

restore

news and views on the well-being of the whole person

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what season are you in?

"IN THE BARE TREES, OLD HUSKS MAKE NEW DESIGNS..." WILLIAM CARLOS WILLIAMS

In the cold and dark of winter, I recall that line as guidance for the soul work suited to this time of the year. The urge to stop so much doing, to retreat from our projects, and to get quiet, can help the psyche rest in simply being. In this time of letting go, our old patterns can slowly evolve to make "new designs."

However, our individual "season" may not match the calendar. Ask yourself, "What season is it in my life?" Could this be a winter season of gently going to pieces? Just as with fallen leaves, we can allow a time of slow decomposition so that old surfaces can crumble to become new nutrients for later growth.

GETTING IT TOGETHER

When we take stock of our lives, we general welcome only one direction - up! We value any evidence of our getting better, smarter, or richer; growing and refining our abilities to think, to speak, to act, to make money, make love, make babies, make a difference in our workplace

and our community. These capacities grow and deepen throughout our lives but especially through the first 30 or 40 years of life, what the psychologist Carl Jung called the first half of life. But rarely does life keep going in that one direction. What then?

GOING TO PIECES

As a psychotherapist who specializes in working with adults, I find myself concerned daily with a complementary trajectory in people's lives, the sacred work of grieving and letting go. There are many "little dyings" in a life - job losses, relationship endings, dreams that are reluctantly abandoned. Every loss of something outside of us has a corresponding loss within our self.

While we expect these losses to happen more during the "second half" of life, they actually go on throughout our lives. All growth involves letting some aspect of the self drop away so as to make room for something new to appear. When we are emotionally equipped to make a life transition or suffer a loss, the grieving and letting go happens naturally and we mature. That doesn't mean that there aren't



difficult feelings, just that we can process those feeling and let them transform us as they pass.

It is when we lack adequate support internally and externally, when losses add up or come unexpectedly, that our capacity to digest our experiences shatters. "Who am I now, after losing all that I thought was essential?" Feeling stuck is a sign that necessary grieving is not happening.



need support?

This newsletter is written by me, Christopher Maier, a psychotherapist and mindfulness teacher with a private therapy practice in the Cherry Creek area. I assist adults dealing with emotional pain and times of transition. Many of my clients come to therapy due to symptoms of anxiety, depression, trauma, grief, or relationship strain. Some are motivated just by a desire to deepen their spiritual life so as to live more abundantly. In every case, there is something about their current story of who they are that is restricting their full aliveness. I see pain and feeling stuck as calls to release these limiting stories so as to discover **your whole story**.

If you might need support in your process of change, call me at **303-477-7833** for a free consultation.

the art of letting go

To speak of an “art” of letting go might suggest that if we only knew how to do it correctly, it wouldn't be so confusing, so disorienting, so painful. Ultimately, we don't DO letting go. This art is a sculptural one with ourselves as the material that gets sculpted.

We can allow this sculpting to go on with **an inner gesture** of willingness and surrender, openness and curiosity. Such a gesture arises from within a re-framing of loss and grief: shifting away from seeing it as an unfortunate, embarrassing state to get away from or get

through, to seeing it as the smithy of the soul in which one's metal is clarified, made more pliable and transparent. Through this process we learn that paradoxically we win by losing. We grow more truly ourselves by letting fall away so much each of us clings to as “me.”

how to win by losing

1. LISTEN TO YOUR BODY

Let the process be directed by your body, not your intellect. The process of letting go is **a birthing process**, and as with birthing a child, the verbal, conceptual mind needs to step aside to let an older wisdom take over. If you are not currently on talking basis with your body, it may take

some persistence on your part in asking it to direct you. The modern, urban world is culturally poor in aids to mourning. In Ireland, the work of letting go used to be aided by the wailing sounds of a keening woman at the graveside. The stream of laments and wordless

wailing would break open all the locked doors of our holding it together, and one was cleansed by weeping. Music, dance, yoga, massage can all help. (For guidance in self-care, go to [http:// www.Whole-Story.com/articles](http://www.Whole-Story.com/articles) and download Fall '08 newsletter.)

2. LOVE. HOLD ON. LET GO.

The process cannot be rushed nor out-smarted. Life will not be fooled by our attempt to avoid loss by only pretending to love or pretending to grieve. *“To live in this world you must be able to do three things,”* advises

the poet Mary Oliver. *“To love what is mortal; to hold it against your bones knowing your own life depends on it; and, when the time comes to let it go, to let it go.”* This is as true with our inner attachments as

with our outer ones. To live authentically we need to love and to hold on as long as we can. Only when we have no choice and are bereaved by Life, only then must we submit to the work of letting go.

3. LET YOUR YES INCLUDE YOUR NO'S

The gesture of willingness includes our wails of protest and holding on. Part of the art of letting go can include shouting out all in us that does not want to let go. *“Rage, rage against the dying of the light,”* wrote

the poet Dylan Thomas to his father on his deathbed. To prematurely silence the shouts of “No” prevents a real “Yes” from ever being achieved. To say “Yes” to life includes saying yes to all the

“No's,” even the “Oh no's!”. Saying yes to what is present now, allows this now to unfold. The paradox is that only by such radical acceptance of where we are can we become **the change we wish**.

coming home to someplace new

When we have completed a round of loss and mourning, our winnings show up as a deeper peace, a new settling into our true center. We find

our seat, as it were, in the source of our aliveness. It feels like coming home to someplace new; or, more accurately, coming home to a place

both new and yet older than our oldest memories. No longer needing to hide from parts of ourself gives us an ease of being.

U P C O M I N G C L A S S

practicing peace

REDUCING STRESS THROUGH MINDFULNESS

This popular 8-week course in stress reduction trains you to cultivate moment-by-moment awareness without judgment. Classes include instruction, discussion, and practice of mindfulness while sitting, lying down, and in simple yoga stretches. Instructor Christopher Maier, LPC, is a Certified Mindfulness Teacher with over 30 years experience.

BEGINNING IN APRIL IN CAPITOL HILL

for more information, call 303-477-7833 or email CM@Whole-Story.com