkins goes on and comments that thought does not experience it’s own thought-ness? There has to be something greater than the mind. So he says, we know what is going on in the mind because of consciousness itself. All of what is occurring then is what is occurring in consciousness! Consciousness is the awareness of what is going on in the mind. What I got out of that is that consciousness is greater than the mind and awareness is greater than consciousness. He finally puts this mystical rationality or his understanding of transcendence, in reverse order.. being aware of consciousness that comes from thought, created by the mind, evolving from

sensation of the body. Humph, Sylvia is waiting for my response, I feel her hand gently shaking my arm...

“Where’d you go Julie? Did I give you a jolting poke as we fight for territory?”

I gotta laugh at that, “no... we aren’t fighting for territory you Loony woman you. By the way at sixty-seven you have keep you looks and grace. Maybe when this class is completed, you will regain your subtle state of being.”

“Oh, yeah, I seem kind of desperate don’t I. A predator is an identity I do not want to choose. Actually I am curious, especially after his share. You ever see a professor open up like that?”

“Sylvia, have you read any of the class material, “Letting Go” by Hawkins?”

“Not yet, should I?”

“The first quote, ‘You cannot bless from your divided mind, blessings can only happen from a unified consciousness.’ P. Unified consciousness has me contemplating, he takes the reader up the staircase from the body, sensation, mind, thought, consciousness and finally awareness. I think I just had a realization of what unified consciousness might mean in the context of Preethaji’s quote. If awareness is the highest source of experience, then to be aware of another’s consciousness makes us as a unified body of energy. No need to fight over territory, the share by Joseph - his friend might have understood that concept.”

“You mean the fact that his grief was short lived since he did not possess over Guinevere?”

“Yes, he must have had an understanding of unified consciousness and therefore in a way he was able to bless Joseph and Guinevere because his mind was undivided. Does that make sense?”

Sylvia smiles, “well, yeah of course. It’s beautiful, I’m sure his friend did not like the circumstance. At least it seemed like he was able let go of the emotions and desire what ever comes first. That’s my dilemma and it made me desperate. I must say Julie, thank you for not being shocked and defensive.”

“You’re welcome, I used to be a journalist, it kinda made me thick skinned.”

We continue our walk back to our cars, in silence. We pack our handbags into our cars and momentarily look at each other. Sylvia is the first to make contact with a warm hug. She backs her head away, “look at you, such young beauty!”

I chuckle, “I haven’t thought of being young anymore, at forty-three. But thank you I like that identity.”

We both chuckle, “I have to get going, see you Tuesday Sylvia.”

“Bye now.”

I pull out and start down the road. When I look in my rear view mirror Sylvia is still standing by her car and looking up the path towards the cabin. She appears to be holding something. I continue on my way home.

Chapter 4

Sylvia slowly walks up the path back towards the cabin. When she arrives at the cabin, she slithers along the left side of the cabin and stops at the front porch. She makes sure that she is inconspicuous. The first thing she notices is that the boat is not tied to the dock, it is out in the pond with a solitary rower. She takes her binoculars and watches Joseph row, he is facing the cabin, but his focus is on something thirty yards away from her. Sylvia observes the stillness of the pond and how Joseph navigates the boat with a long strong pull of the oars. He waits and glides a ways before dipping the oars. She listens to the squeak of the metal where the oars are inserted into their holders. She observes Joseph as his head turns to his right and appears to be looking towards the shoreline. He drops an anchor into the water even though it is calm enough for the boat to just sit. Sylvia flops against the building and gives a sigh. She turns and goes back to her vehicle. Once there she doesn’t hesitate and drives off.

It’s Tuesday and on the overhead screen there is a quote; “If you are unable to connect with yourself, you will never connect with another.” K

Joseph is late as usual, coffee in hand he makes his grand entrance. There’s a mummer in the room as some of us are sharing our first Saturday experience in

this unusual psychology class. The room quiets down without any demand for quietness. He places his coffee on the table, looks up and requests, “let’s ‘circle the wagons’” He takes his chair from the stage and places it between Melody and Red Feather Hawk.

“Let’s be still for about thirty seconds, close your eyes, just be still,” is the only instruction. After about thirty seconds, “now slowly, open your eyes... How do we experience our thoughts? Is it through Consciousness? Let’s grasp this thought from Hawkins... you can not experience anything in consciousness since consciousness is without form. It is limitless. It’s content is form. Consciousness itself is just space it has no particular locality.

So now, let’s just go around the room, and tell us what happened in those thirty seconds of stillness. We’ll start with you Benjamin.”

“I never got still. I was able to still my body, but I was thinking about what the Saturday class was like. I have an indication from some of the talk buzzing around the room before you showed up.”

“You’ve had a practice, for what twenty some years? Does the quote on the screen say anything to you?”

“That’s an interesting way to ask me if it has an impact. Yes, to your question. Hawkins progression is body, sensation, emotion, thought, mind. I got stuck in the lower frequency. Where as If I would have gone to consciousness, then awareness, I would have connected with my ego mind, where I could have made a choice to remain there or dissolve all form.”

“Thank you Benjamin. Penelope, if you dissolve all form, and are in consciousness and consciousness is formless, how do you get back to connection?”

“Being aware of transcendent bliss which is still a disconnect since I am not present with the other person or life around me?”

Red Feather speaks, “I would like to comment. You are, at that moment, connected with self.”

Sylvia is next, “I realized on Saturday, that I was so connected with self that I never really connected with my ‘family’ in the way I could have been.”

Joseph, “here’s another quote from Preethaji, ‘What makes you choose how you respond to Life? Your state of being.’ P How does that apply to Sylvia’s share?

Ja Dev, please, looks like you have a comment...”

“I want to ask what was your state of mind?”

“Honestly, that’s what we’re sharing right? I was in a state of desire, my emotion was desperation.”

Sylvia glances at Julie who asks, “what was the cause of your desire?”

Sylvia looks at Julie then directly at Joseph and unabashedly makes her statement, “Joseph, so there, who will judge me for...”

Joseph takes a deep breath, “The object of your obsession does not matter. All obsession is suffering, it keeps you away from loving and living. It’s a Krishnaji quote. Desperation can lead to obsession and obsession is craving, duality, ego, and the mind. It blocks one from being aware of consciousness with...”

Red Feather interrupts, “connection to all that is, your brothers and sisters. If I obsess about my desires I lose connection everything. I become connected to a thought and my focus is on what I want for me.”

Melody has a question, “what is meant by suffering?”

“When I was so concerned about Joseph’s plan, sorry professor, you mind if I call you Joseph,” it’s Bertha speaking.

“No, what you will come to discover is that I am a participant in this class. This quote hit home. If I obsess over being the professor I lose out on loving and living every moment of our meeting.”

“Well, that was similar to what I wanted to say, my previous obsession with your style of teaching this semester almost prevented me from enjoying this unique post graduate class. How thrilled I am today, especially hearing a little bit about Saturdays gathering, with the Loons.”

Joseph smiled then and class ended. At first I was appalled with Sylvia’s burst of honesty. Of course I saw it coming as soon as she looked at me. I regret not having any empathy or compassion for her state of mind. As we shuffled out the

door, I waited outside to apologize to Sylvia. She wasn't coming, I cracked open the door, ever so gently and peeked to see Sylvia talking with Joseph. At the time I didn't know what was discussed. Not until weeks later...

Saturday - Joseph's cabin at White Lake Pond

Rachel, Benjamin, Peter, Bertha and Ralph are comfortably seated and intrigued by the view and the loons in the pond. There's at least twenty in the pond, it looks like a convention of Loons. Joseph leads them through a mediation that Preethaji did at the event she did at the college. It was called the Serene Mind Mediation.

"Let's take three deep conscious breaths, let your diaphragm and lungs fill with air then exhale slowly so that it is twice as long as the inhale.

There's a pause...

Now what emotion do you have right now? Is it frustration, anxiety, or trepidation? Or is it Joy, Love, and calm?

Another pause...

Are you in the past that has already happened or are you in the unknown future. Maybe you are in the present moment.

Pause...

Now visualize a small flame burning between your eyebrows and observe this flame as it travels to the middle of your brain.

When you are ready gently open your eyes."

"Thank you for showing up and thank you for participating at the class on Tuesday. What I want you all to be aware of is thoughts that arise out of your subconscious related to old patterns of thinking or beliefs. This is a quote we will contemplate on today. "Did you know? Contrary to the saying, 'actions speak louder than words,' it's your inner state, your inner experience, that speaks loudest." P & K - Take some time to connect with whatever comes up for you. It might be a past experience or maybe it is happening now."

Julie quietly enters the cabin. When Joseph looks at her with a surprised expression, all heads turn in her direction. “Ah, sorry for barging in without an invitation.”

“Come on in Julie.”

She moves forward a couple of feet, “This is a spontaneous visit. By that I mean that I am working on a project and my interest is to follow this group, er family and document how all the the families respond to the quotes that are given. Just let me know if you’d rather have me leave.”

There is no response from the participants. Finally Joseph saves me from embarrassment. “Look out on the pond today. Do you see the large gathering or sometimes it’s called a Loomery. If we are fortunate we might see the circle dance preformed. If a Loon feels stressed or threatened it might do a Penguin dance. Generally when there is a gathering it is for social contact and a form of non violent communication. Anybody follow Dr Marshall Rosenthal’s work? So here we have Julie, flying in from some other pond to be with fellow loons. Look at her raised shoulders, maybe she is feeling that she is overstepping our boundaries.”

I instinctively start strutting in a tight circle with my arms at my side flapping my hands and like a pigeon. It’s a Tai Chi movement I learned years ago. There’s laughter and someone, I think it was Joseph, started to hoot.

“It’s not like I set up any regulations.” Joseph chuckles. “What is your project Julie.

Now at this point I did not want anyone know that I was writing a story, a novel about Dr. Jospeh Petra, Phd. And so I came up with my project as doing research about a subject of quotes as a post graduate course.

“I was at the Preethaji event and since Joseph has changed this course into what it has become, I am doing research as a freelance journalist for the Epoch Times newspaper to run in their psychology section. So if you all don’t mind, I won’t use names, I just want to compile some experiences from each “family” during these Saturday sessions.”

“A vote is in order...All those in favor of Julie’s presence here, today, say Aye.”

It was a resounding Aye! I was so relieved and grateful, what an opportunity to be able to sit in and get more insight of Joseph as a renegade professor, going out in a flame of glory.

Bertha starts, “it’s your inner state, your inner experience, that speaks loudest.” That was the essence of the quote. I think of the word ‘experiences’ as an identity. So if my inner state is a state of pain or suffering, than I am identifying with the pain as a suffering state. I can see how that happens with me on a daily basis.”

“Thank you for that Bertha, I just realized that I boast how I live life experientially and experimentally. So what am I identifying with when I experience joy or grief, for instance. Now I realize that I created a belief that last only as long as I believe it to be true,” adds Joseph.

Ralph speaks, “now you just created the mystery that I struggle with as a priest.”

Peter asks, “so as your mind floods you with thoughts of what’s real and not real, (duality?) are you experiencing suffering?”

“Yes, yes, of course, I took a vow to believe the mystery of the holy trinity and when I question any of the teachings I’m suffering. My identity of the theologian as a Catholic priest is challenged and a battle rages within.”

Rachel, “ok, I’m not preaching here, just thinking...so if I let go of the thought, you know, it might bring up an emotion, or sensation, is the letting go of it the surrender to Divine? Maybe Divine will, in your case Ralph.”

“When I shared about my MVD experience of first suffering and then accepting the outcome in one of our classes,” it’s Benjamin speaking, “what occurs to me is something Preethaji mentioned at the event. She used the word clinging. We can cling to joy just as much as we cling to anger. The clinging to an emotion keeps us from being present. Then there is the collective consciousness of which we are part of, when you think of it as a field of energy then we are influencing it or are being influenced by it. So being aware of our inner state is an opportunity to identify with a suffering or non suffering state. Just as Joseph shared earlier.”

“It’s almost time, thank you all for the insight. Here’s a parting quote to mull over on your drive home.”

‘Why do we fear to see the truth about ourselves even though no one else will know about it? P’

As the “family” is leaving, Benjamin glanced at me scribbling away in the corner, I was not oblivious to everything else. I wanted time with Joseph. I saw him with his disconcerting expression. The other tenured professor in the group of Loons, possibly protecting his territory? Loons, I checked about their behavior, pecking at the chest when they attack. And during their dance, I see them starting to gather on the pond, they have to make sure that there isn’t a submarine attack during their collective celebration. Once everyone is gone I finally look up and Joseph is staring at me.

“Julie, I have a guest coming soon. I’m flattered that you are doing some authentic journalism that might have a positive impact to an audience of the Epoch Times. Maybe you can get it syndicated if your are so fortunate.”

“I haven’t thought of it beyond what I am doing. I’m intrigued by the fact that you are not facilitating these Saturday sessions, nor the lecture hall class on Tuesdays. What is your reasoning?”

“When I am the teacher, I miss out on the way the teaching affects me at the moment. We have our teachings with the quotes and I get to participate. I have been the facilitator for twenty nine years, what a gift to end my tenure as a student, a recipient of knowledge and wisdom.”

I started to pack my bag. When I looked up Joseph continued to look at me. I wasn’t sure what to do. He had tears welling up in the corner of his eyes. He turned towards the window, the view. The loons were putting on quite a show. He seemed to be fixated on the shoreline where the granite cross monument stood. Then he asked me...

“Julie, come here please, do you see the burial site of Gwen and my long ago best friend?”

Yes, I responded. I was feeling some apprehension, not anticipating what might come next.

“There is a Loon family living in the reeds, along the shore. The male will not let me go ashore, in fact he protects the whole area even the monument.”

He turned to me then and asked for a hug. It was a hug and neither of us wanted to let go. After awhile we had a rather awkward letting go, of what? For me I sensed he was clinging to his past relationships that he buried two years ago. Was it grief, was he suffering. At that moment he chuckled and cleared his throat.

“Thank you Julie, Considering what we all shared today, you just experienced my truth.”

I looked at him not sure how to take his declaration. I put my hands around both of his arms and thought of moving in for a kiss. Then I realized the response would tarnish the beautiful moment we shared as heart felt compassion. I let go, smiled and said my farewell while urging him to enjoy the Loony show. I wanted him to turn so he wouldn't pick up on my body language full of desire. He turned just then, long enough for me to race out of the door and fly down the steps to my car. I took a deep breath I started the engine, as I started down the road, a car was coming towards me. As it passed I took a quick glance at the driver who was driving a personal car set up as a rural post office vehicle. The driver side was on the left. The driver keep both eyes forward, to my cringe I saw that the driver was Sylvia.

Chapter 5

Sylvia knocks on the cabin door, there's no answer. She hears a lot of commotion coming from the back of the cabin. Sounds of Loons fill the airwaves. She walks around to the back to find Joseph on the deck with binoculars observing about twenty loons in the pond. He is absorbed in the bird show and does not know that she is there. She observes Joseph, his movement, expressions and his excitement. After a few minutes she announces her presence, “Hello Joseph Petra!”

“Oh, Sylvia, here give me your hand and scoot up here. Take a look,” he hands her the binoculars.

While she is looking, she sees the granite cross, “that was quite a share you gave last Saturday. Do you grieve your loss often?” She lets her hands come down and looks directly at Joseph.



“I do, I still feel our connection, it’s probably the reason I keep this cabin. I’m grateful that this class agreed to spend Saturdays here. It keeps me from feeling isolated. I wonder how I might cope when my finale day comes and I leave Dartmouth.”

“I doubt that you will leave Dartmouth for good. You have too many friends that won’t let you disappear into oblivion. I’m sure you recognize that, professor.”

The pond is suddenly quiet. They both turn to look at the sudden stillness of the pond and watch as the loons fly off into the distance towards White Lake.

“Come Sylvia let’s put a meal together. We can talk and enjoy each other’s company.”

While they are sharing some small talk about each other and preparing a meal over a bottle of organic dry wine from France, Joseph changes the subject.

“A Preethaji quote just came to me. It fits the occasion, ‘Such love arises not because two people share the same taste, passions, or interests. It happens

when two people awaken to the beautiful state of connection.’ How does that resonate with you?”

Sylvia is stunned, “you are making it easy for me to love you, Joseph.”

“I hope it’s not a physical attraction. Not yet anyway.”

Sylvia laughs, “you read minds, too? Just kidding, really the flow of this late afternoon has been nothing short of a communion with you. The ease of your interrelation makes me feel good about my self. I feel like a complete woman.”

“If I was thirty years younger I would probably have some tenseness and the conversation sure would be different. Now, here we are two elders, if you don’t mind the reference, engaged in truthful connection. Your reaction to Julie’s inquiry last Saturday was raw honesty. Is it out of desperation that you seek a mate, or should I say partner.”

“My you are so straight forward. Desperation I find despicable. Let’s change that to the thought that openness and our true self opens the channels towards a real relationship that no longer requires romance. The romance is the inter connectedness as stated in the quote.”

“After we eat, let’s take a short boat ride on the pond. The sunset should be entertaining with the type of cloud cover forming.”

Diner is filled with the excitement of two people engaged with each others discoveries of the other. There is a harmony forming and the atmosphere is eclectic. Eventually they are in the boat and Joseph rows with slow strong pulls on the oars then lets it glide. They are sitting quietly, Joseph looking up at the clouds reflecting colors of orange, and pinks.

“Is that where you buried them, that rock cross up on the shore?”

Joseph comes out of his reverie and looks over at the grave site. “Yes, their ashes. Too many regulations to bury a whole body. Besides they did not deserve to have their bodies rot in the earth.”

“I’m sorry if I seem too noisy, it’s just that I feel your heart, or maybe I should say your presence, is with them.”

“Over there just to the right of that small opening between the reeds, do you see the Loon family?”

Sylvia spots the ‘wedge’ or ‘brace’ a family, “yes now I do.”

“Gwen died in the boat. She had Lou Gehrig disease. She was in a three day coma and came out of it in total bliss. She asked to be placed in the boat and wanted to float the pond. The male Loon won’t let me dock my boat. It’s as if they are the protectors of the grave site. They don’t want me to interfere with Gwen and Jeff’s relationship again.”

“Is that why you grieve or suffer about your loss?”

“You might have a point there. I know I resist having that thought. I regret that our relationship took the path that it did. Even though we remained friends, in my deepest knowing, it changed the energy. And so you all witnessed my suffering last Saturday.”

“I browsed the internet a few days ago and found all sorts of PK quotes. This one struck me after your share Saturday and what you just shared, ‘Only if you are free of the shame of your past can you feel comfortable with the other. P’”

Joseph listens, and is moved by it’s relevance. He feels his tears and takes a strong pull with the oars. Then another and another...Sylvia knows she touched a deep hurt in Joseph. They remain quiet and quickly dock the boat at the cabin.

“Thank you Sylvia for showing up. It has been a pleasure to be with you this evening. I need to be alone now.”

Sylvia nods and understands, “Thank you Joseph, may you be blessed.” She turns and walks along the side of the cabin back to her car. An indication that she wants to respect the space Joseph needs right now.

I wrote this last chapter the best I could from Sylvia’s recall. We connected before class on Tuesday and I had a humbling experience regretting that I had projected negative energy towards her. My envy and jealousy prevailed over the compassion that I resisted giving her. I began to recognize that at first I wanted to write about a scandal and be part of it. I was influenced by all the drama of writers and journalists today. Just looking for clicks as they say in the virtual world of connection. Now I am just grateful to be documenting what is

happening amongst my peers as our families connect forming heartfelt relationships, by sharing.

Chapter 6

It's Tuesday and class is back at the lecture hall where all of the families meet. They automatically "circle the wagons" waiting for Joseph. There are two new quotes on the screen;

"When we live life from a beautiful state of love and connection, not only will we attract the right people, we will keep them for life." P

"What we are setting out to discover is a state of love that has the sublime potential to transform every relationship." P

Joseph is fifteen minutes late as usual. He enters with coffee in one hand and two decoys of a Common Loon. He sets down his coffee and places the decoys in the middle of the circle. Then he takes his seat. There is silence. Nobody is asking what the significance of the decoys are in the middle of the circle. The facial expressions vary as Joseph makes eye contact with each student.

"Thank you all for showing up. We are almost halfway through the semester. This Saturday, as our third family meets at the cabin on the pond, we will have completed three separate family gatherings. The pond is small enough that usually one Loon family or asylum, brace, or wedge (the technical names) resides there. The male will protect his territory. If there is an intruder they might have a standoff. Much like a gunfight in the olden days where shots are fired until someone is hit by gun fire, the Loons peck at each others chest until there is a victor and the other leaves the pond. The pond at the cabin has two asylums. At some point they seemed to agree that sharing and unity is better than separation. Just so you know there is a bit of fascination that I have concerning this phenomenon of a Loon's territory. Just as I am curious if our three families are willing to commit to one family circle of friends after our scheduled time is over. As we continue on with this semester and relationships form within our separate families of five, let's consider that our Tuesday lecture hall gathering is a unified consciousness that thrives because we are aware of

each other as contributors to each others beingness. Enough said, who wants to start? Start with either quote, which every one moves you.”

At this point the room was still as a wind sock with no wind to move it in any direction. Joseph calmly took a sip of his coffee, smiled and took another sip patiently waiting for a contribution of thought, emotion, or wisdom. Some of us were looking at the quotes again. Others seemed to be in contemplation. I looked over at Sylvia and she had her eyes on me. She smiled, it was a warm smile, not one of triumph. I wondered why I would think of her smile as a smile of triumph. I started the conversation.

“I will comment on the second quote. Since the start of this class I have been discovering that my ego only knows love as a personal choice of whom I share it with. By choosing I limit my chance to form a loving relationship with all life. Not just you all in this room, it can be with nature or even an object. Everything and everyone is interconnected, somehow. I seem to make that part a mystery, when in fact we know that Einstein and Tesla relates everything as energy, vibration and frequency. I have been in states of judgement, projections and envy. I have limited myself to desiring a single relationship and attempting to ‘protect my territory’ as the male Loon does. I’m grateful that we ‘circle the wagons’ and I get to see everybody here.”

There’s a silence, a few people are readjusting their posture in their seats. Then Melody decided that she would contribute, “I do live my life from a state of loving everything. Some of my friends and family think I’m a little ‘woo woo’ as the saying goes. I don’t care, my grandmother was a great influence in my early years. We spent a lot of time in the garden and taking nature walks. She claimed to speak or connect with elementals and other forms of life with the love from her heart. I’m probably the youngest person in the room, I love the way professor Petra is using Loons as a mythology and strategy to make connections. I wonder professor are you hoping to form new life long relationships with some of us? I too am hoping to form long lasting relationships, maybe end up with a couple of mentors.”

Benjamin spoke right away, as soon as Melody finished, “This is non-sense I must say, what knowledge am I getting pretending that I am a part of this charade? What do you have Joseph, in the way of something new? Say a new revelation of Freudian theory?”

Sylvia responds, “Benjamin my dear, the request was to respond to one or both of the quotes. Considering you are a tenured professor of twenty-nine years, I

was anticipating that you might have some personal wisdom to share. How do you connect with your students, especially since you might have a hundred or more crammed into a lecture hall where you recite from a syllabus?”

Benjamin clears his throat. His face is flushed and there is some perspiration forming on his brow. “Touché Sylvia, I have my relationships with my peers. Is that not enough?”

“And what is your motivating factor when you meet with your peers? Is it to love them more?” ask Johnathon

“Well honestly, that’s what we’re doing here, right? So no I don’t think of it. My love is for my wife and children. Outside of our relationship it’s to exchange ideas, concepts, theory, knowledge and...and, and maybe I need to transform my self and the emotion of love will become present in my world. I am humbled, I guess I feared having to share my truth. I am my external world. My inner world has been kept under lock and key. Okay, Joseph, Hawkins is new in my world, I resisted his message. It’s eastern philosophy I follow western psychology.”

Ja Dev Singe has his turn to speak, “I do not want to interrupt, are you finished professor Holt?”

“Yes, for now, go ahead.”

“You are aware of Jung’s travels to India, yes?”

Benjamin shakes his head, “of course.”

“And how his relationship with Freud fell apart when his practice of psychoanalysis took on an eastern influence. Yet he isolated himself on his homestead where he became a man of self reliance.”

“Yes, yes I’m familiar with the history. What point are you trying to make Ja Dev.”

“What I have become aware of is that when I am not suffering, not angry, depressed, frustrated, then I seem to attract people. They want to be around me, they can feel the love energy that I am emitting. I came to this class thinking I would just be learning something new like you. Now I am feeling the freedom of opening my heart to this family. I am with the type of people I long for. I have been isolated as an Indian, my cultural difference was something I internalized. I feel that I can make new connections.”

Red Feather speaks, “my family lineage shows me how hate and fear caused separation. Not only with the white man, also amongst tribes. I grew up listening about stories of my fore fathers. To this day when I meet others I have to seek forgiveness first. I have to forgive myself and I have to forgive the other. When I forgive the other I might be on the wrong track, I forgive them for a perception I have that may not be true. When I am in a state of love and compassion, I feel a transformation of my inner state. That is when I am ready to be in relationship with another.”

The Tuesday class came to a close. We held hands in a circle of love. Alicia lead us through the gospel song This Little Light of Mine, I’m going to let it shine - everywhere - in my brothers heart - in my sisters soul - all around the world - I’m going to let it shine. It was a compelling moment for our group to connect. We filed out beaming. Johnathan had his arm over Benjamins shoulder. And Sylvia went to Joseph. This time I had no jealousy or envy. I was grateful that Sylvia was there for him. I did some research about Joseph, Guinevere and Jeffery Morton. The news of the affair made it in the back pages of the newspaper and appeared again in the obituaries a couple of years later. It was considered a mild scandal to say the least.

Chapter 7

The Saturday session was being held on the back deck overlooking the pond. Joseph had spotted some strange activity during the week. A new loon was lurking, flying in and out of the of the pond. The loon wailed loudly looking for a mate. It’s wails were met with either a yodel from a male claiming it’s territory or a hoot from a female looking for a mate.

Benjamin shared with me that on Thursday before the class he visited his old friend. He shared with me that Joseph was one of his peer group that meet regularly to discuss their work and lives. He stopped going about two years ago, after Gwen’s death and then the suicide of Jeff Morton, his best friend. The main reason he signed up for class was to be an observer of Joseph’s last class before retirement. Joseph was an icon at Dartmouth and students used to be on waiting lists to get into his classes. Following is Benjamin’s recall of that Thursday with Joseph Petra.

Benjamin - "I was perturbed after the Tuesday class. Something had changed drastically with my old friend. I found it disconcerting that he failed to acknowledge me as a fellow professor. I understand grief, maybe that is why Joseph was referencing Hawkins for the class material, he needed to let go of his tragic love affair and her ensuing battle with Lou Gehrig disease. I wanted to be there for him, but he chose to distance himself from us after Jeffery's death. I drove up to his cabin and he greeted me like an old friend. I felt accepted even though I had resistance to this last class of his. He took me out back and pointed out to a new Loon family on the south side of the pond across from the north side where the cross was being guarded by the first of the three Loon asylums. He was thrilled that the new male was accepted in this pond.

"That makes three families Ben, isn't that something. We have our three families and the third is coming this Saturday for their first Saturday Session. It's so synchronistic, that our class is mimicking the Loons as a class structure."

"What do you mean Joseph? I mean what is your objective having us comment on quotes let alone quotes of Gurus from India."

"Ben, don't you see, as we speculate on each quotes' meaning we are slowly processing our inner workings. Each share is different, even you eventually shared honestly. It doesn't matter what I or anyone else thought of your share, the fact that you recognized something...maybe your resistance to another type of psychoanalysis. What matters is that you became aware of being influenced by your external world."

"And the Loons? What is the synchronicity?"

"The pond now has three families that are accepting that they share the same territory. It is rare for Loons to share their territory. A couple of weeks ago, remember, there was a gathering of about twenty Loons. They danced and circled the pond. You said that you registered for this class to see if I had anything new to contribute as a professor. This has been as new to me as it is to you. My inner world is opening up and by sharing it unabashedly, I feel free and trusting of the relationships that are forming."

“Hey, I just finished building a small wooden Kayak, let’s float a stretch of the Bearcamp before dark. We can put in at the south end of White Lake and park another vehicle along Depot Road.”

So that’s what we did, Julie. You found us soaking wet, with a broken wooden Kayak, laughing, waving down the next car we saw for a ride. It was a process of sorts. Another humbling experience for me. (Benjamin chuckles)

Then he challenged my motive... “I did some checking Julie, you are not writing a freelance article for the Epoch Times. This kind of detail isn’t needed for a three column summary. So what gives, are you authoring a book? Or do you have the ‘hots’ for Joseph?”

I responded honestly, “Both, he is the object of my fascination.”

The third Saturday class.

Only when you feel whole can you bring your total presence to the other and respond with spontaneity and love. P

Relationships break not because attraction fades but because we have gotten used to a consciousness that is self obsessed and hence easily moves into disconnection. P

I decided to arrive early that day. I wanted time with Joseph, alone and unpretentious. The quotes were already on the overhead projector, blatantly on the window shade that was pulled down, blocking the view of the pond. Earlier in the week when I saw the soaked river rats, laughing with the broken wooden kayak - paddles waving in the air trying to flag down a ride - I saw Joseph free of all suffering. He was reunited with his old friend. My heart jumped, I saw an attractive young man having fun. When he and Ben figured out how to fasten the kayak to the top of my car, I cared less how wet my seats would get. The smell of the river, the story of hitting a submerged rock, being extracted from the kayak and Ben hanging on not willing to let go was intoxicating. Joseph scrambling to shore, walking Depot Road and finding Ben still holding on the boat, full of water braced against a shoreline rock. Insisting they pull the broken remains ashore. His lips turning blue, the boat breaking in two...the two boys had me shaking my head in disbelief and laughing with them. What made them laugh? Maybe it was

the ridiculousness of desperately hanging onto an object of material insignificance.

Joseph greeted me at the door, I felt nervous and bold at the same time. How will he respond? He set two chairs at the back of the small room. The other chairs had the similar seating arrangement of a circle. I set my bags down wondering who else the other chair was for. Sylvia? Joseph was sitting on a couch, sorting through material for the class. I felt unpretentious and under my breath I said oh F...k. He must have heard for he looked up just as I plopped myself on his lap. Instinctively his hand was gently and lovingly rubbing my back. He read aloud "Only when you feel whole can you bring your total presence to the other and respond with spontaneity and love. P" He looked up at me with a wry smile, are you going to write about a scandal?"

We heard the door knob turn. I quickly got to the other side of the couch, brought my knees to my chest and wrapped my arms around them. Ben entered the cabin. Smiled and said, "how cute, you two look like father and daughter in a serious conversation." He chuckled, then mockingly said, "you know she's writing a book Joseph, about you!"

I could have cried just then, but I was too outraged. These wisened tenured professors probably had several woman younger than me ready to form a relationship out of obsession. It was my turn, "Quote number two, my attraction hasn't faded for you Joseph. The last time I restrained myself from kissing you, seducing you. Why? I was aware of the desire forming out of a craving, that became an obsession. I'm not sure where to go from here. I don't want a relationship that is disconnected from love. That goes for you too Benjamin. You guys are the psychology professors, help me."

I felt bold then, courageous too. I was trembling and felt out of place. Joseph was the first to come to my rescue.

"In our world, all too often it seems like we fall in love with royalty, only to watch in horror as they regress into irritating and boorish creatures who track mud into the house and do not seem to understand a word you're saying!" I'm not sure where that quote came from, it was on this list that I got from one of the promoters of the event. I find it fitting, wouldn't you say so Ben?"

Ben howled, “yes, of course after a very short time you’d realize you misjudged your obsession.”

“So is that your way of giving me empathy?”

“Let’s do a serene mind that we did in one of the classes. We’ll do it out loud, agreed?”

“You two go ahead, this is none of my business. Julie, just know that I am part of your family, or is it wedge? Joseph you’ll have to name our three groups. I going to the pond and be with the loons.” Ben departs, and Joseph looks at me with such loving eyes. He grabs for my bare foot and starts to massage it.

“ ‘This beautiful state of connection is possible for all of us as we make peace with ourselves, our past, and our present. P’ That says it all, doesn’t it Julie? We don’t even have to do the serene meditation with that thought. You know, what’s the emotion you’re feeling right now? You don’t have to tell me, just notice it and make peace with it. Are you in the past that has come and gone? Or are you in the unknown future? Or what is present for you right now?”

I cried then, I felt his love and caring as he gently massaged my feet. The obsession was over. I felt connected to a true friend.

Ben came back into the cabin, “Joseph, there is another wedge on the south side of the pond. Three wedges of loons in one pond how is that possible?”

“Exciting isn’t it? I witnessed it happening all week. The calls and the new male looking for a mate and a female wanting one. The other two males sharing their territory.”

The Saturday family was entering first melody then Ja Dev eventually all of them arriving about the same time. Once everyone was seated Joseph erased the two quotes and started scribbling two new ones. He introduced Ben and I.

“We have two distinguished guest, you all know Benjamin and Julie. They’ll be sitting in, Julie is writing a free lance column and Benjamin is learning a new class structure that he’ll use in the future. If he doesn’t retire to build strong kayaks.”

“Here’s our two quotes to ponder and share how they impact you.”

“Few of us truly make creating a beautiful inner experience a priority in our lives, choosing instead to live as though our career, performance, appearance, status, or financial security is all that matters. K”

“We have the potential to experience extraordinary states of consciousness, to feel connected with others, to feel connected to everything. P”

Joseph starts the class, “Let’s be still for about five minutes. No thoughts if you can manage that, just listen to the stillness.”

It’s a windy day and there are some chimes sending out beautiful tonal sounds. The loons are hooting. You can hear the wind against the outside wall. Finally Joseph has us come back to the present.

Anjali Kuer has the first share, “I live a rather austere life as a Sheik. I can’t say I have a beautiful inner experience. I chose a life of spiritual discipline and I am questioning my path at this point in my life. I feel connected to the people in my sect. I don’t really have any connection with others. My identity, wearing this turban has my internal thought processes projecting what people might think of me. Being in this class with all of you has given me a new perspective and the potential to be part of a new family. I like the reference that we consider our gathering as a family.”

“Thank you Anjali.”

There is a silence as the others contemplate on their current state.

Ja Dev speaks, “Yeah, I have been noticing when I am suffering or when I am in a beautiful state. I understand that it is my choice to either stay in the suffering state or move on from it, not deny the suffering, rather move into what brings me joy, or peace. Become present with a new thought form, maybe even take on a task that requires my full attention my full presence. Later, if the suffering state returns reminding me not to stuff it, then I have the potential to process what was the cause of the suffering. I am learning that it is my inner conflict that causes me to suffer. So I take responsibility for my state of mind. That is my share.”

“I am glad to be in this group, we have a nice cross-section of minorities. Oops, I just identified us as something different. Now I realize that I am identifying as a

minority and trying to include you all as the same just to feel inclusive. Sounds like suffering to me. As a black woman, my first inclination is to use that as an excuse why I can't make creating a beautiful inner experience a priority in my life. It's crazy, I know, so I need to process my ancestral lineage. I know that my father and mother instilled positive energy in my life. I wonder what my grand parents went through, and their parents before them. I know that I have the potential to achieve whatever I want. It's my thoughts that I need to be aware of. Awareness, of the conscious mind is what I need to make as a priority. All the other stuff is past history that I can't change. The history has it's place in this whole process of personal growth. But the awareness of my present moment, that is what I want to work on. I am Alicia, I am Black, I am you and you are me!"

There was a quiet stillness of contemplation that lasted about five minutes. Then Red Feather Hawk shared his wisdom.

"You all share a personal wisdom. I am impressed that you speak truth. Joseph, I want to thank you for choosing to follow the behavior of the Loons. It means a lot to me, for I gather my wisdom from nature that surrounds me. My beautiful life is living in harmony with nature and my surroundings. After my share on Tuesday, I realized how much inner work I need to do in order to get beyond the judgements that I carry deep within. These last several days I did a personal quest in the White Mountains. I saw the war that rages within. I realized if I want to be part of this family, I need to let out a Hoot and join this dance with all of you. Ah Ho."

Melody was last. "Wow, I don't have the years living life that many of you have. Being the youngest, well there's not much that I thought I could share. But these quotes are a pathway of stepping stones if I pay attention to them. So I like the second quote, 'We have the potential to experience extraordinary states of consciousness, to feel connected with others, to feel connected to everything. P' Right now my extraordinary state of consciousness is feeling connected to you all. I'm excited and hope that we can stay together as we go into the second half of this unique class. I have much gratitude for you professor to bring something new into my life. I'm grateful for all of your shares it gives me direction." Melody turned around to face Ben, "I'm grateful for you Benjamin, the other day when you challenged Joseph and how willing you are to stay with us. That meant a lot to me, the willingness not to give in to resisting something new in one's life. Thank you everybody."

"Thanks for showing up, you all had profound shares, they touched me in so many ways. Thank you. We have three separate families. This week a new

family, in Loony terms, wedge, brace or Asylum, entered the pond and was accepted by the other two wedges. I found this to be a synchronous sign of our Tuesday family circle. A gathering of Loons is called a raft. I would like to call our Tuesday gathering a Space For Grace. Let's discuss this on Tuesday when we all meet."

And that ended a day of surprises, truth, and love for me. Before I departed I did ask permission to write this book. Joseph just looked at me and then said, "you don't need to ask for permission. Ben was behind Joseph waiting at the door and he raised his eyebrows with Joseph's blessing. I thanked Joseph, he gave me a weak smile, gave me a hug and walked over to the window lifted the shade and looked at the pond in the direction of the cross. Ben nodded his head as a signal to come. We left the cabin went to my car and before I packed up the car he said, "Joseph is still grieving, you connected with him today in a way that connected him to his past. Julie, forgive me for being so, oh how should I say it..."

"Bluntly honest with your feelings?"

"I'll by that, maybe better yet, for my projections that I place upon you. Your actions and my concern about them brought the friendship I had with Joseph back again. Thank you."

I gave him a quick kiss on the cheek, which startled him. I ducked into my car, almost knocking him over with the car door, looked up with an Oh NO expression. He laughed, waved and headed to his car. In a weird way I had a new friend.

Chapter 8

It was Tuesday again, and I had a strange feeling that something was going to drastically change. I wasn't sure what to expect. When I observed Joseph with eyes fixed on the granite cross I sensed that he was wrapped up in past memories. Maybe he never reached a resolve concerning his relationship with Jeffery and Guinevere. Jeffery Morton committed suicide at the age of fifty. By then Gwen and Joseph's relationship had solidified the split between Jeffery and Gwen. They never officially divorced, it seemed like there was a mutual understanding and acceptance of the direction and new meaning of their friendship. At least on the surface. Jeffery was also a professor and his forte was

psychoanalysis. It was thought that his spiritual seeking took priority over his marriage with Gwen (Guinevere). She turned to Joseph for solace and that is when her bond with Joseph was stronger than with Jeffery. Benjamin who was close to all three of them knew deep down that there was denial of what was taking place. He felt that they seemed to not want to destroy the friendship, which took precedent over all of their inner most suffering.

The desks were already circled. Today Joseph was waiting for us. He sat up on the stage and hadn't put any quotes on the overhead yet. In fact it was turned off. The desks had index cards with our names on them. As we all slowly got seated, the circle was divided into the groups or the "Saturday Families" that we had formed. Once everybody had arrived and the room quieted down Joseph lead us in a Serene Mind meditation, the one that Preethaji did at the event.

"Close your eyes.

Let's take three conscious breaths. A full inhale, fill you diaphragm then your lungs, slowly, and let the exhale be longer than the inhale.

Now what emotion is present right now. Is it grief, regret, or anger or are you grateful, calm, or joyful?

Now follow your thought, are you in the past that has already happened, or are you in the unknown future?

Now visualize a small flame between your eyebrows.

Follow that flame as it travels to the middle of your brain."

There is a long silence, before Joseph says, "keep your eyes closed and just be still for five minutes."

Time passes and we opened our eyes upon Joseph's instruction.

He turns on the overhead and starts writing a quote... "In the enlightened state of consciousness, you wake up from the duality of matter in consciousness, sacred or not sacred, you and the other, divine and human, suffering and pleasure. K"

He brings two chairs into the middle of the circle. "Benjamin are you willing to nurture me through a "Hot Seat" process relative to this quote."

“Yes my friend.” He gets up and goes to a chair. Joseph grabs another chair and places it next to Benjamin. Then he sits across from him.

Benjamin looks up at the quote on the screen. “In the enlightened state of consciousness, you wake up from the duality of matter...” you had quite a choice of words to describe emotions. Let’s start with grief. Were you or are you still feeling grief.”

“Yes. I want to visit the grave site and the male loon will not let me land the boat.”

“Do you grieve because you can’t visit the grave site, or do you grieve for Gwen and Jeff?”

“I regret what happened to our relationship. I am forever angry with God for Gwens debilitating disease. And I blame myself for Jeff’s suicide.”

“If consciousness is a vast collection of thought - anger, blame, grief and regret are part of consciousness, just as joy, gratitude and calm also feeds into consciousness what do you choose.”

“I was aware of choosing the grief, regret and anger.”

“What will you accomplish by visiting the grave site again. Surely you have done that many times. You mentioned blame...that too is part of the collective consciousness. Why are you stuck there Joseph? It’s over, it’s the past there is nothing you can do about it.”

Joseph is crying now, “she didn’t deserve what happened to her! I messed with the energy...”

“OH, bull it was her that came to you. It was Jeff that refused to fulfill her needs...”

Sylvia raises her voice, “stop it Benjamin, that’s enough.”

I was sitting next to Sylvia and gently placed a hand on her arm. I whispered, “it’s alright Sylvia, it’s okay.”

She looked at me shocked that I was okay with the emotional state of Joseph. I whispered again, "It's a process, they are friends from way back. Ben is very familiar with the situation."

Ben continues, "suffering and pleasure...do you regret the pleasure, is that why you are suffering?"

Joseph looks up and opens his eyes, "you saw it back then, while it was happening, our pleasure and the suffering it caused to the three of us." He is sniffing now, and Bertha hands him some Kleenex.

"This quote awakened you, didn't it? You have been in denial for longer than I thought."

"I could not feel compassion in my heart. I showed it on the external, I cared for Gwen when she contracted Lou Gehrig Disease. I refused to acknowledge Jeff's depression. And I cut you off from us."

Red Feather speaks, "Now there are three Loon Wedges and the four directions of a medicine wheel are complete. The cross is in the North where the Loon protects the woman of the north which represents wisdom. The cabin is in the west which represents liberation. Be careful of the Loon in the north, the Loon will defend by pecking at the chest. You know this Joseph. Benjamin has pecked at your chest and opened your heart. Now you can go to your cabin in the west and liberate yourself with a compassionate heart. If you don't it will be broken. Ah-Ho"

Ben stands up and motions for all of us to tighten the circle around Joseph whose head is cast down in an emotion of tears. Penelope starts a chorus of "May the circle be unbroken - bye and bye Lord bye and bye - There's a better home a waiting - In the sky Lord in the sky.

Joseph stands, hugs Ben, looks at all of us and walks out the door. Quietly, very quietly, we put the room back together. I look at Ben, he nods and lips c o f f ee? With raised eyebrows. I nod yes.

We meet at the coffee shop across the street where Joseph always got his morning brew. We are seated with our coffee and Ben opens the conversation, "you are familiar with Gestalt, yes?"

"Yes, I am, I went to a Fritz Pearl training in California."

“When Joseph requested this process today, I realized how the East and West philosophy compliments each other if we are open to it”

“Yes, we have all been processing all this time. I know that I have visited the two states and probably suffering more than not. Now I am starting to learn how to dissolve the suffering without denying that it’s there. You really hit a nerve for many of us when you challenged Joseph’s truth.”

“Well it helps to have been privy to their relationship. You see, what happened between Jeff and Gwen, was that Jeff became so obsessed with his...let’s call it seeking, that physical contact with Gwen ceased. Gwen wanted sex, that was her determining factor to share a deep love with her mate. For her, sex was for pleasure, it was a tantric union when she could feel the other. She didn’t have the capacity to feel another any other way. She had great restrain for many years to not find it elsewhere. Over the course of the relationship with Joseph, Jeff’s best friend, she confided in me asking if it was the right thing to do to approach Joseph. I did not want to interfere in anyway with their relationship. When Joseph and Gwen started the affair well, it reminded me of King Arthur, Guinevere and Lancelot. It is ironic that since class started we formed a circle, like the knights of the round table.” Ben chuckled at this thought.

When he mentioned it I awoke and realized the story and tragedy of Joseph Petra, Phd. was nothing short of a tantalizing script.

Chapter 9

Two years later...

By now Sylvia and Joseph were spending a lot of time with each other. Living together, and in a healthy relationship. However, one day Sylvia confided in me that Joseph still hadn’t let go of his grief from his past. She found him many a day in the Jon boat checking on the Loon families and anchoring near the north end shoreline just staring at the grave site.

I had slowed down on the book wondering if I wanted to publish it. I thought that it might tarnish his image, since I felt that the past was a focal point of the book.

Benjamin and I became very good friends. He helped me with the book writing with many personal antidotes about Joseph's earlier life.

The class, or I should, the family circle stayed in touch and committed to a weekly Space for Grace on zoom. We actually took up the teachings and meditations of the Oneness Movement. Penelope and Melody went to India and attended one of the many events offered at Ekam. We contacted the people that originally promoted the 2023 event with Preethaji to see if there was any chance of a repeat. After all Dartmouth, being a learning center for psychology was the perfect venue.

Johnathan eventually created a corporate workshop that promised to reduce stress by changing one's state.

Rachel and Bertha continued their practices, and introduced new elements into their therapy.

Red Feather Hawk would visit Joseph on a regular basis and observe the Loons.

Ja Dev and Anjali opened up a yoga center practicing Kundalini Yoga and discussing the teachings of Krishnaji and Preethaji.

Alicia created a school program to motivate young youth especially older teens. She utilized many of the videos from Oneness that focused on youth.

Henry, Peter and Ralph continued their education at Dartmouth, to further their careers.

*It was a Saturday, a summer day in June. I was at the Lake having a little picnic and writing a free lance article for a local community news paper. The kind that has community news and a lot of local advertising. The editor liked my column title *It's a Beautiful State in a Beautiful World*. I was just minding my own business when a thought entered my force field. It was a past thought of envy. The time when Ben entered the cabin and said, "isn't that cute father and daughter". When we heard the door nob turn I quickly got off of Joseph's lap and curled my knees to my chest on the other side of the couch. That's when I knew Salvia had the rights to Joseph. I stopped what I was writing and wondered where that thought came from. That incident and those feelings...are they still buried somewhere in my sub conscious mind? Then I started thinking, if*

consciousness is just thought and I am aware of where that thought is coming from then I can choose to explore the thought, dispel it, or let it take control. And if the vast consciousness is a collection of thought from an unlimited source of minds. Then I suppose I am susceptible of picking up any thought that's just kind of floating around in consciousness. I wonder how intuition plays into this scenario. With all of this thinking going on I spontaneously decided to pay Joseph and Sylvia a visit at the cabin. As I approached the cabin I sensed that something was off. There was a car parked along side the road, about a hundred feet from the cabin. It was at the dead end.

I knocked on the door and there is no answer. I was always welcomed by both, Sylvia and Joseph, our relationship was a best friend relationship. So I entered the cabin. The first thing I noticed was a bag of groceries knocked over and spilled on the table and floor. I felt a breeze and saw that the back door to the deck was open and a bundle of clothes lay on it. I walked out to the deck and looked out at the pond. The boat was out there and all I saw was Sylvia's naked body in motion, as if she was sitting on top of... Joseph?"

I picked up the binoculars next to the clothes and saw a limp hand against the top rim of the boat. All I could think of was "you got to be kidding? Their like two young teenagers... then I saw Sylvia's head turn in my direction. She frantically waved at me to come, with a flurry of beckoning waves. I stripped down and started walking into the pond, my toes and feet getting sucked into the murky, muddy bottom. When I was up to my waist I went into a prone position and started swimming. It didn't take long to get to the boat. I dropped my feet and felt bottom. It's a shallow pond and I was at the four foot mark. When I looked into the boat Sylvia had Joseph's shirt ripped open and there were peck marks on his chest. "Sylvia, what..."

"I think he had a stroke. I don't know how long he's been laying here. He is breathing and has a pulse. I don't know what to do. Should I prop him up, shake him until he comes too? What should we do?"

"I'm not sure, I'll row us to the cabin. Then we can call 911."

As I was getting into the boat my eye caught a figure standing next to the cross. It was Red Feather.

I started rowing and before we got to the cabin Joseph opened his eyes and in a slow drawl asked, "what happened?"

The right side of his mouth drooped. His voice was slurred. Sylvia responded, "You may have had a stroke, we are going back to the cabin."

There was a tremolo sound from a loon, a warning that a boat or intruder was approaching. I saw Red Feather turn and disappear into the woods.

We got to the small dock at the cabin and gently pulled Joseph out of the boat onto the dock. He sat up and made an effort to communicate. "I, I saw Jeff, he regrets not... regrets not giving Gwen what she, she... wanted. He forgave me, ee."

"Okay Joseph, no more talking we are getting you inside." We put his arm around each of our shoulders and slowly stood. We felt him using his legs to stand. What a relief.

When we got inside the front door was open and two EMT's were entering. What came to me was Red Feather's prediction. Did he know that Joseph was going to be attacked. It was his warning two years ago, be cautious of the loon that protects the woman of the north.

It was three years to the date that Joseph finally passed away. Sylvia still stayed with him until his last days. She was his loyal caregiver and confidant. They spent time musing about the mysteries of the universe and its laws. Psychology as Joseph knew it wasn't on his radar anymore. They shared the quotes over and over getting fresh insights and loving each other more than ever before. Sylvia continued to age in grace. On March 25th, 2030 Professor Joseph D. Petra PhD. was cremated and the urn of ashes was buried between Jeffery Morton and Guinevere Smith. There was fifteen of us that showed up, in kayaks, Jon boats, and paddle boards. The Loons circled us and gave us their music and dance. The male who guarded the grave site stood by, peacefully. It knew that Joseph, Jeff and Guinevere finally came to a resolve. Red Feather Hawk was the ceremonial host.

We still hold Saturday class at the cabin, and continue with our space for grace. New people show up once in awhile and know that there is special connection happening. Benjamin is retired and our friendship continues, he is looking for a publisher for this manuscript.

Always Love...

Apendix

Dartmouth November 7, 2023

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"Conscious Living" Event to Feature Renowned Philosopher Sri Preethaji



Sri Preethaji shares insights into consciousness and spiritual tools for today's challenges and issues.



Meditation with Sri Preethaji brings experiences of deep calm and oneness.



Sri Preethaji gives a sacred transmission of energy for spiritual growth and higher consciousness.

Living with happiness, peace, and belonging no matter what life brings.

We must learn to master our inner world.”

— Sri Preethaji

NEW YORK, NEW YORK, US, November 1, 2023 /[EINPresswire.com](https://einpresswire.com/)/ -- Ekam's USA-Canada [Conscious Living Tour](#) with renowned transformational leader Sri Preethaji, is set to captivate audiences in five North American cities:

- Toronto, Ontario – Nov 5, 2023, University of Toronto
- New York, New York – Nov 6, 2023, Scheuer Auditorium
- Hanover, New Hampshire – Nov 7, 2023, Dartmouth College
- Miami, Florida – Nov 14, 2023, Faena Hotel
- Jupiter, Florida – Nov 16, 2023, Unity of Jupiter

Conscious Living means to become aware of one's own state of consciousness and be able to choose serenity even when facing life's challenges or pressures. The event is designed to provide attendees with insights into becoming an observer of consciousness with the capacity to shift inner states of being.

Unlocking a Life of Fulfillment and Harmony

Conscious Living offers keys to quality of life. Sri Preethaji's teachings emphasize that human experiences are rooted in either a suffering state or a beautiful state, with no intermediary. The choice of state significantly impacts one's life experience, influencing decisions, choices, actions, and subsequent consequences. Sri Preethaji eloquently states, "It's our passion to help individuals to step out of all that is holding them back, to step into beautiful states, to have powerful states of expansion embedded in their consciousness so that they can be a light."

The Conscious Living Experience

The event comprises three main components:

1. Wisdom Talk: insights into consciousness and spiritual tools for today's challenges and issues.
2. Meditation: dynamic group meditation with shared intentions and inner connections.
3. Deeksha: sacred transmission of energy for spiritual growth and higher consciousness.

Lea Flocchini, a participant in a previous workshop, attests to the transformative power of Conscious Living, stating, "The more you practice Conscious Living, the more you hardwire your brain to better handle daily stressors. And the result is more happiness, peace, and belonging, no matter what life throws our way."

Praise for Sri Preethaji's Teachings

Usher, the multitalented Singer, Songwriter, Dancer, and Actor, attests to the life-altering impact of Sri Preethaji's teachings, emphasizing, "Discovering the practice of living in a beautiful state through Sri Preethaji and Sri Krishnaji has been a true game-changer in my life."

Arianna Huffington, Founder of HuffPost and Thrive, applauds Sri Preethaji's contributions, stating, "Sri Preethaji and Sri Krishnaji channel ancient wisdom into modern truths, guiding us to let go of burdens and forge genuine connections within ourselves and with others."

Entry Into Conscious Living

This workshop is tailored for both newcomers to spiritual practices and seasoned practitioners. This event promises not only inspiration and transformation but a profound shift towards a life of grace and fulfillment.

[For tickets and further information, visit EkamUSACanada.org.](http://EkamUSACanada.org)

About Sri Preethaji

Sri Preethaji is a philosopher and modern-day sage, co-founder of Ekam and co-author of The Four Sacred Secrets. Named by Times of India as one of the most impactful spiritual leaders of our time, Sri Preethaji was chosen by the Indian Government to address the nation at this year's India Economic Conclave. Her wisdom converges the worldly and the spiritual, the scientific and transcendental.

About Ekam

[Ekam World Center for Enlightenment](http://EkamWorldCenterforEnlightenment) is a sanctuary for seekers worldwide, offering a space of profound transformation, introspection, and connection. Sri Preethaji and Sri Krishnaji lead millions on profound journeys into enlightenment, helping individuals find healing, joy, peace, and purpose. Ekam offers a variety of transformative experiences in India, throughout the world, and online.

P K Quotes

When you are awakened, all sentient beings have become the various organs of your body. You are no longer taking care of the other but a part of yourself, hence you awaken to a tremendous passion to liberate all humanity from suffering. K

Behind war or peace, addictions or social harmony, persistence or failure, kindness or cruelty, cooperation or coercive politics, and, finally, happy children or a generation that is troubled, there is either a suffering state or a beautiful state. P

If we can sit quietly with the trees, the Earth and the waters with our hearts awake, we will become part of the sacredness of nature. P

How can you act right when you are in conflict? DISSOLVE INNER CONFLICT and the course of RIGHT ACTION will emerge by itself. K

Only when you awaken to the magnificent state of connection you experience the sacredness of life. You are truly living. P

Your body is one of the most magnificent expressions of universal intelligence. It is designed to experience great love with compassion and great bliss. K

Enlightenment is a state of supreme efficiency K

Ekam is created to awaken you to the power of consciousness for you to fulfill your heartfelt intentions. P & K

You cannot bless from your divided mind, blessings can only happen from a unified consciousness. P

Forgiveness is not weakness it is intelligence. It is a State of mind that permits freedom happiness and love in relationships. P

What makes you choose how you respond to Life? Your state of being. P

If you are unable to connect with yourself, you will never connect with another. K

Every moment in our lives, we are either living in suffering state or a no suffering state. K

Did you know? Contrary to the saying, 'actions speak louder than words,' it's your inner state, your inner experience, that speaks loudest. P & K

Why do we fear to see the truth about ourselves even though no one else will know about it? P

The object of your obsession does not matter. All obsession is suffering, it keeps you away from loving and living. K

One human aspiration that remains unchanged and continues to flourish, is the desire for enlightenment. P

Enlightenment is no new invention; it is the longest celebrating human experience. K

Quick to take defense we become engaged in a mission of self-defense. We become incapable of dealing with the real situation in ways that create greater happiness and well-being for all. P

RELATIONSHIPS

When we live life from a beautiful state of love and connection, not only will we attract the right people, we will keep them for life. P

What we are setting out to discover is a state of love that has the sublime potential to transform every relationship. P

Such love arises not because two people share the same taste, passions, or interests. It happens when two people awaken to the beautiful state of connection. P

Such a state of connection that is shared, free of all expectation, is the elixir of life. It is the silent power that helps us navigate the most pressing of challenges and conquer them. P

This shared commitment to our mutual evolution is essential to the thriving of an intimate relationship. P

It's only when you embrace yourself entirely that you can truly accept another and feel accepted by the other. P

Only if you are free of the shame of your past can you feel comfortable with the other. P

Only when you are at peace with your present can you feel the others respect for you. P

Only when you feel whole can you bring your total presence to the other and respond with spontaneity and love. P

Relationships break not because attraction fades but because we have gotten used to a consciousness that is self obsessed and hence easily moves into disconnection. P

Taking a relationship beyond attraction to enduring love and connection is only possible through a transformation in our consciousness from separation to connection. P

When we can break free of our habitual self preoccupation, we will awaken to the power of an “other – centric “consciousness. P

Connection is the elixir on which our very brains survive. P

Without the beautiful states of love and connection nourishing our souls, our lives are desolate. P

If we do not awaken to the beautiful state of connection we cannot experience lasting love. P

In our world, all too often it seems like we fall in love with royalty, only to watch in horror as they regress into irritating and boorish creatures who track mud into the house and do not seem to understand a word you’re saying! PK

BEAUTIFUL STATE

This beautiful state of connection is possible for all of us as we make peace with ourselves, our past, and our present. P

We can and must break free from the stranglehold of self obsession and live life in a beautiful state. P

This absolute disregard for being and an obsession with doing causes an acute imbalance in the way we live and pulls us down into a deep vortex of unforeseen obstacles. K

Few of us truly make creating a beautiful inner experience a priority in our lives, choosing instead to live as though our career, performance, appearance, status, or financial security is all that matters. K

Forgiveness

Forgiveness is about setting yourself free of all that is hurting you. K

Let us be gentle with ourselves when the suffering states arise, when we feel stressed or lonely, and we don’t want to let go of our hurt. K

We have the potential to experience extraordinary states of consciousness, to feel connected with others, to feel connected to everything. P

Rapture, bliss, universal love, peace, equanimity, fear – these are transcendental states that do not last for prolonged periods. K

Enlightened states are known to leave a permanent imprint in human consciousness. K

When we go beyond I – consciousness and explore the deep plains of One-consciousness, we are like adventurers exploring the beauty of the deep sea's. K

In the enlightened state of consciousness, you wake up from the duality of matter in consciousness, sacred and un-sacred, you and the other, divine and human, suffering and pleasure. K

If you are in a beautiful state, a state of love, compassion, joy, or serenity, there is a field that gets generated around you. K

Depending on our state of consciousness, each one of us generates a field around us. K

If you are in a beautiful state, a state of love, compassion, joy, or serenity, there is a field that gets generated around you. K

When seekers enter the Limitless Field, their neural structures and neural chemistry are affected and they awaken to powerful states of consciousness. K

The Limitless Field is a space of no effort; it is a realm of happening. K

Pause, inquire, observe. Know your truth. For truth alone can set you free. K

If our mind is preoccupied with a promised here after, are we living at all? K

If life were like a game, what would you do when the rules change? Will you quit, or will you have fun? K

Have you made the game of life all about winning and losing? Or is it about paying attention and enjoying every move? K

Should we rely on psychics to know our future when in awareness we can be the game changers? K

What does it matter who hurt you? Is it not you who has to set yourself free? K

How would life be if instead of spending our lives trying to change the other we learned the art of setting ourselves free? K

Have you taken time to observe you're in your state of being? Do you know what makes you unhappy and what makes you joyful? K

If your thinking is old, how can you have a new experience of life? K

Do you realize that the little plant outside your window is breathing for you every moment of her existence? K

CONNECTION

All living beings are related, bonded and tied together to all life by their very breath. P

While we may be quick to understand the problem, have we taken the time to understand our self as well as the other? P

Do you keep yourself and the other in prisons with your ideas of love? Or have you actually learned the art of connection? P

When we reflect on the beautiful moments brought into our life by another, we become sensitive to love. P

When you nurture a spiritual vision for the people you work with, you feel inseparable from them. P

To live with a sense of being connected one needs to move away from self-absorption towards connection. P

Your presence to the others sadness and joy is the most nourishing gift you can bring them. P

In the enlightened state of consciousness, you wake up from the duality of matter and consciousness, sacred and unsacred, you and the other, the divine and human, suffering and pleasure. K

We advocate for consciousness approach to creating abundance – a step away from the destructive states that hold us back from manifesting our dreams in a deep towards a consciousness that is wildly creative and fully awake. K

As our brains, bodies, and consciousness go through a transformation, even if suffering does arise, we can quickly dissolve it and return to a beautiful state. K



When the Time Com

This past Christmas Day, one of our residents passed away.

There is no perfect way to speak about death. No phrasing that makes it easy. Yet moments like this have a way of stilling the room. They interrupt our routines and ask us to pay attention, not only to the life that has ended, but also to what life itself may be quietly preparing us for.

In much of modern culture, death is treated as something separate from life. Something to avoid, delay, or hand off to professionals. But the truth is simpler and harder to face:

How we die is shaped, in many ways, by how we live.

Preparing for death is not morbid. It is not pessimistic. It is one of the most responsible and loving acts we can engage in, both for ourselves and for those we will one day leave behind. Preparation is not about predicting an end date. It is about living in a state of completion rather than postponement.

It means tending to unfinished places while there is still time.

There are questions worth sitting with—slowly, honestly, without rushing to tidy answers.

Am I living in alignment with what truly matters to me? Not what once mattered. Not what I was told should matter. But what matters *now*? When titles, roles, and expectations fall away, what remains? Our daily choices quietly answer this question whether we acknowledge it or not.

Have I said what needs to be said?

Unspoken words have weight. Gratitude left unexpressed. Apologies delayed. Love assumed but never voiced. Preparing for death often means lightening that load—speaking plainly, kindly, and while there is still time to be heard.

Have I made peace where peace is possible? Not every relationship can be repaired. But many can be softened. Peace does not require agreement or reconciliation. Sometimes it simply means releasing resentment, letting go of old battles, and choosing not to carry them forward.

Am I at peace with myself? This may be the hardest question of all. It asks for honesty without judgment. To forgive ourselves for what we didn't know at the time. To recognize growth. To accept that perfection was never the assignment.

Preparing for death also means preparing those we leave behind. Yes, this includes practical matters, but it also includes emotional clarity. When our wishes are known, when our values have been spoken aloud, when affairs are in order, we ease the burden on others during a time when they are most vulnerable.

For those who cared for the resident who passed—staff, friends, neighbors—this loss may touch places you didn't expect. Care-giving creates bonds built through presence, routine, and quiet attention. When that bond ends, something real is lost.

Grief may arrive as sadness, fatigue, distraction, irritability, or a sense of emp-

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ness. It may come and go. It may surprise you. None of this means something is wrong.

Grief is not a problem to fix. It is a process to be honored.

And if this passing stirs thoughts of your own mortality, that is not a failure of strength. That is awareness.

Across cultures and throughout history, many have held a different understanding of death—not as an end, but as a continuation. Not a stopping point, but a crossing. A doorway rather than a wall.

From the moment we are born, we are moving, learning, shedding, adapting, becoming... It is not unreasonable to consider that this movement does not abruptly cease but simply changes form.

Seen this way, death becomes less something to fear and more a transition into the unknown, and the unknown is where every great adventure begins.

None of us feared our first breath, though it was the greatest transition of our lives. We did not know what awaited us—yet here we are.

Perhaps the same is true at the end.

When death is viewed not as an enemy, but as a continuation, something softens. Fear loosens its grip. Life becomes more deliberate. Time becomes



more precious—not because it is scarce, but because it is meaningful.

We cannot control when our time will come. But we can choose how prepared we are when it does.

Sometimes the greatest preparation is simply living in a way that leaves less undone—lighter, clearer, and more at peace as we approach the doorway.

And perhaps, when the time comes, it is not an ending we step into... but a new adventure, already familiar in ways we can't yet name.

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Questions? Comments? I appreciate both. garrick@parkcountyseniorcenter.org (406) 333-2276 or AgelessWellness.net

"Truth spoken with care is the highest form of service."

