

Richard Rohr's Daily Meditation

From the Center for Action and Contemplation



Week Thirty

Being Peaceful Change

Change Comes from the Inside

Monday, July 27, 2020

As we come to know our soul gift more clearly, we almost always have to let go of some other “gifts” so we can do our one or two things with integrity. Such letting go frees us from always being driven by what has been called the “tyranny of the urgent.” [1] Soon urgency is a way of life, and things are not done peacefully from within. What if we choose to simply do one or two things wholeheartedly in our lives? That is all God expects and all we can probably do well. Too much good work becomes a violence to ourselves and, finally, to those around us.

Let’s just use our different gifts to create a unity in the work of service (Ephesians 4:12–13), and back one another up, without criticism or competition. Only in our peaceful, mutual honoring do we show forth the glory of God.

The Gospel is not about being nice; it is about being honest and just, and the world doesn’t like those two things very much. Our job is to learn how to be honest, but with love and respect. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. taught us that before we go out to witness for justice, we have to make sure that we can love and respect those with whom we disagree.

Imagine the surrender necessary for those who have been oppressed for hundreds of years to continue to work peacefully for justice. Frankly, I don’t know how anyone can do it without contemplation. How do we get to that deep place where we do not want to publicly expose, humiliate, or defeat our opponents, but rather work, as King said, for win-win situations? Seeking win-win solutions, not win-lose, takes a high level of spiritual development and demands spiritual conversion.

When we are hurt, we want to hurt back. When we are put down, we want to put down the opponent. This is our ego’s natural defense mechanism. We all move toward the ego, and we even solidify it as we get older if something

doesn't expose it for the lie that it is—not because it is bad, but because it thinks it is the whole and only thing! We change from inside—from the power position to the position of vulnerability and solidarity, which gradually changes everything.

True contemplation is the most subversive of activities because it undercuts the one thing that normally refuses to give way—our natural individualism and narcissism. Once we are freed from our narcissism that thinks we are the center of the world, or that our rights and dignity have to be defended before other people's rights and dignity, we can finally live and act with justice and truth. People don't really change by themselves. God changes us, if we can expose ourselves to God at a deep level.

Gateway to Action & Contemplation:

What word or phrase resonates with or challenges me? What sensations do I notice in my body? What is mine to do?

Prayer for Our Community:

O Great Love, thank you for living and loving in us and through us. May all that we do flow from our deep connection with you and all beings. Help us become a community that vulnerably shares each other's burdens and the weight of glory. Listen to our hearts' longings for the healing of our world. [Please add your own intentions.] . . . Knowing you are hearing us better than we are speaking, we offer these prayers in all the holy names of God, amen.

[Listen to Fr. Richard read the prayer.](#)

Story from Our Community:

As I read the daily meditation this morning, I felt as if something bigger than me was telling me everything is going to be okay. My kids and I have just moved to a new town after leaving an abusive husband. It was not easy, and these first few days have been a struggle. We are healing, and I see this time in my life as more than just a change of address or a new job but as a transformation. I've been through the dark night, the fire, and I will be stronger. I am excited to see what our new lives will include. Thank you for the daily meditations. —Name withheld

[Share your own story with us.](#)

[1] Charles E. Hummel, *Tyranny of the Urgent* (InterVarsity Press: 1994, ©1967). Hummel offers ways to identify priorities in life, so that immediate demands don't always crowd out key desires.

Adapted from Richard Rohr, [Dancing Standing Still: Healing the World from a Place of Prayer](#) (Paulist Press: 2014), 85–87.

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