

six unfoldings of the sacred in everyday life

NOTES ON THE MEANING OF THE SACRED

Dennis Rivers -- September 2016

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Seeds of the divine presence in everyday life.

Divine presence as deeper and more beautiful aliveness rather than more enduring substantiality.

Every good idea can be pushed too far. God as parent can morph into God as cosmic dictator.

The "God is love" idea is deeply radical because love is a process rather than a person or a substance. Processes invite participation in ways that persons and substances do not. The divine dimensions of existence.

Doorways of the sacred in everyday life.

One approach to political cross-training points toward finding value in the lives of people whose values are quite different from my own. I see us all as born yearning to embody the six qualities explored below, even those who seem to be going in the opposite direction right now. Gandhi's vision: embody the virtues you want your opponents to practice.

1. Vitality: *the journey from deadness to aliveness*

Life energy, Chi, prana, Holy Spirit
expressed in breathing, movement, dance,
running, hiking, yoga, sports
expressed in lovemaking, birthing, breast-
feeding, playing with kids
physical vitality -- leaping for joy
emotional vitality -- empathizing with the flow of
experience in the people around me
mental vitality -- wrestling with deep questions,
thinking new thoughts
relational vitality -- nurturing and exploratory
conversations, creative questioning

2. Awareness and Awakeness: *the journey from blindness to vision*

consciousness expansion and focusing,
life becomes more vivid,
becoming more present,
paying deeper attention -- being here,
lowering the noise level in my mind through
meditation, so that I can be more completely
present to what's happening now

3. Love, compassion and empathy: *the journey from isolation to mutual care and nurturing*

feelings of connectedness and oneness, leading to
the desire to be of service
feeling part of something larger than myself,
which calls me to open up
delight in the virtues of the other "how do I love
thee, let me count the ways"
desire to nurture the other
learning to love myself
learning how to forgive others, make amends, ask
for forgiveness and forgive myself

4. Understanding: *the journey from confusion and avoidance to clarity, truth-facing and truth-telling*

seeing how things fit together -- the pattern that
connects
seeing how all things fit together
seeing how I fit together with all things
understanding cause and effect in ways that allow
me to cause more helpful effects
"Consider how the wild flowers grow" (Luke
12:27) opening to the wisdom manifest in
nature
finding the courage to face the truth, and tell the
truth, about my life situation

5. Expression: *the journey from being a passive observer of life to being an active celebrator of life*

feelings of inward overflowing
"make a joyful noise unto the Lord"
works of mercy done with a happy heart
building the world
mending the world
becoming a more exuberant companion to my
fellow wayfarers on the journey of life
music, art, painting, protest, celebration

6. Awe, wonder and the experience of beauty: *the journey from sterile routines to startled delight*

lifts me out of my normal way of seeing the world
I am changed by the experience, it marks a
moment in my life story
Awe, wonder and beauty can call me to play a
larger role in life
Awe, wonder and beauty can cause me to see the
people around me with new eyes
