

Quench

SUMMER 2015
CULTIVATING RELATIONSHIPS

A resource seeking to satisfy spiritual
thirst in community

Cultivating Relationships

BY CECILIA AMARAL

Two human beings come together for a moment, a day, a long term relationship. These encounters unfold from the choices we make as we walk through our world. The significance of these encounters comes from the invitations that they offer to us to be engaged with the world in which we live with meaning and purpose. While these actions and attitudes may sound simple, there is no randomness when two people come together.

The soil in which these relationships grow and develop requires respect, cooperation, and appreciation. A key to the cultivation of the encounter is that each person has an opportunity to thrive. Even in moments of solitude, we are connected with others and with all aspects of creation.

As I reflect on the words that appear on this page, I am asking myself, "How do we go from theory to practice? How do we nurture the possibilities that come from engaging with others?" Once we have made the choice to engage in a relationship we need to listen to our needs and that of the other. Mutual give and take opens the pathway to mutual understanding. Open dialogue assists us in coming to a developed lexicon that is both unique and universal in the relationship.

One of the words we use to describe the fertile soil for meaningful connection is community. Some of you may remember the saying, "no man is an island." Songs, poems, and prose were composed to remind us that we don't live in a vacuum. For those who are guided by spiritual traditions that incorporate the belief of the Trinity involved in our coming to be, we know that we were invited into life by a community. Others may find that their spirituality is guided by a deep and abiding awareness that the universe is a great example and reminder of connectedness.

Like you, I look to men and women who offer words that both encourage and challenge me to live what I believe. I offer you a passage from Parker Palmer in his book *The Promise of Paradox*.

"God comes to us in the midst of human need, and the most pressing needs of our time demand community in response...how can I learn accountability unless I live in a community where their acts and their consequences are visible...how can I take the risks that right action demands unless I live in a community that offers support? How can I learn the sanctity of each life unless I live in a community where we can be persons, not roles, to one another?"

Whatever resource we use be it prayer, reflection, or conversation, the ultimate goal of cultivating relationships requires a commitment to value the simple, ordinary and meaningful connections we make with God, ourselves, and others.

May we step gently into the next moment of our lives with the life-giving awareness that who we are and those we meet are meant to be celebrated.

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Editor's Note:

DEAR READER,

Welcome to our issue on cultivating relationships. When I think about those two words carefully, I begin to realize that they can be applied to so many aspects of our lives. A relationship with God or Spirit, relationships with lovers and family, with animals, with one's garden, with food; the list goes on and on.

Today, I want to ask you a different question. How much time do you take to cultivate a relationship with yourself? In our busy lives, we are so often tending to everyone else – cultivating the “gardens” of our families, our work, our friends. But what about your own, small, personal garden plot? Do you take time to get to know yourself? Do you know what you really like? Do you know what you want out of life – just you, not anyone else's expectations of you? What is your passion? What in life gives you joy? If you can't answer these questions easily, it's time to cultivate a relationship with YOU.

Carving out space for alone time is not as hard as we think it is. Making space for quiet is vital to our soul existence. If you need some help in learning how, you've come to the right place. Take advantage of all The Well has to offer you. And if you are a happy recipient of some Well Water, please remember that you can cultivate a stronger, more functional Well for the Journey by giving back. We love volunteers. Are you called to help? Let the office know your strengths. I can guarantee they'll find a job for you to do.

- ROBBIN MARCUS

Cultivating Volunteers

BY GREG COCHRAN

Cultivate – to grow and care for

Two individuals sitting in The Well's kitchen having a soulful conversation after a program; or, a group of people sitting in The Well's gathering space having a deep discussion about living our faith in everyday life – both, cultivating relationship. But there is much that goes on at The Well that makes these cultivating moments possible, and behind it all – volunteers!

The Well would not exist without our volunteers – those providing care and opportunities for growth where deep relationships and community are cultivated:

- Those who serve on our Board and Leadership Team that keep an eye to mission of The Well, making sure we have the resources to live into it.
- Those who serve in our Circles, who work to bring to reality The Well's mission and vision.
- Those who plan special events and parties – creating community.
- Those who help create a physical environment at The Well that is open, hospitable, and welcoming.
- Those who bring comfort, encouragement, and challenge through our Daily Faith Reflections email.
- Those who spend hours preparing for, giving guidance to, and creating sacred space for individuals and groups as they facilitate programs.
- Those who make our participants feel at home before a program.
- Those who come to The Well to organize and file.
- Those who sit around tables folding, sealing, and stamping.
- Those who bring *Quench* to your hands and in your “in-box”.

Thank you volunteers! You may not see the end results, but please know this, you are cultivating relationships more than you know! I see it. I hear about it. I know it. I am so grateful!

What Would Happen If We Didn't Have Termites in Our Desert?

BY TERRI AND BOB SMITH

Spring is here and it's time to think of gardening. The first step in gardening is to prepare the land. Here on the east coast we have fertile soil that is easy to make compact, dry and moist, but how is land in desert areas prepared for spring and new growth? The dry desert doesn't have the moisture to promote fungi to help decay and fertilize the land. Having just been to the beautiful Sonora Desert in Arizona this spring and seeing multitudes of thriving 100 year old 15' saguaro cactus made me wonder how things are renewed in the desert.



A naturalist explained how science studies species that rely on each other for survival, a term called "mutualism", by having mutually beneficial relationships. In the desert,

termites need the cellulose found in the skeletons of dead saguaros and other plants. The termites clean up the dead plants, basically cleaning up the desert, allowing space for new seedlings to grow. Without their work, no seedlings would grow, no animals could survive and the whole desert ecosystem would collapse.

What would happen if we didn't have termites in our own spiritual deserts? What dead and dried up skeletons have we been harboring that need to be turned into something new? What could be dying in us that we need to rid ourselves of so that we can prepare for the new growth God has planned for us?

God puts people in our lives to challenge us and help us. Think about the relationships between a nurse and patient, psychiatrist and client, pastor and congregant, husband and wife, mother and child. Just as the termites show us, a mutually beneficial relationship is one of clearing out, watering and healing to allow new growth. Consider and give thanks for the mutually beneficial relationships in your life.

What's On Your Nightstand

ALL THE LIGHT WE CANNOT SEE
BY MABETH HUDSON

How do we see or even hear light in darkness? Set amid one of the darkest times in human history, *All the Light We Cannot See*, by Anthony Doerr, reveals the kindness, courage, beauty, and friendships that arise in the most unlikely situations. The story centers on the relationship between a blind French girl and an orphaned Nazi conscript. Part historical fiction and part fable, this book is filled with symbols, metaphors, and characters that will linger with you long after it is read.

This summer The Well will launch a series called "Well Read"- discussions around books that touch your spirit. Book groups will be held on site with lemonade and iced tea on the front porch. Group discussion questions will be available for download off our website for those who wish to form their own groups. To learn more, visit our website.



OUR VISION

GATHERING...

SEEKING THE SOURCE OF

WHOLENESS AND LIFE

QUENCHING A COMMON THIRST

NURTURING ONE ANOTHER.

IN COMMUNITY...

BEING NOURISHED AND

RENEWED

BECOMING LIVING WATER

FOR OTHERS IN THE WORLD.

OUR MISSION

TO ENCOURAGE AND SUPPORT SPIRITUAL WELLNESS IN DAILY LIFE THROUGH INNOVATIVE PROGRAMS AND RESOURCES.

CORE VALUES

BRIDGING: INVITING PEOPLE FROM DIFFERENT BACKGROUNDS AND EXPERIENCES INTO COMMUNITY WHILE HONORING EACH PERSON'S UNIQUENESS.

REFLECTING: TAKING TIME AMIDST THE BUSY-NESS OF LIFE TO EXPLORE FAITH, FIND MEANING, AND GROW INTO WHOLENESS.

DISCERNING: HELPING ONE ANOTHER LISTEN FOR AND BECOME OPEN TO, AND RESPOND TO THE LIVED EXPERIENCE OF GOD.

WELLBEING: TENDING THE SPIRITUAL LIFE AS AN INTEGRAL PART OF WHOLENESS IN PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES.

REACHING OUT: BECOMING MORE COMPASSIONATE, CREATIVE, CONTEMPLATIVE, AND JOYFUL IN OUR RELATIONSHIPS AND OUR WORLD.

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400 West Pennsylvania Ave.

Towson, MD 21204

Phone: 410.296.9355

wellforthejourney.org

info@wellforthejourney.org

Project Director: Robbin Marcus



400 West Pennsylvania Avenue Towson, MD 21204