

CALL WAITING

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For several years now I have been spilling ink on the pages of *Shen* as I try to understand and come to grips with my own change process.

In past editions I have openly wondered why on earth people opt for chaos when the knowable seems at hand. For example, I, like many others, have entered the crucible of relationship just when I felt I was mastering living alone and I have changed career directions while pretty much at the top of my game.

To survive on the planet, some kind of socialization process seems necessary, as does some kind of rebellion against it. As Haven "teachings" underscore, in a bid to meet the expectations of others and to diminish our life anxiety, we sacrifice our authenticity at the altar of what is knowable and by extension, controllable. Consequently, as we "grow up" the magic and spontaneity of childhood begins to disappear. We demand an answer for everything. We confuse death (certainty) with life (uncertainty).

But while we have been out there "*fitting in*," our authenticity has continued to eat away at us. Eventually we begin to resonate when others describe their vague sense that something is missing. Some of us take this experience as a sign that it is time to combine our lives with another seeker who feels as empty as we do.

In the mystic traditions of religion the universal drive to get in touch with one's authenticity has been expressed as a sense of "divine dissatisfaction" or the "worm in the heart." I have come to believe that it is this core impulse that drives all meaningful change.

So if "divine dissatisfaction" spurs me on, what would "divine *satisfaction*" look like? It is hard to generalize here but I would hazard a guess that it has something to do with a sense of satisfaction that does not become obsolete. While the trappings of modernity (including my new Acura) are indeed appealing, they seem incapable of offering anything that approaches sustainable satisfaction. And so, an ever deeper quest for change.

It has been my experience that this "deeper" search for satisfaction seems to fall into two general categories of the change process.

Firstly, there is the change that I initiate, usually out of a sense that the "status quo" is no longer acceptable. There is a very real sense that if the necessary change is to occur, I must "do" something either to create something new or to so disrupt the status quo that something different is bound to shake loose. Either way, as a result of my actions, I come to "know" what to "do" and I "do" it.

The second category of change involves the following of an inner call towards a door opening somewhere. In this category, if I am in touch with my need for more sustainable or deeper satisfaction, I wait until this door has opened sufficiently and I simply walk through. It sounds simple enough but this second category of change is a good deal more tricky than the first.

While I have responsibility for all change that impacts me, (after all, I am the one who is "divinely dissatisfied") there is much less control in this second category. Indeed, the door is not opened by the individual, but by the collective. The responsibility of the individual is to be "in touch" enough to recognize the door as an entry-way to greater authenticity and to respond.

But how can we trust the collective? And what do I "do" if there is no call? After all, isn't it the outer world that I have blamed for oppressing me in the first place?

These are good questions that defy an easy answer. But some level of trust in the universe seems essential if we are to make anything of the opportunities that present themselves in life.

Perhaps the genesis of my mistrust lies in a confusion between the "herd" and the "whole." I think I have had enough of the herd, at least as it is often expressed in the mass culture of struggling for the top of the heap, designer clothes and fast food. However the deeper collective is not about finding one's place in the

herd but rather about a sense of being a part of the whole. Ken Wilbur labels the deeper collective as the "universal." He regards it as an evolutionary step beyond both the herd and the individual (or individuated) person. Spiritual masters and poets have explained the difference between the herd and the whole as the difference between being "of" the world and "in" the world.

Sometimes, the whole "calls" us. When it does, such a call is as legitimate and as authentic as anything we have seemingly initiated on our own. But to fully answer the call we must know ourselves and be strong enough to walk through the door to take our new place with our individuated selves intact.

At this moment I find I am once again in a place of anticipation (and frustration) about an impending change. I simply know that a shift is about to happen. But on this occasion, by racking my brain for what and how to initiate the necessary shift I am exhausting my energy. Like most people, I have many gifts and talents I could exploit in the process of "doing my thing" and I have spent many long hours in recent months examining possibilities. Yet, I also sense a need to simply "be clear" and wait. I have always found waiting very difficult. Beyond my modernist need for rapid gratification, I just hate sitting in waiting rooms or hanging out while someone calls my name. I guess don't know what to "do" with myself at such times. Yet here I am. Waiting for the deeper collective. Waiting for the call. In this position I've little choice but to trust that the call will come and that I will recognise it when it does. So, back at this word *trust* again. Maybe that's what it is I am meant to learn in all of this.