

Sailing in the Fog



On a bright, sunny day you can set your course on a landfall five miles away from you and sail right to it. But in the fog, you make your way by paying close attention to all the things immediately around you: the deep roll of the sea swells as you enter open ocean, the pungent scent of spruce boughs, or the livelier tempo of the waves as you approach land. You find your way by being sensitively and sensuously connected to exactly where you are, by letting "here" reach out and lead you. You will not learn that in the navigation courses, of course. But it is part of the local knowledge that all the fishermen and natives use to steer by. You know you belong to a place when you can find your way home by feel.

All in all, this little metaphor is a pretty good analogy of how these two levels of awareness actually work. If egoic thinking is like sailing by reference to where you are not—by what is out there and up ahead—spiritual awareness is like sailing by reference to where you are. It is a way of "thinking" at a much more visceral level of yourself-responding to subtle intimations of presence too delicate to pick up at your normal level of awareness, but which emerge like a sea swell from the ground of your being once you relax and allow yourself to belong deeply to the picture.

... [A]wareness seems to be given to us in order to hone in on and not lose touch with that "point or spark of pure truth" at the core of our being, from which both the true compass track of our life and our existential conviction of belonging emanate.... And as we learn gradually to trust it and let it draw us along, we discover that those core fears of the egoic level—that something terrible can happen to us, that we can fall out of God or suffer irreparable harm—do not compute in the deeper waters of our being.

~Cynthia Bourgeault, *Mystical Hope: Trusting in the Mercy of God*. Boston, MA: Cowley Publications, 2001.