Discussion

Angela 2 — Week 6, Day 6, Session 5 — 12 minutes

Summary: After brief reports on the morning lesson, Russell invites a reflection on spiritual benefactors and the human qualities people value, to carry into the afternoon practice. He clarifies that the list can be long and need not be written. The session closes with volunteers for kitchen help.

From the lesson

[Russell:] Any reports on what stands out from the lesson in particular? Anything? What do you have?

[Participant:] Yeah. I mean, I noticed that, you know, when you've talked about the symbolizing and feeling moving center, and how that — just awareness of this plane really is integrative, like a somatic integration of that, and also the expansion into situation.

There's something very profound about this gesture and the way it — I don't know that you feel this, but I don't think it's always true. But in my experience, there's such a deep something inside that just feels completely whole and knows, and still, actually, along that midline. Something about that neutral place. Something about going along the plane.

I mean, thinking about the plane, kind of infinitely out and back. And so—

[Russell:] I actually didn't get to complete the lesson. So we're going to have a short version tomorrow before — however. But it felt like enough. I didn't want to add another 15 or 20 minutes. We wouldn't — it would have minimized the result we already had, in my opinion.

Benefactors and qualities

[Russell:] So I want to invite a reflection, just not a serious working on, but a reflection, and this will lead us into a practice that we'll do this afternoon.

In the fourth week I introduced this. I picture this concept, some of you might remember, that we've all had spiritual benefactors. We've all had, in our past, whether it was a teacher or a coach or an uncle or an aunt or somebody who — they weren't the most wonderful person in the world, but they had certain qualities that they evoked in you.

Chances are you've had somebody in your history. It may have been very pleasant. It may not have been pleasant. Remember that quote I read at the ceremony the other night, from that concentration camp, this women's concentration camp, that, you know, is a really radical notion of: please don't only see the evil that they did. Also see that because of them, we had this great camaraderie. We had to find our courage. We had to feel — we got to feel our love for each other. Remember that also when you judge them. It's an amazing sentiment.

And I'm — we have become who we are because of so many forces. And amidst any of us, amidst what we think of as our problems, we wouldn't be here functioning at the level we're functioning without the infinite grace of so many beings. And we can just start with, you know, the earth and the air and, like, like that piece of paper, and the water, and these beings who are feeding us every day, and the gardeners, and who — at that grand level. But at a personal level, you know, somebody showed you kindness along the way.

And probably many showed you moments, at least, of kindness that gave you a feeling of life's okay, I'm okay. Even though there may have been many exceptions to that.

So sometimes it was through a challenging person you grew some courage, or you grew the sense of self-reliance, or you grew some quality that you appreciate about your humanity. And then through the kindness and goodness of certain beings.

So I want to reflect on two things that we'll then work with in a couple of different ways. One is some of the qualities that you value — that you value, that you have been exposed to. Some of the qualities that you value. And if you can remember some of the particular people, remember them. You don't have to write them out or anything, but remember them and thank them. Say hello to them. Recalling some of the benefactors, remembering them, but mostly the qualities that you felt from them or through them.

And I want that in the background. We're actually going to do a different practice, but if that's in the background, it'll make the practice we're going to do more potent.

Okay, so you can enjoy maybe reflecting on a teacher from the fifth grade, or somebody who — well, you know, this was difficult, but that thing, I got something like that, being in their presence. I got something like that.

And then we'll come together. Let's be ready to work at four, because we need the full two hours to do what I want to do this afternoon.

Looking at the qualities of the values. No, you're looking at — you're looking at. About anything you see that's not interesting. You're looking at all of this. You're looking at qualities that you're appreciating, that you've been exposed to, kind of some of the models for you, for some of what you've developed.

And I'm suggesting that they're not always growing because the model was so wonderful, but hopefully you have some of them too, in your memory, in your history. But you're also — so that's from your personal history. You're also thinking of the qualities that you value. That you put value — the qualities that, if you could help your grandchild grow certain qualities, let's add that to it, okay? It's a little different track.

If you could have — so some of the values, some of the qualities in a human being that you value. It's not — get what I mean? That's how I'm using qualities and value.

And then, yes, please.

Questions

[Participant:] I have a quantitative question. How many qualities would you expect to identify?

[Russell:] 57.

No. A quantitative — no, no, no. It's more than one or two. It could be 15, it could be 20. You're not — we're not going to narrow it down. This part is to open up the territory, and then I'll give you some more ways to get it more precise. But this is just let it go.

No, you can write them if you like, but this is not given to you as a writing exercise. This is a different writing we're going to do when we get together. This will feed into that. If it helps you to write, write, but you don't need to. Just — if I bring it up fresh at four o'clock, it's a little too much to deal with. I want this in the background now.

[Participant:] Can I write in my journal, or does it have to be on me?

[Russell:] It's fine. Your journal, especially your journal.

Kitchen help

[Russell:] Okay. Oh, I have one last thing. When I was meeting with Elizabeth this morning and dealing with some logistics and all like this, I said to her, you know, I feel so grateful for the care and for the quality of everything that they've been supplying us. I said, I know that you hold service in a very high value. Would it be disrespectful if some of us served you a meal and you ate first?

And she said, well, now, you know, thank you so much, but that wouldn't be right for us. I go, is there anything we could do to give just something back? She goes, well, if five or six people would want to help with dishes, help in the kitchen after we eat, that would be great.

So I'd like myself to volunteer for a lunchtime cleaning, and I'm wondering if we can get some people there at lunch and then some people there at dinner. So I'm going to clean at lunch. Anybody join me?

Three. Okay, let's stand up. Lunches. Lunches, stand up. Okay. One, two, three, four, five. Perfect. Okay, dinners, stand up.

Great, they'll figure out something to do with their—. Okay.