



Just last week I was driving home on a wet night after having been away for five days. I was low on gas and had taken a wrong turn on a back road out of Watsonville. Eventually (Thank the traveling gods) I found Hwy 101, but much further south than I wanted to be! I was still looking at a 4 hour drive with the rain glancing like little swords off my headlights before I would arrive to spend the night at my sister's place in Sacramento, still a two hour drive from home the next day. I was feeling lost, stressed and angry with myself.

I turned on the radio and tuned into the middle of an interview with Terry Anderson. You may remember, he was abducted on the streets of Beirut in 1985 and kept as a hostage for nearly seven years. I'm not sure if the interview was current or if it was an interview from the time of his release but what leapt out at me was the question from the interviewer: *Have you forgiven your captors?* And his response. *Yes.* He went on to say that forgiveness was something he had to do for himself, so as not to continue to be kept hostage by his own anger and hatred.

It was one of those moments that sliced through my own self pity and absorption. Maybe one of those rain swords flew from my headlights into my heart. The rest of my journey home had a different quality of inner dialogue. What is *that* within us that can forgive seven years of imprisonment, of exile from family, of solitary confinement, of hearing your friends tortured in rooms next to you, of hearing your friends die? What is *that* which desires the desire to forgive, even when revenge is struggling for the upper hand? What is *that* in us, in you, in me?

I have recently been re-engaging with the Enneagram. I'm taking a weekly online nine month Enneagram immersion course with some of the founding teachers. I have begun teaching Introductions to the Enneagram here at Skyline and plan our own immersion program into the nine Enneagram types in the new year. Helen Palmer posed an interesting challenge during one of the online classes. I understood it to go to the true self/false self polarity that some of the Enneagram community teaches, and also that many people engaged in spiritual practices have internalized. What I heard Helen say

was to be aware of this tendency, in various spiritual traditions, to devalue the personal self as a false self.

This caused me to reflect about *that* quality of choice and awareness that is so distinctly human. The Enneagram speaks to this: Who is the person who *chooses* to do the work of inner observation; who *chooses* to lay down her defenses; who *chooses* the leap of faith? What is that center of free will which is uniquely me (uniquely you), a unique personal self? Who is that who is willing to surrender, to trust, to be receptive to Being, Essence, Divinity, whichever name you choose to express true *metanoia* (beyond *nous*, mind), and beyond speech? This self is not to be devalued, nor diminished as a false self. This is a participatory self; a self capable of *Yes*, of the *Yes* of Terry Anderson.

Yes

*I will keep saying yes to you
Until I say yes no more
And then you alone will be
The yes inside me.*

*I will say yes to you
Until there is no "I" left.
When I am bereft of you,
When all my grief has spilled,
My heart's tears distilled,
You will be the yes
That has taken me apart.*

*I will say yes to love
Until love is all
And I am not.**

This *Yes* is the *Yes* of Being; the *Yes* of the river flowing from it's source transforming all along its course. This is the *Yes* of incarnation, of descent into the world and the cosmos. This is the miracle in Hanukkah, the Christ in Christmas, the Light burning in a dark prison cell in Beirut or Chowchilla. This is the *Yes* that creates all things new.

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* *YES* poem by Diane Pendola

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