

## Let The Journey Begin

This Place Where You Are Right Now,  
Hafiz

This place where you are right now  
God circled on a map for you.

Wherever your eyes and arms and heart can move  
against the earth and the sky,

The Beloved has bowed there –  
knowing you were coming.

I could tell you a priceless secret about  
your real worth, dear

But any unkindness to yourself  
any confusion about others,

Will keep one from accepting  
the grace, the love

The sublime freedom  
divine knowledge always offers to you.



## STORY

"The supreme achievement of the self is to find an insight that connects together the events, dreams, and relationships that make up our existence."

Leonard Baillas, Myths, Gods, Heroes, and Saviors

"There's always a story. It's all stories, really. The sun coming up every day is a story. Everything's got a story in it. Change the story, change the world."

Terry Pratchett, A Hat Full of Sky

The first movement on The Journey is pausing to tell/hear "Story" which Abraham Heschel describes as "Carrying for the seed of eternity planted in the soul." When, in the telling/hearing, story breaks through fallow ground of numbing distraction and "rightness" into the light of day, having been blessed with an acknowledgment of its beauty and latent potentiality, the seed of purpose that can bring nourishment to the world begins to grow and ripen.

Beneath or inside the life we lead every day is another life that runs like a subterranean river. Beneath the ordinary world of work, family, ambition, money, pleasures and grief, there is another world to be discovered. There is a more enduring story that runs like a river that is deep and wide and carries with it abundance and healing. Bringing where we are, the soil of our story, the Journey opens us up to this river of life.

One of the most courageous and calming actions we can do to begin to build resilience and responsiveness in a disruptive world is to stand up and share our story and in the sharing begin to show our soul. In the sharing, a light begins to shine on our path from other stories by those who walk the way with us.

Your life story is like an intricate tapestry woven from ancient spools of colorful thread. Each fine thread, spun from star dust, is woven on a cosmic loom which, when the time is just right or 'once upon a time', is fated into the world as you. Shimmering strands of DNA come together in a beautiful and unique masterpiece that contains the Universe's imprint, now incarnate in the jagged edges of family, race and cultural, ready to unfold as your life, your story.

The tapestry that comes into the world as you, though intrinsically beautiful, is far from complete. If you were able to look back at the early version of your life, you might not

be able to recognize yourself. Loose threads dangle in every direction as if waiting for you to pick up the shuttle to pass through the loom of your days to continue the story. Slowly, over time, in spite of many fellow weavers tugging on the loose threads, an image of you begins to take shape.

There comes a time when you stand back from the tapestry, feeling that you may be nearly complete in creating the image of you. Suddenly it seems that, when you weren't looking, some shadowy force (SHADOW) has tugged on the frayed edges of your masterpiece revealing a tangled web and distorted image. All those years spinning yarn from the wool of ambition, weaving a career, borrowing more and more thread from the local thread bank, falling in and out of love, leaves an indelible impression that there's much more to be discovered.

Then you remember that underneath the storied layers of knotted and frayed yarn, there is one golden thread. In order to untangle the web that has become your life, you must follow that golden thread that was secretly woven before the beginning of time and is now fated or concealed within the corporal surfaces of the unlikely narrative of your life. The golden thread now shimmers with a luminescence that leaves your once colorful story faded in the background. This is the golden thread of purpose that when followed will lead to your deepest joy and ultimately to your destiny.

Secretly woven, partially hidden in each of us, perhaps before we are born, is a story. This story holds an orientation and a purpose for each of us and for all of us. Though many feel like we are born with no story, like a blank slate (tabula rosa), written on the essence of each one is a core pattern and vital shape that can be "remembered" and lived into. This story-thread can be sought and found within as well as encountered in the outer world as your story is interwoven with other's. This field guide is like a weaving guide for this next part of your Journey.

I love Mary Oliver's question that touches the age-old human inquiry, "Tell me, what will you do with your one wild and precious life?" "Who am I?" and "For what purpose was I born?" and "What should I do with my life?" The insights, or the way, can be found inside the questions themselves, inside the one asking, and inside the story already being lived. The quest, or journey, begins with your story. My commitment is to be your Anam Cara.

I Give you the end of a golden string;  
Only wind it into a ball,  
It will lead you in at Heaven's gate,  
Built in Jerusalem's wall....  
William Blake



## **Story in Context**

Begin this Journey with whatever part of your story rises in your attention.

Interior:

The success of any intervention is dependent upon the interior state of the intervenor. Is there something moving in me that has my attention?

Interpersonal:

All transformation is relational. What “shimmers” when reflecting on my closest relationships?

Systemic:

We are all connected to groups, communities, organizations that hold possibilities for transformation.

Is there some aspect of my connection to community that I want to explore?

Environmental:

We are not separate from the Earth. What do I notice when I step outside and take a long, loving look at the space we inhabit together?



## **Exploring Story**

We like to say that in the sharing of our story we are “listened into being”. When, in a safe place, we share our joys and fears, our longings and vulnerabilities, the journey of transformation begins.

Questions: Can I describe that part of me that longs to wake up and be heard? Imagine my life-story is a book. What pages or chapters are missing? What is the plot that is unfolding? What remains to be written? Does it sometimes feel like I am living in a trance?

Posture: How do I feel in my body when sharing my story? “In a world that lives like a fist, mercy is no more than waking with your hands open.” Mark Nepo

Conversation: Where and with whom in my everyday life can I share my story and feel heard?

Language: If I could create a “word cloud” of my story what words stand out?

Belief: What BIG beliefs do I tend to hold on to when the going gets tough? Do they serve me well on the path of discovery?

Challenge: Is the story I am living big enough to hold my soul’s longing?

Practices: Journaling, Spiritual Direction, intentional community, learning to “hold the space” for others to share their story.