

## ∞ Prologue ∞

# O.K. Who Are You Really?

*She was determined not to cry. All around her, children were sobbing as though their hearts would break. Each clutched at the hem or pant leg of the parent who brought them. Each parent struggled to free a child's frantic grip and propel that child to the first day of separation. But this little girl was too proud to hold on. She had visions of the beautiful sculptures she would make. She saw in her mind the paintings she would bring home. She saw before her a line of exciting lessons and learnings, of songs and poems and numbers and letters and yes, indeed, worlds she would master. When the tears welled in her eyes, she bravely, proudly, blinked them away. She was ready for kindergarten.*

*Years later, through the maze of dashed hopes and forgotten dreams, she would recall the brave little girl she had been and wonder what had happened to her. Through the miasma of the struggle for survival and a child of her own whose father she no longer knew, she wondered how a life so bright with hope and pride could have deteriorated to this. "Who was she?" she asked. Where was the courage she had at five? When had the hope evaporated? How had this brave little girl so completely disappeared?*

*The little boy next to her wouldn't sit still. He was full of life and vigor. The explorer, the mountain climber, he opened his eyes in the morning and leaped out of bed with an excitement that rang through the neighborhood. Already the teacher was warning his father about the possibility of drugging him listless so he would conform to the docility of the other children. She called it 'focus.' It wouldn't be long before he would bend—they would just have to work a while to adjust the medication.*

*By the time he caught his breath, he would be well past eighteen and wonder how his childhood had passed in a dream. Who was he? What had happened?*

*The group of children in the corner needed special services. By the third week of school, the teacher could tell. Full of eccentricities not visible in the other students, they listened to the rhythm of their own truths.*

*One was drawn to music. He could follow any drumbeat, remember any lyric, knew the names and songs of all the current musicians. His entire body pulsated to the tune of the radio. There would be no avenue for him. His talent was not on the curriculum. Instead, he would be dragged through histories that had no relevance to his melodic nature. He would be filled with calculations that would have been understood had they been linked to the beat of the songs in his heart. He could have composed anything, but he never had a chance.*

*Thwarted from discovering the calling intended for him, his life grew gray. A wife and some kids, the nine-to-five job he fell into because he didn't know what else to do, would feed his obesity, his ulcer and his sense that there should have been more, but he just couldn't remember what. What now? Is that all there is? Who was he then?*

Stories like these play out in our schools every year. They create a society of adults who spend the rest of their lives looking for the identity and integrity stolen from them when they were small. According to psychologist Dr. Carl Rogers, the search for a more authentic self underlies all our interactions and strivings. Everything we do, want, crave or try is driven by our need to find the answers to these questions, “Who am I? Why am I here? What is my relationship to others?” Rogers writes:

As I watch person after person struggle in his therapy hours to find a way of life for himself, there seems to be a general pattern emerging, which is not quite captured by any...description...to be that self which one truly is. (On Becoming A Person, 166)

To which he adds:

I am quite aware that this may sound so simple as to be absurd... (On Becoming A Person, 166)

But what we most often miss is the obvious. It's the old adage, “I have gone out to find myself. Should I come back before I return, please ask me to wait.”

We don't really know who we are. We have lost the connection to a greater self that holds within it the true identity, integrity and purpose of soul—the passion and brilliance with

which we were born. A youthful perception finds wonder. A magical moment, without condition, expectation, fear or judgment, engenders faith, revisits connection and fuels passion. The child can lead us back to our innate brilliance with authenticity, integrity and passion, if we allow it. But we forget.

We forget our own childhoods when all things were possible. We stop imagining lands of trust where fantasies merge and dreams materialize. We stop feeling love in its unconditional radiance. We forget thoughts without words and fields without end. We stop dancing on clouds. We keep the grass and the breeze waiting. We wonder about the magic of wishing on a star. We wonder if we've forgotten how to wonder. We just plain, old, forget.

Dr. James Hillman observes, "We dull our lives by the way we conceive them..."(5) We fill our days with the search for external reward, stimulation and validation. We sail through our cities well past the speed limit, plugged into books on tape, beepers and cell phones. Talk show hosts tell us how to fix our lives and make pizza. Songs of love and pain whiz through our psyches at mach speed. We are voyeuristic and bored, latching onto sordid newscasts and soap operas. We get excited over media sex and romance, while leading day-to-day lives devoid of passion. Our barometers are set to everybody else's standards. We talk ourselves into jobs that are safe but lacking in creative life force. We commit ourselves to relationships that are likewise. We tell each other we are fine, but inside, we are afraid to look. We are asleep and have forgotten who we are—then we ask our children to be like us. Christina Grof describes our dilemma:

For thousands of years, mystics, philosophers, and poets have described human beings as having two essential components; we exist simultaneously as limited individuals who identify strongly with our bodies, our lives, and the ma-

terial world and as spiritual entities who are unlimited, universal, and eternal. We live with a paradox: we are at once human and divine, limited and eternal, the part and the whole. We are both the small self and the deeper Self. (27)

Edward Carpenter, a visionary social scientist and poet of the late nineteenth century, writes that there is a vaster self that can be reached past our ordinary consciousness. He describes his experience as being:

So great, so splendid...that it may be said that all minor questions and doubts fall away in the face of it; and certain it is that in thousands and thousands of cases, the fact of its having come even once to an individual has completely revolutionized his subsequent life and outlook on the world. (Ferguson, 31)

We are more than we think. Dr. Maria Montessori writes, “It would be absurd to think that man...[would] lack a plan of psychic development.” She explains:

There is in the soul of a child an impenetrable secret that is gradually revealed as it develops.... It contains within itself mysterious guiding principles, which will be the source of its work, character, and adaptation to its surroundings. (Absorbent Mind, 19)

Then she warns, “...because of its delicate condition...the psychic life of a child needs to be protected.” (Absorbent Mind, 19) But we do not protect this psychic life. We ignore it. And when we ignore the power, direction and wisdom of

the heart, we overlook the breadth of majesty and sense of purpose that is ours. Dr. Hillman explains:

...there are things I must attend to beyond the daily round and that give the daily round its reason, feelings that the world somehow wants me to be here, that I am answerable to an innate image.... I believe we have been robbed of our true biography—that destiny written into the acorn. (4-5)

That ‘destiny,’ as Hillman describes it, is the calling of our heart, the innate direction of our soul that fulfills our being and gives our life deeper meaning, the journey that reconnects us to our passion and brilliance. It is our calling, our reason for being, the heart of our human experience. It is impelling. It yearns for the opportunity to live a much greater, more miraculous, benevolent and brilliant truth—to fulfill its soul’s contract. It is our birthright.

Ours is a call to self-discovery, an exploration into life and all its possibilities—a sacred, creative, unpredictable, and sometimes even paradoxical adventure.

It is time to listen to the call, in ourselves, in each other, in our children—to connect with others who have heard their own voice echoing back through the cacophony of congested thoroughfares, drive-through windows and schedules too busy to keep. *Recover your passion! Discover your brilliance!*

It is time to collect all that we are, our stories, perceptions and dreams, the fragments of our lives, and acknowledge the magnificence and unlimited breadth of humanity that is ours, to build an environment of unconditional love that nurtures and protects, seeks and fulfills, that answers that call.

Our mental, emotional, physical, social, and spiritual awakening will shape the direction of the world’s tomorrow. It is

imperative and the time is now. We must remember, here in the present, all we are and why we are here:

*We are here  
to reconnect the higher functioning of our world,  
not as we have constructed it in the past,  
but as we deeply experience it  
and know it to be.*

*We are here  
to mend the barriers  
that have kept us less than what we are.*

*We are here  
to reintroduce ourselves to ourselves, to each other,  
and to the capacities and forces  
that truly lie within and without.*

*We are here  
to lift the awareness of how we affect each other  
and the physical world around us.*

*We are here  
to gently assist in the already ongoing  
and unprecedented conscious evolution of mankind.*

*Life demands we dedicate ourselves  
to this higher purpose.*

*Now is the time.*

This is the story of my family and the children who have given me wings and flight. This is our call to passion and brilliance. May it help ignite yours.

### The Call to Brilliance:

- We are born with our divinely given gifts and willingness to give and receive love intact.
- As a seed contains the pattern for the whole tree, our being is encoded with the unlimited pattern of our brilliance.
- As a seed is directed by nature to grow into a tree, our motivation to explore and create is directed by the need to manifest these gifts.
- The desire to express this brilliance within the format of love is the fullest and highest expression of our being.