

If you were unable to attend Sunday service on September 28 you might appreciate the poem, readings and reflection questions folks were asked to sit with and make some journaling notes about. I offer them here for your personal meditation.- Rev. Kate Bortner

When Someone Deeply Listens To You

When someone deeply listens to you

it is like holding out a dented cup

you've had since childhood

and watching it fill up with

cold, fresh water.

When it balances on top of the brim,

you are understood.

When it overflows and touches your skin,

you are loved.

When someone deeply listens to you

the room where you stay

starts a new life

and the place where you wrote

your first poem

begins to glow in your mind's eye.

It is as if gold has been discovered!

When someone deeply listens to you

your bare feet are on the earth

and a beloved land that seemed distant

is now at home within you.

— John Fox

The Effort to Listen

“What is so important that we have time to read all the books on love and relationships but we do not have time to listen to the heart of our lover?” - Molly Vass

We all suffer at times from the effort to study something instead of living it. Or from the effort to fix or advise rather than to listen and to hold. But as the theologian Paul Tillich puts it "The first duty of love is to listen."

When I think of the times I have truly listened in my life-to the sea's endless lapping, to the sighs of my grandmother when she thought no one was near, to the pain of others that I have caused-it is receiving these simple truths that has made me a better man.

So often when we refuse to listen we become obsessed with remaking the world in our own image, rather than opening the spirit within us to the spirit of what is.

At the deepest level, ours is not to make ourselves heard but to be still enough to hear. As the Native Elder Sa'k'ej Henderson says "To truly listen is to risk being changed forever." Reflection by Mark Nepo, The Book of Awakening

When have you felt most deeply listened to?

How do you listen?

Inspiration's Anatomy

Begins with the ordinary wishbone of a common chicken hung with sewing thread in the kitchen to dry. For days or weeks it develops the invisible flesh of wish and desire. Sways, little divining rod, over the woman washing dishes, chopping onions, rinsing garden earth from her hands. When it is finally dry and ready to be used, it will weigh scarcely more than spilled salt or the petals, drifted loose, from peonies on the kitchen table. Because the woman is alone she must name one wish for her right hand and one for the left, then split the fragile bone to see which of the desires overrides. It is one of the conditions of inspiration that things must come apart before they can be put back together. Mekeel McBride, from The Short Autobiography of Inspiration in Red Letter Days

Remember a time you were most inspired?

What came apart in your life and how did you put it back together ?