

June 25 Becoming: Fruity

Galatians 5:22-23, 25

The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against such things. ... If we live by the Spirit, let us also be guided by the Spirit.

The Message:

But what happens when we live God's way? God brings gifts into our lives, much the same way that fruit appears in an orchard—things like affection for others, exuberance about life, serenity. We develop a willingness to stick with things, a sense of compassion in the heart, and a conviction that a basic holiness permeates things and people. We find ourselves involved in loyal commitments, not needing to force our way in life, able to marshal and direct our energies wisely. Legalism is helpless in bringing this about; it only gets in the way. ... Since this is the kind of life we have chosen, the life of the Spirit, let us make sure that we do not just hold it as an idea in our heads or a sentiment in our hearts, but work out its implications in every detail of our lives.

July 2 Becoming: Renovators

Isabel Wilkerson, *Caste*

Not one of us was here when this house was built. Our immediate ancestors may have had nothing to do with it, but here we are, the current occupants of a property with stress cracks and bowed walls and fissures built into the foundation. We are the heirs to whatever is right or wrong with it. We did not erect the uneven pillars or joists, but they are ours to deal with now. And any further deterioration is, in fact, on our hands.

Isaiah 58:6-12 (The Message)

This is the kind of fast day I'm after: to break the chains of injustice, get rid of exploitation in the workplace, free the oppressed, cancel debts. What I'm interested in seeing you do is: sharing your food with the hungry, inviting the homeless poor into your homes, putting clothes on the shivering ill-clad, being available to your own families. ... "If you get rid of unfair practices, quit blaming victims, quit gossiping about other people's sins, If you are generous with the hungry and start giving yourselves to the down-and-out, Your lives will begin to glow in the darkness, your shadowed lives will be bathed in sunlight. I will always show you where to go. I'll give you a full life in the emptiest of places— firm muscles, strong bones. You'll be like a well-watered garden, a gurgling spring that never runs dry. You'll use the old rubble of past lives to build anew, rebuild the foundations from out of your past. You'll be known as those who can fix anything, restore old ruins, rebuild and renovate, make the community livable again.

July 9 Becoming: The Living Journey

The Real Work by Wendell Berry

It may be that when we no longer know what to do
we have come to our real work,
and that when we no longer know which way to go
we have come to our real journey.

The mind that is not baffled is not employed.
The impeded stream is the one that sings.

Black Elk

Everything the power of the World does is in a circle. The Sky is round, and I have heard that the Earth is round like a ball, and so are all the stars. The Wind, in its greatest power, whirls. Birds make their nest in circles, for theirs is the same religion as ours. The sun comes forth, and goes down again in a circle. The moon does the same, and both are round.

Even the seasons form a great circle, in their changing, and always come back again to where they were. The life of a man is a circle from childhood to childhood and so it is in everything where power moves. Our teepees were round like the nest of birds, and these were always set in a circle, the nation's hoop, a nest of many nests where the great spirit meant for us to hatch our children.

Richard Bach

In order to live free and happily, you must sacrifice boredom. It is not always an easy sacrifice.

July 16 Becoming: Embodied

Ranier Marie Rilke:

God speaks to each of us as he makes us,
Then walks with us silently out of the night.

These are the words we dimly hear:

You, sent out beyond your recall,
Go to the limits of your longing.
Embody me.

Flare up like flame
And make big shadows I can move in.

Let everything happen to you: beauty and terror.
Just keep going. No feeling is final.
Don't let yourself lose me.

Nearby is the country they call life.
You will know it by its seriousness.

Give me your hand.

Gen. 1:26-27

Then God said, "Let us make humans in our image, according to our likeness, and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over the cattle and over all the wild animals of the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth." So God created humans in their image, in the image of God they created them; male and female they created them.

July 23 Becoming: Open

Dale Allen Hoffman, *Echoes of an Ancient Dream: Aramaic Toning on the Path of Light*

I very clearly see, much like Yeshua, that true life comes not simply from what is clearly "known", but rather maybe even more so from the Great Mystery, from the vast expanse of non-knowing, from the clear, pure depth of what we do NOT know. We must remain open to those eternal forces which do not fit within our limited idea of five senses of taste, touch, smell, sight and hearing. The echoing voice of eternity is not heard with the ear but rather felt within the heart.

Kahlil Gibran

What is prayer but the expansion of yourself into the living ether?
And if it is for your comfort to pour your darkness into space,
it is also your delight to pour forth the dawning of your heart.
When you pray, you rise to meet in the air those who are praying at that very hour,
and whom, save in prayer, you may not meet.
Therefore let your visit to that temple invisible be for naught but ecstasy and sweet communion.
For if you should enter into that temple for no other reason than asking, you shall not receive.
And if you should enter into it to humble yourself, you shall not be lifted.
Or even if you should enter into it to beg for the good of others, you shall not be heard.
It is enough that you enter into the temple invisible.
I cannot teach you how to pray in words.
God listens not to your words, save when He himself utters them through your lips.

July 30 Becoming: Fecund

2 Corinthians 9:6-8

The point is this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each one must give as they have decided in their heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work.

Myrtle Fillmore:

When we develop our soul and express its talents and capabilities in loving service to God and humankind, our temporal needs will be supplied in bountiful measure. We have access to the realm of rich ideas; we enrich our consciousness by incorporating these rich ideas into it. A rich consciousness always demonstrates prosperity.

"The kingdom of God is in the midst of you" (Lk. 17:21). Jesus said, "Seek first God's kingdom ... and all these things shall be yours as well" (Mt. 6:33). This means that we are to find the wealth of capabilities and spiritual resources within us, and bring them into expression. When we develop the power to accomplish things and the qualities that we need in order to accomplish them, success is assured. ...

Sometimes we begin at the wrong end of the prosperity line, and our methods need changing. Perhaps we try to accumulate money to meet our temporal needs without first laying hold of the equivalent of money on the inner planes of consciousness. This inner equivalent consists of our rich ideas, our innate capabilities and resources of Spirit. ... The supply is a gift of God and is ours because it is a part of God's plan. We are to accept it in faith as such. Expect it to come, and it will.

August 6 Becoming: To Become or Not to Become

Dainin Katagiri Roshi. Each Moment is the Universe

... a being is neither being nor nonbeing, because nothing exists constantly. Everything is a transient form of being that is constantly becoming. A being is an event in time and space. All beings interconnect with each other... then, according to causes and conditions something happens and many elements come together to form a being.

John Haspel

Becoming" points to the potential inherent in each moment. Each moment holds the potential to continue ignorance and become continually subject to stress, or to become awakened. Becoming can refer to giving birth to another moment rooted in ignorance giving rise to further confusion, deluded thinking, and suffering, giving rise to further becoming a "self" prone to suffering. Consciousness rooted in ignorance reinforces deluded thinking unless the ongoing process of becoming is interrupted. Consciousness rooted in ignorance "conditions" thinking in such a way that it continually either ignores or "embraces" suffering. Rooted in ignorance, we misunderstand 'self' and become other than 'self.'

August 13 Becoming: Lovely

St. Francis and the Sow by Galway Kinnell

The bud
stands for all things,
even for those things that don't flower,
for everything flowers, from within, of self-blessing;
though sometimes it is necessary
to reteach a thing its loveliness,
to put a hand on its brow
of the flower
and retell it in words and in touch
it is lovely
until it flowers again from within, of self-blessing;
as Saint Francis
put his hand on the creased forehead
of the sow, and told her in words and in touch
blessings of earth on the sow, and the sow
began remembering all down her thick length,
from the earthen snout all the way
through the fodder and slops to the spiritual curl of the tail,
from the hard spininess spiked out from the spine
down through the great broken heart
to the sheer blue milken dreaminess spurting and shuddering
from the fourteen teats into the fourteen mouths sucking and blowing beneath them:
the long, perfect loveliness of sow.

Psalm 139: 13-15

For you created my inmost being;

you knit me together in my mother's womb.
I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made;
your works are wonderful,
I know that full well.
My frame was not hidden from you
when I was made in the secret place,
when I was woven together in the depths of the earth.

August 20 Becoming: Named

Mark 14:3-9

While he was at Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, as he sat at the table, a woman came with an alabaster jar of very costly ointment of nard, and she broke open the jar and poured the ointment on his head. But some were there who said to one another in anger, "Why was the ointment wasted in this way? For this ointment could have been sold for more than three hundred denarii and the money given to the poor." And they scolded her. But Jesus said, "Let her alone; why do you trouble her? She has performed a good service for me. For you always have the poor with you, and you can show kindness to them whenever you wish, but you will not always have me. She has done what she could; she has anointed my body beforehand for its burial. Truly I tell you, wherever the good news is proclaimed in the whole world, what she has done will be told in remembrance of her."

August 27 Becoming: Transparent

Neale Donald Walsch

I've come to believe that total nakedness, that is absolute transparency, that is utter and unfettered and profound visibility, is the only way that we can truly love. Anything less, is self-defense.

Angie Thomas, *The Hate U Give*

Once you've seen how broken someone is, it's like seeing them naked—you can't look at them the same anymore.

Henry David Thoreau

Perfect sincerity and transparency make a great part of beauty, as in dewdrops, lakes, and diamonds.

September 3 Becoming: Connected

The Power of Eight by Lynne McTaggart

Something about the promises we make to each other may carry more weight than the promises we make to ourselves. They give us the courage ... to remove the branches lying across our tracks with greater ease. A statement in the presence of a small group is a contract we make with the universe - to do and be better than we presently are. There is also the power of support and connection, a condition as necessary to the human spirit as oxygen is to the human body. The most fundamental promise we make to each other, the most basic of our social contracts, is to support each other through adversity. *I will be your witness*. At every point of our lives we need to know that somewhere out there, somebody's got our back, and this knowledge becomes a larger certainty in our lives when a group of strangers connect together to heal us.

Hebrews 10:24-25

And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

September 10 Becoming: The One Behind the Two

Eckhart Tolle, *A New Earth*

"When forms around you die or death approaches, your sense of Beingness, of I Am, is freed from its engagement with form: Spirit is released from its imprisonment in matter. You realize your essential identity as formless. You realize your identity as consciousness itself rather than what consciousness had identified with. That's the peace of God. The ultimate truth of who you are is not I am this or I am that, but I Am. The recognition of the impermanence of all forms awakens you to the dimension of the formless within yourself, that which is beyond death."

Steven Levine

"If our only spiritual practice were to live as though we were already dead, relating to all we meet, to all we do, as though it were our final moments in the world, what time would there be for old games or falsehoods or posturing? If we lived our life as though we were already dead, how much time would there be for self-protection and the re-creation of ancient mirages? Only love would be appropriate, only the truth."

September 17 Becoming: Kind

Kindness by Naomi Shihab Nye

Before you know what kindness really is
you must lose things,
feel the future dissolve in a moment
like salt in a weakened broth.
What you held in your hand,
what you counted and carefully saved,
all this must go so you know
how desolate the landscape can be
between the regions of kindness.
How you ride and ride
thinking the bus will never stop,
the passengers eating maize and chicken
will stare out the window forever.

Before you learn the tender gravity of kindness
you must travel where the Indian in a white poncho
lies dead by the side of the road.
You must see how this could be you,
how he too was someone
who journeyed through the night with plans
and the simple breath that kept him alive.

Before you know kindness as the deepest thing inside,
you must know sorrow as the other deepest thing.

You must wake up with sorrow.
You must speak to it till your voice
catches the thread of all sorrows
and you see the size of the cloth.
Then it is only kindness that makes sense anymore,
only kindness that ties your shoes
and sends you out into the day to gaze at bread,
only kindness that raises its head
from the crowd of the world to say
It is I you have been looking for,
and then goes with you everywhere
like a shadow or a friend.