

The Fiery Trail to Walking in Prayer: *Following Your Personal Spiritual Experiences*

A Spiritual Teaching Memoir

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Preface

If you haven't reflected upon it, you haven't done it
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Reflecting upon one's life is a challenging task. Even though I have participated in countless hours of personal therapy, I have discovered as I write this book, that there are areas of my life I want to avoid thinking about or even to skip over completely. It is much easier for me to jump into the abstract, the theoretical. Reflection involves grieving. Grieving hurts. And yet, it transforms.

For example, I have been working on this manuscript for over a year and yet have managed to avoid reading the personal journals I have packed away for many years. Today, I decided to get them out. I feel the fear in my stomach. Even some cramping. What am I afraid of? I have spent more than a year remembering, embodying and writing the pain and suffering in my life. Maybe I am afraid that how I have remembered my life is a little off. Maybe I have deceived myself somehow, in certain memories. I don't want to read the journals, but here I go. I am definitely nauseated. I will let you know what I discover.

Although I had been thinking about writing something since retiring from my psychology practice, after reading my journals, it seems, to my surprise, that I have been thinking about writing a book for a much longer time. I am sure I lost that purpose in a brain fog after my daughter was killed in a car accident in June of 1999. However, after I retired recently, I was thinking about writing again. Perhaps telling my story may be of some service.

I began this book in earnest just after a recent encounter in a nearby park with Charles. I was throwing the ball in the park for Star, my black Labrador Retriever, when an older man in light colored khakis, a safari hat and glasses, walked over toward me and from across the chain link fence he announced,

“You have a lot of light, L-I-G-H-T.” he spells it out for me.

“What do you do?”

“Psychologist”, I responded somewhat taken aback.

“I thought it was something like that,” he noted, “People come to you.”

I asked if he was some kind of a psychic. “No, I just do what you do.”

“A counselor?” I ask.

“Something like that,” he replied enigmatically, “Do you work around here?”

“Retired. Maybe I’ll write .. “

Charles responds, “You should write about your life, not all that intellectual stuff. You have learned a lot.”

Then he inquired if I was married and I thought to myself, “red flag”.

“Not for over 40 years,” I quip as I bend down to pick up Star’s ball.

He turned and walked away.

And the old king said “Follow the omens”.

I understand this encounter with Charles to be a lightly veiled guidance from a non-physical realm, intervening in my embodied reality. These spiritual interventions have presented in many

Often, these inter-realm involvements are not as sweet or clear and fascinating as my encounter with Charles. Sometimes these extraordinary occasions are only confusing, but they can be terrifying or lead me on a painful journey into a spiritual crucible. If I am brave enough to engage with it, I come out stronger, wiser, and more true.

Often when I have bullied myself into an experience I thought I wanted or needed, dodging the nagging, but faint, feelings that “this is not for you”, it has not turned out well for me and often not for others. Somewhere deep inside me I knew I was off track, but with some creative cognitive gymnastics, I could ignore the warning signs. Following my spiritual guidance can lead me into a painful journey as well, but somehow in the end, I know I am changed for the better.