

January 2010

WHAT'S OLD, WHAT'S NEW: BOOKS & FILMS WORTH KNOWING

THE PARADIGM SHIFT, SYNCHRONICITY & CALLED TO BE HUMAN

*"and I want him to know that subtle, sneaky, important reason  
why he was born a human being and not a chair."*

Murray's comment about his nephew in A THOUSAND CLOWNS

In my last article I focused on the big picture--the paradigm shift that many see as necessary and as actually coming in our world-view and in the world's perception of persons with disabilities, and especially with autism. Now I would like to bring our attention closer to home to look at what is the implication of such a global shift for us as individuals. What choices do we have and what attitudes will best guide us as individuals facing the unknown and ever changing future.

Several quotations have guided (continue to guide) my thinking over the years and provide me with reminders to guide me as I approach the days ahead.

*"It is not the easy or convenient life for which I search,  
but rather life lived to the edge of all my possibilities."  
m.a.hersy*

*"Expect all things and be satisfied  
if three or two or even one gets fulfilled."  
Corita Kent*

*"The one remaining freedom we have as human beings is to choose the attitude  
we will take toward any given set of circumstances that we are given."  
Victor Frankle*

*"One specific hypothesis that is worth investigating is whether the lives  
of these individuals who can be classified as 'creative persons' show  
a particular tendency toward the occurrence of synchronistic events."  
Ira Progoff*

Indeed the experience of synchronicity (the surprising occurrence of seemingly unrelated events) seems to indicate that these persons are certainly following the highest path of what it means to be human. Or as Frederick Buechner said, to be fully human "is where your deep gladness and the world's deep hunger meet." I believe that we are all called to be fully human, to be the highest and best version of what it means to be a human being and not "a chair" or a robot. Such a vision is to embody the freedom of choices to create and then accept our destiny in relation to the other human beings we encounter each and every day. Carl Jung said that when we experience a synchronicity filled life, we are on the right path to fulfillment and competence.

I personally, as an educator, have accepted my calling (my vocation) to be an aqueduct. I am not the water nor the source of the water, but I see myself as the instrument through which the life giving water flows to others across many different disciplines. I have come to this understanding by looking back over my life where I have said with certainty at least six times that I know I did not want to do something only to find myself called to do that very thing. One of these areas that I knew I did not want to be involved with was "the handicapped or the retarded," not that someone else shouldn't be involved, but that certainly wasn't me. However, in

1976, I saw a 10 minute film, produced by the BBC about a severely handicapped artist, Richard Wawro of Edinburgh, Scotland, and my life was dramatically changed. As they say, "the rest is history."

Soren Kirkegaard observed, "We live our lives forwards, but we can only understand them backward." Or as Gene Marshall said in his poem "The Moment of Decision"

*God waits to decide what the future will be  
until you decide who you will be now.*

Thus as Michael Jenkins says in CALLED TO BE HUMAN

*Life itself... is simply given to you  
and what you choose to do with (it) is entirely up to you.*

Therefore, to see yourself as called, not fated, to be chosen and selected means to see yourself as having been given the opportunity to accept the circumstances as a special invitation to construct a life of joy and love and service regardless of what these circumstances might be.

I would like to invite you to participate in an exercise using the following poem I wrote:

#### To Experience Synchronicity

Surround yourself with:

Art  
Beauty  
Books  
Cards  
Films  
Magazines  
Music  
Quotations  
Pictures  
Poetry  
Pottery  
Stones  
Symbols

Remove from your surroundings:

The Garbage  
&

The negative people

When negative thoughts come,  
Focus your thoughts on your Surroundings  
"carve, not crave, a time and place  
for royal, purple dragonflies to rest"  
Continue to look toward the Light  
Live with hope and joy.

"Happiness is where you are & what you want to be."

Now, take each of the words in the list and look at your room or home and write down beside the word what specific things you have chosen to surround yourself with. Add to those things that would remind you of the light. Remove those things that would point you toward the darkness.

Now use your life as a mirror to reflect that light into the dark corners of the world you encounter each day, and you will begin to experience a flood of synchronicities as a result.

Finally, I would like to share a blessing with you that came to me in the form of a card written by Margaret Cessna and presented by Heartbeats (see [www.heartbeatscatalog.org](http://www.heartbeatscatalog.org)). Two parents came to Margaret asking that she write a blessing for their special needs child. After talking with them she wrote the following:

A Blessing for Parents  
of a Special Child

Because your gift of special life  
enriches the universe  
with tenderness  
with honesty  
with grace  
You are blessed

Because you have given this child  
to all of us  
this person who  
knows no threat  
welcomes all  
displays unconditional love  
finds joy with no limit  
You are blessed.

Because you have  
nurtured and protected  
loved and enjoyed  
applauded and encouraged  
your name is written  
in the heavens  
as most special parents  
worthy of God's trust  
worthy of God's love  
deserving of this special child

May you, too, go forth into the days ahead having received the blessing of having been chosen to be the parent or the teacher or the care giver of a special child, and may you choose to accept your calling with courage and patience and determination to be fully human and to enable your child to experience the fullness of being human as well.

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