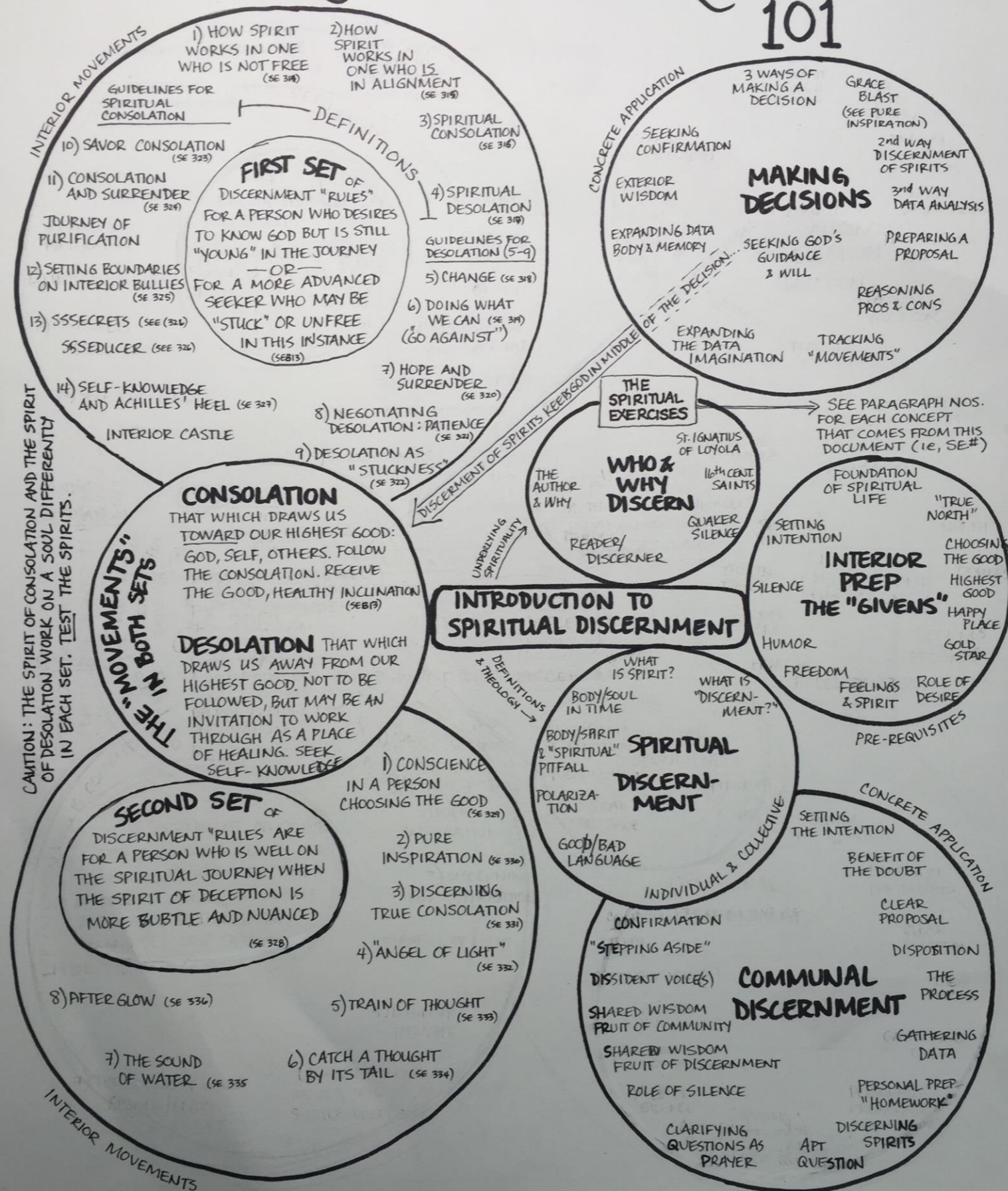


Choosing the Deeper Wisdom

Spiritual Discernment 101

MAP OF SPIRITUAL DISCERNMENT 101



Who and Why Discern

Author and Why

The Reader Discerner

St. Ignatius of Loyola and Understanding Spirits

Ignatius and Discernment of Spirits

The Spiritual Exercises

Rules of Discernment

Spiritual Mentor/Director/Friend: Keeping it Honest

16th Century Wisdom

Quaker Silence

Recent Wisdom: Non-Violent Communication, Self-Parenting,
Shadow Work

Description: This chapter is an introduction of the author, the reason this volume was conceived, and an introduction to the main character (Ignatius) and his work, the Quaker tradition, and some current psychological elements that nuance this 16th century tradition.

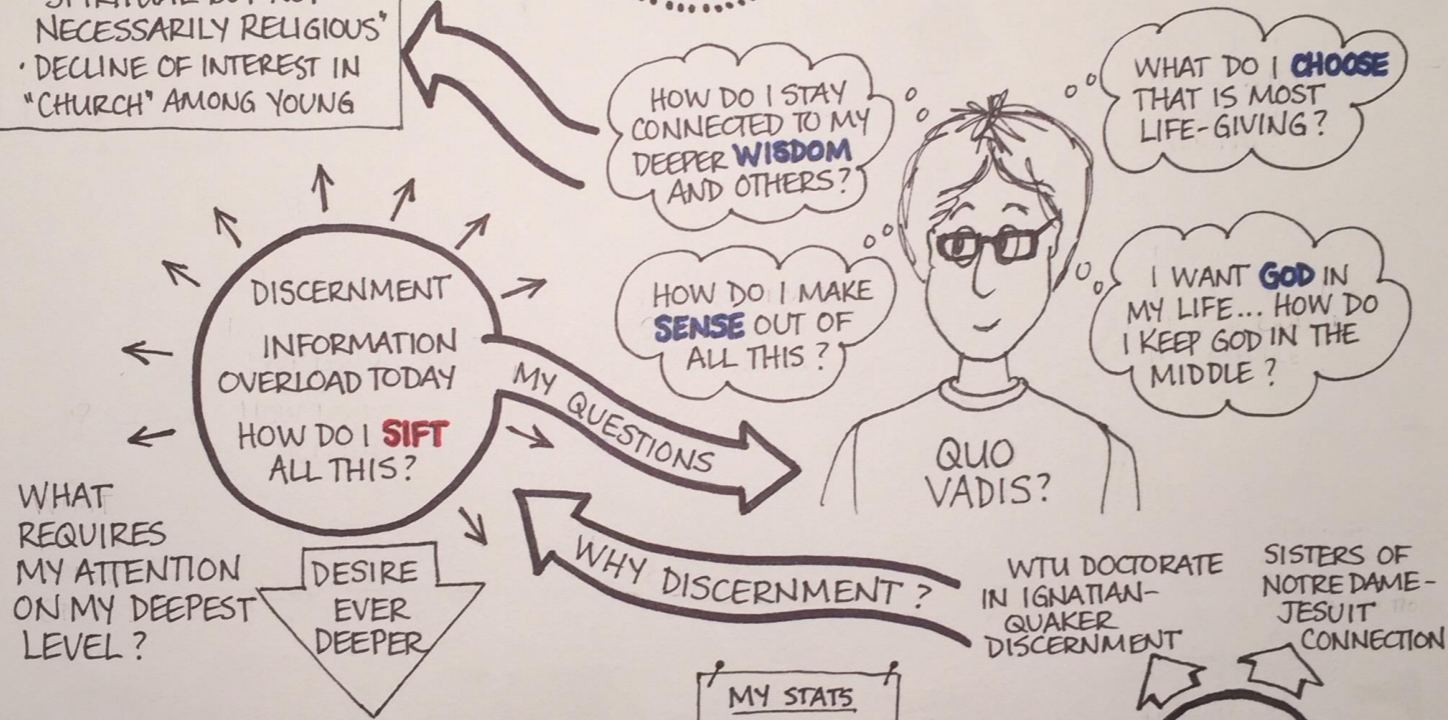
WH AND WH ? CURIOSITY AND WONDER ROCK...

TODAY
 ACCORDING TO CURRENT STATISTICS:

- THERE IS AN INCREASE IN NUMBER OF "NONE'S" (NO RELIGION) AND
- "SPIRITUAL BUT NOT NECESSARILY RELIGIOUS"
- DECLINE OF INTEREST IN "CHURCH" AMONG YOUNG

THIS WORK IS AN ATTEMPT TO CONVEY 16th CENTURY WISDOM FROM ROMAN CATHOLIC TRADITION FOR THOSE SEEKING DEEPER, MEANINGFUL CONNECTION WITH GOD, SELF AND OTHERS

*This is handwritten because it is my best way to both experience and to convey **SOUL-STUFF**: slow, playful and exploratory*



INTRODUCTIONS

START HERE



MY STATS
 WH. FEMALE
 USA BORN 1962
 EUROPEAN-RAISED
 ROMAN CATH.
 SR. OF NOTRE DAME
 GODSEEKER
 EDUCATOR:
 6th GR. TO GRAD. SCH.
 SEMINARY
 SPIRITUAL DIRECTOR



HOW TO READ THIS

THE SPIRITUAL JOURNEY IS NOT NECESSARILY LINEAR, NOR IS THE EXPLORATION OF SPIRITUAL DISCERNMENT, AS ILLUSTRATED IN THE "MAP OF CONTENTS."

EACH PANEL CONTAINS SOME NARRATIVE WITH IMAGES THAT ILLUSTRATE THE CONCEPT. BEGIN WITH WHATEVER CATCHES YOUR ATTENTION. EXPLORE. THINK OF EXAMPLES IN YOUR OWN EXPERIENCE RATHER THAN THAT OF OTHERS.

THE CLOUD BUBBLES REPRESENT INNER DIALOGUE. MULTIPLE BUBBLES FOR ONE CHARACTER OFTEN SHOW THE GRADUAL DAWNING OF SELF-KNOWLEDGE AND PERSONAL PRAYER FOR GUIDANCE. THESE TIME LAPSES CAN BE A SPLIT SECOND, MINUTES, DAYS, WEEKS, MONTHS, EVEN YEARS IN REALIZATION: THE DANCE BETWEEN THE SPIRIT OF THE CREATOR AND HUMAN CO-OPERATION WITH GRACE THROUGH FREE WILL.

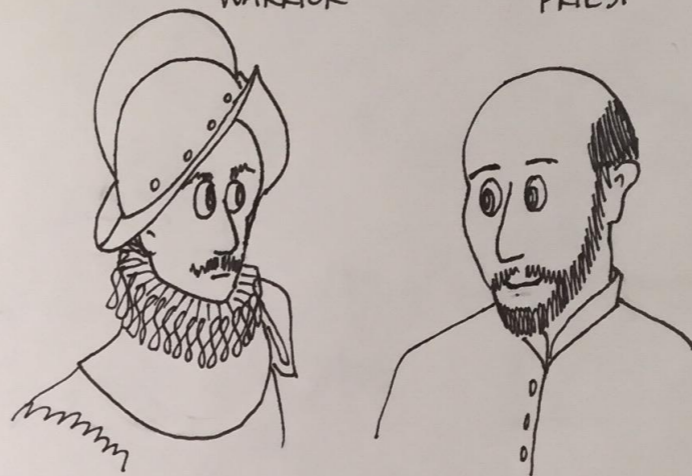
THE VARIETY OF LAYOUTS REPRESENT THE VARIED WAYS THE SPIRIT SPEAKS, AND THUS THE NEED TO ATTEND TO THE SPIRIT HOWEVER AND WHEREVER IT REVEALS ITSELF.

THERE IS SOME AMBIGUITY IN THE USE OF THE TERM "SPIRIT": FROM GOD? A SPIRITUAL ENTITY? A PURELY HUMAN MOVEMENT? THE POINT IS WHETHER THE SPIRIT LEADS TOWARD OR AWAY FROM GOD, FROM THE HIGHEST GOOD.

ST. IGNATIUS' UNDERSTANDING OF THE "SPIRITS"

ST. IGNATIUS WAS A 16TH CENTURY BASQUE SPANIARD, A MILITARY MAN, A COURTIER, AMBITIOUS & PRAGMATIC. UNTIL HIS CONVERSION HE WAS FOCUSED ON HIS OWN HONOR & GLORY AND THAT OF HIS FAMILY NAME. AFTER HIS SPIRITUAL CONVERSION HIS MOTTO BECAME, "ALL FOR THE GREATER HONOR AND GLORY OF GOD." SAME OBSESSION, BUT NO LONGER FOR SELF.

FROM COURTIER WARRIOR TO PILGRIM AND PRIEST



AS A 16TH CENTURY MAN, IGNATIUS BELIEVED IN SPIRITS, THOSE FROM GOD, AND THOSE ALIGNED WITH SATAN, OR EVIL. THESE WERE SPIRITUAL ENTITIES THAT COULD INFLUENCE THE HUMAN SPIRIT, THOUGH HUMANS REMAIN FREE TO CHOOSE. IGNATIUS' WRITTEN WORK IS A PERSONAL TESTIMONY OF THE JOURNEY TOWARD MORE & MORE **FREEDOM** TO CHOOSE THE "GOOD," THE "GREATER," THE "MORE." THAT IS NOT BOUND BY THE SLAVERY, BLINDNESS & DISTORTION OF THE "ILL" EFFECTS OF PERSONAL & SOCIAL CONTRARY SPIRITS.

WHETHER YOU, THE READER, BELIEVE IN THESE SPIRITUAL ENTITIES OR NOT, IGNATIUS DID, AND IT IS HELPFUL TO REMEMBER THE CATHOLIC TRADITION THAT FORMED HIM. REGARDLESS, IGNATIUS' "RULES OF DISCERNMENT," THE BULK OF THIS WORK, ARE STILL PSYCHOLOGICALLY AS WELL AS SPIRITUALLY INSIGHTFUL.

IGNATIUS & DISCERNMENT OF SPIRITS

IGNATIUS' **CONVERSION** WAS WORKED THROUGH A VERY SLOW AND PAINFUL CONVALESCENCE AFTER A WAR INJURY. A CANONBALL SHATTERED HIS LEG, AND BECAUSE OF HIS VANITY, HE HAD DOCTORS RE-BREAK HIS LEG AFTER IT BEGAN TO SET CROOKED.

AS IGNATIUS LAY PRONE FOR LONG MONTHS, HE FANTASIZED ABOUT CHIVALROUS ADVENTURES AS A HERO KNIGHT IN SHINING ARMOR. IN HIS FAMILY CASTLE WERE ALSO TWO BOOKS: THE LIFE OF CHRIST, AND THE LIVES OF THE SAINTS.

OH, HOW I WOULD LOVE TO RESCUE A LADY IN DISTRESS... BUT I AM **STUCK** IN THIS PITIFUL STATE, PERHAPS FOREVER.

WHAT AN INSPIRATION ST. FRANCIS WAS. HE WAS HUMBLE AND DID GREAT GOOD DURING HIS TIME. SUFFERING ONLY MADE HIM MORE LOVING & COMPASSIONATE. HELP ME TO **SURRENDER**.



THE DAWNING OF A CONCEPT...
DISCERNMENT OF SPIRITS
ACCORDING TO IGNATIUS

AHHH... DESOLATION TAKES ME **AWAY** FROM YOUR WILL FOR ME! IT LEADS ME TO PRIDE AND VANITY... **NOT** MY BEST SELF!

CONSOLATION DRAWS ME **TOWARD** YOU AND THE MAN YOU INVITE ME TO BECOME!

I SEE THE PATTERN!



OVER TIME IGNATIUS BEGAN TO NOTICE THAT WHEN HE ENGAGED IN CHIVALROUS FANTASY IT WAS PLEASURABLE BUT AFTERWARD LEFT HIM **DRY** AND **AGITATED** IN SPIRIT. IT TOOK MORE CONCENTRATION TO READ THE HOLY BOOKS, BUT HE FOUND GREAT SATISFACTION, **ENERGY** AND **SWEETNESS** IN REFLECTING ON THESE STORIES. THEY MADE HIM WANT TO BE A BETTER PERSON. IGNATIUS NAMED THESE TWO MOVEMENTS **DESOLATION** AND **CONSOLATION**.

Interior Preparation

The "Givens"

Foundation of the Spiritual Life

"True North"

Choosing the "Good"

Choosing the Highest Good

Choosing the "Gold Star"

Choosing the "Happy Place"

Choosing Downward Mobility as Good

Journey of Purification

Role of Desire

"Felt Knowledge": Feelings and Spirit

Examen: Staying in the Relationship

Indifference: Freedom to Choose

Humor

Silence

Setting the Intention

Description: This chapter deals with the foundations that need to be in place in order to truly engage in *spiritual* discernment rather than just making a decision using reason and feelings alone.

THE FOUNDATION of the Spiritual Life

THERE IS A HIGHEST "UNCREATED"

GOOD, BEAUTY, TRUTH,

A PURPOSE AND PERSON
BIGGER THAN I
WHO SEEKS ME AND
MY **WHOLENESS**
EVEN MORE THAN I DO,
WHO DESIRES TO
COMMUNICATE
WITH ME.

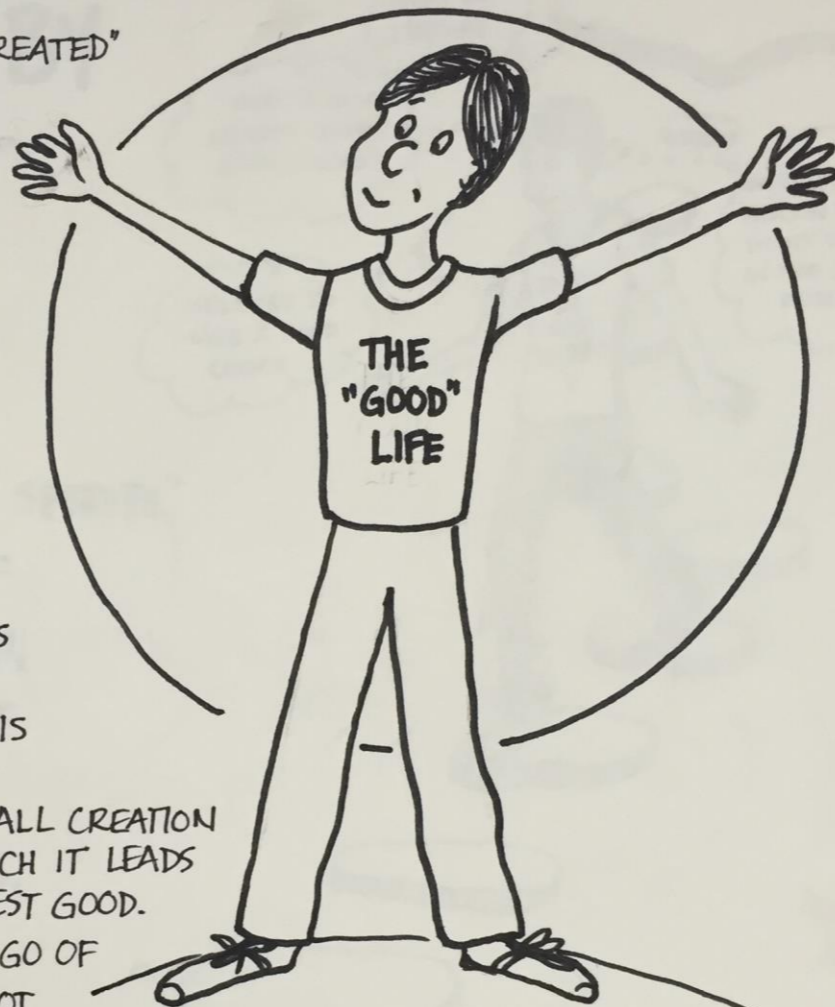
I AM CREATED (CREATURE)
LOVED & LOVEABLE.

EVERYTHING CREATED IN THIS
WORLD MAY LEAD ME
TO FULFILLMENT IN THIS
RELATIONSHIP

I AM INVITED TO ENGAGE ALL CREATION
TO THE EXTENT TO WHICH IT LEADS
TO THIS END, THE HIGHEST GOOD.

I AM CHALLENGED TO LET GO OF
ANYTHING THAT DOES NOT
LEAD TO THIS END ("INDIFFERENCE"
BORN OF INNER FREEDOM).

I AM CAPABLE OF **DISCERNING**
AMONG OPTIONS AND OF
CHOOSING THAT WHICH GIVES
FREEDOM AND LIFE
WITH THE GUIDANCE OF
THE **SPIRIT.**



THE "GOOD" LIFE?

GREATER **INTEGRITY** OF SELF,
OF RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD,
SELF, OTHERS, CREATION

MORE **FREEDOM** FROM INNER
& RELATIONAL SLAVERY

MORE **CLARITY** TO SEE
AND TO CHOOSE
THE "GOOD."

TRUE NORTH

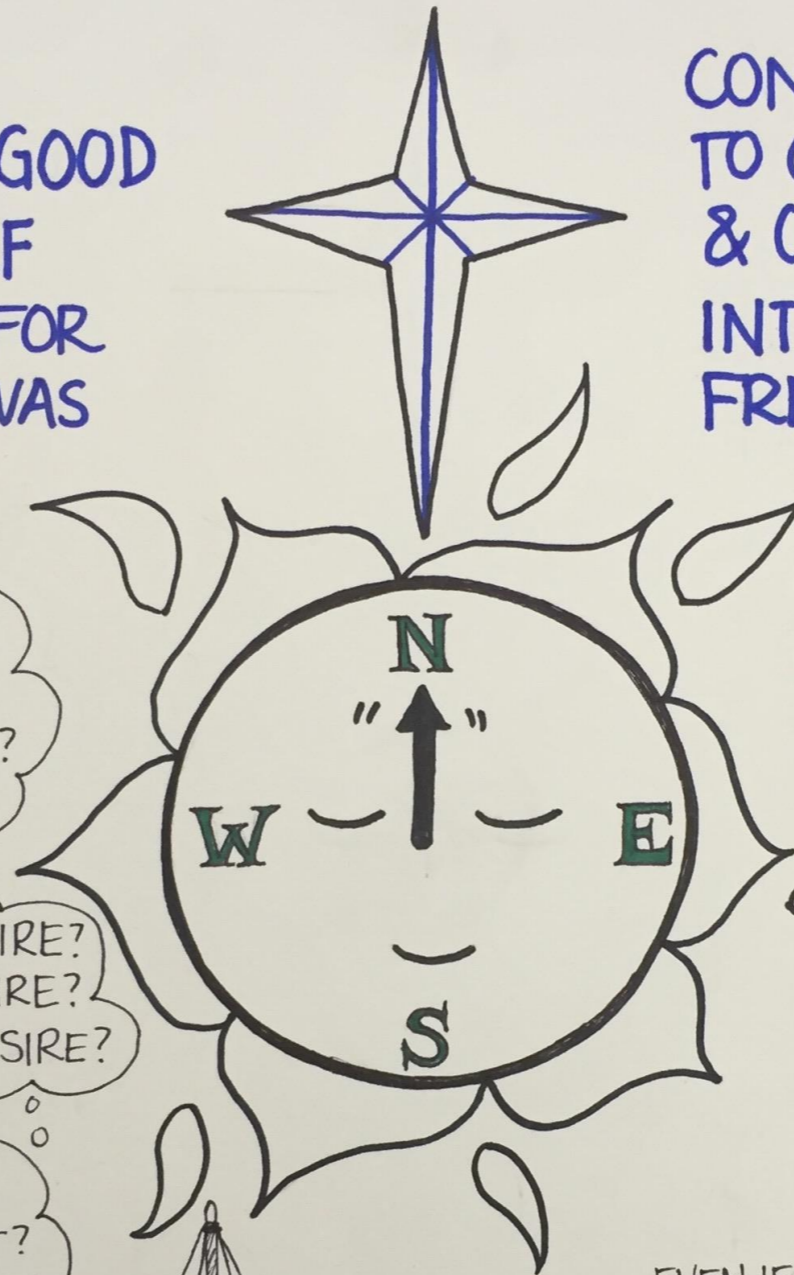
GOD
HIGHEST GOOD
BEST SELF
THE AIM FOR
WHICH I WAS
MADE

CONNECTEDNESS
TO GOD, SELF
& OTHERS
INTEGRITY
FREEDOM

WHAT GETS ME
OUT OF BED IN
THE MORNING?
WHY BOTHER?

WHAT IS MY DESIRE?
MY DEEPER DESIRE?
MY DEEPEST DESIRE?

WHAT OR WHO IS
MY GUIDING LIGHT?
BY WHAT OR WHOM
DO I SET AND
RESET MY
COURSE?



SETTING THE INTENTION
BEFORE EACH STEP AND
OFTEN IN BETWEEN
RECALIBRATES OUR
INTERIOR "HOMING
DEVICE."

KEEP RETURNING TO
THE FOUNDATION,
ESPECIALLY WHEN
THE FOG OF CONFUSION
OR COMPULSION ROLLS
IN. SLOW DOWN INSIDE.

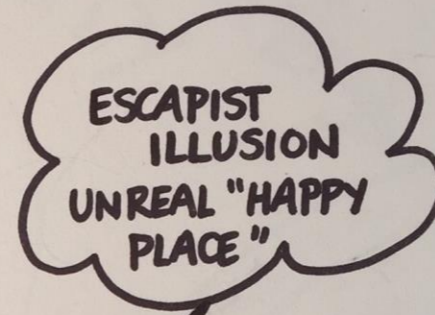
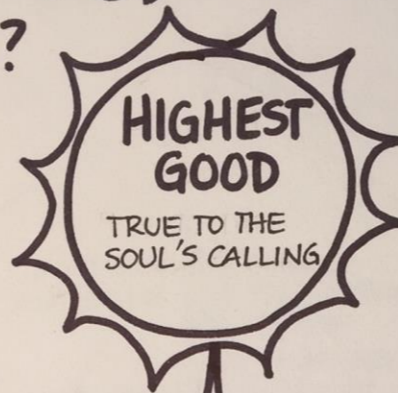
EVEN IF YOU CAN'T SEE TRUE
NORTH, SPIRIT CAN GUIDE YOU
THROUGH A COURSE CORRECTION.
NOTE: "CORRECTIONS" CAN BE
GNARLY, EVEN AS THEY ARE
FRUITFUL FOR THE LONG HAUL.



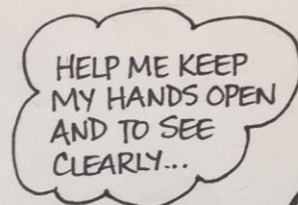
CHOOSING THE "GOOD"

WHAT MUST I DO?

WHAT MAY I DO?



WHAT I THINK MAY BE THE HIGHEST GOOD MAY BE MY ILLUSION, ESPECIALLY IF I AM OVERLY ATTACHED AND STRIVING, PUTTING MORE FOCUS ON MY RESPONSE-ABILITY THAN THE GRACEFUL UNFOLDMENT.



HIGHEST GOOD
TRUE TO THE SOUL'S CALLING

THE MOST GRACEFUL RESPONSE

IT IS EASY TO "OPT OUT" OF DECISIONS

THE MORE WE CHOOSE AND ACT OUT OF OUR DEEPER WISDOM, THE MORE IN ALIGNMENT WE BECOME WITH THE HIGHEST GOOD. WE HAVE GOALS IN MIND, BUT IT IS OUR **CHOICES** THAT DETERMINE OUR ACTUAL DIRECTION IN THE LONG RUN. OUR CHOICES ARE CUMULATIVE. THEY DEFINE US.

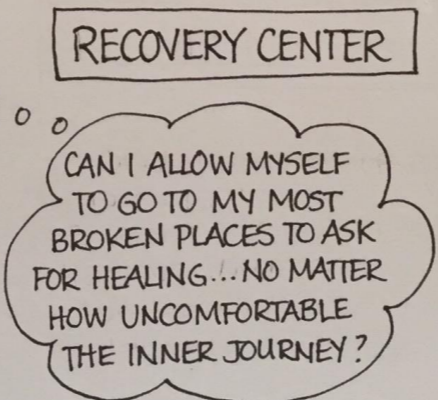
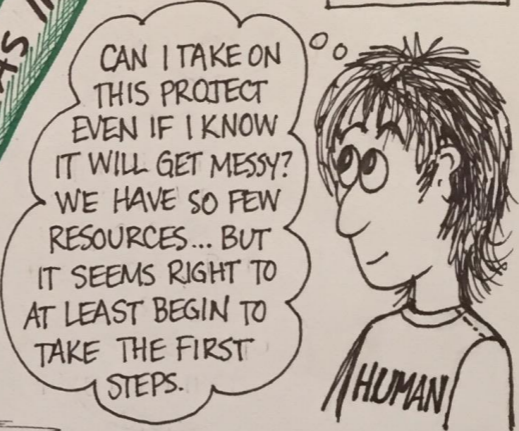
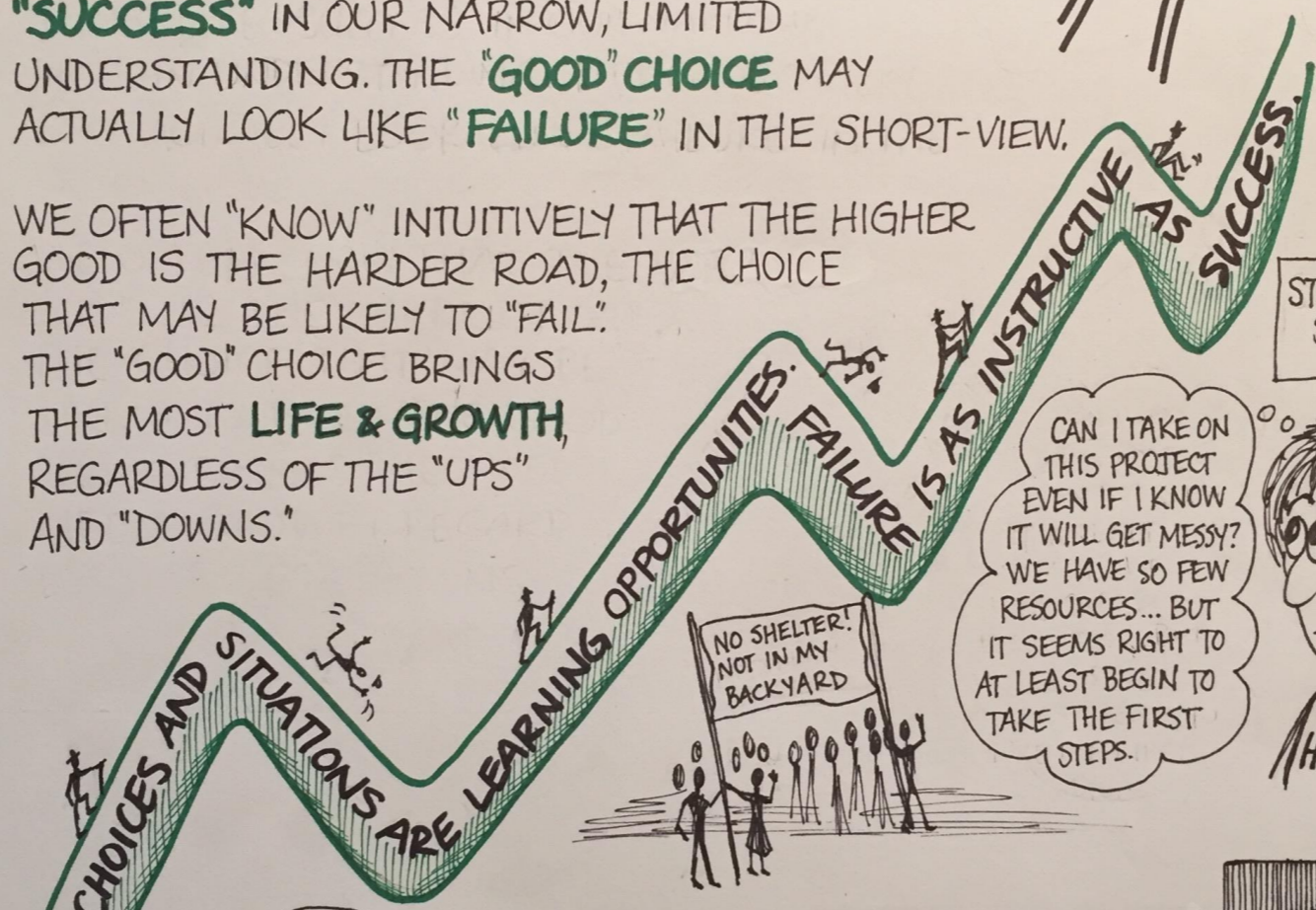
TO CHOOSE AND TO ACT ON THOSE CHOICES IS CHARACTERISTIC OF **HUMAN DIGNITY**. THE ALTERNATIVE IS SLAVERY, INCLUDING "OPTING OUT." TO CHOOSE IS HUMAN; THIS OUR WORK. THERE IS A HIGHER, DEEPER WISDOM THAT SAVES US FROM OUR LIMITED PERCEPTIONS IF WE TUNE IN.

WHEN CHOOSING, WE MAY **DISCERN**, OR SIFT, OUR OPTIONS IN CONVERSATION WITH OUR DEEPER WISDOM. SEEKING SPIRITUAL CONFIRMATION WITH EACH STEP OFFERS US AN OPPORTUNITY FOR A CORRECTIVE FOR OUR INNER LENS, HEALING DISTORTION AND LIMITED VISION.

CHOOSING ^{THE} HIGHEST GOOD

THE HIGHEST GOOD, THE JOURNEY TOWARD INTEGRITY, CLARITY AND FREEDOM DOES NOT ALWAYS CORRESPOND TO WHAT LOOKS LIKE "SUCCESS" IN OUR NARROW, LIMITED UNDERSTANDING. THE "GOOD CHOICE" MAY ACTUALLY LOOK LIKE "FAILURE" IN THE SHORT-VIEW.

WE OFTEN "KNOW" INTUITIVELY THAT THE HIGHER GOOD IS THE HARDER ROAD, THE CHOICE THAT MAY BE LIKELY TO "FAIL". THE "GOOD" CHOICE BRINGS THE MOST LIFE & GROWTH, REGARDLESS OF THE "UPS" AND "DOWNS."



CHOOSING THE GOOD?

THE GOLD STAR

SOMETIMES WHAT WE PERCEIVE TO BE THE HIGHEST GOOD IS A FUNCTION OF OUR **PERFECTIONISM**, OUR NEED TO MAKE OURSELVES INTO THE IMAGE WE HAVE CONSTRUCTED FOR OURSELVES.

THIS SHORT-SIGHTED STRIVING PLACES LIMITS ON GOD'S POSSIBILITIES, GOD'S DREAM FOR US. OUR LIMITED IDEA OF PERFECTION, THEN, DOES NOT LEAVE ROOM FOR GOD'S ABUNDANCE.

THIS GOLD STAR IDEAL IS OFTEN A CONSTRUCTION OF OTHERS' OR OF OVERALL CULTURAL **EXPECTATIONS** (IDEAS OF "SUCCESS," "SPIRITUAL," ECT.)

THIS DEFAULT THINKING NEEDS TO BE PURIFIED IN THE LIGHT OF THE PRESENT DISCERNMENT



I HAVE TO BE "GOOD" ALWAYS. IT IS NEVER OK TO BE SAD OR ANGRY.

I MUST BE RESPONSIBLE ALL THE TIME. NO ONE ELSE IN MY FAMILY IS UP TO THE TASK.

ATTENTION: TO OVERSTRIVE IS OFTEN A SIGN THAT THE HEALING TO BE SOUGHT IS "GOOD-ENOUGH-NESS".

SPIRIT, MAY I KNOW I AM BOTH BROKEN AND LOVED AS GOOD ENOUGH IN THE **NOW**.

I WANT TO BE HOLY JUST LIKE ST. FRANCIS, THE GREATEST SAINT EVER!



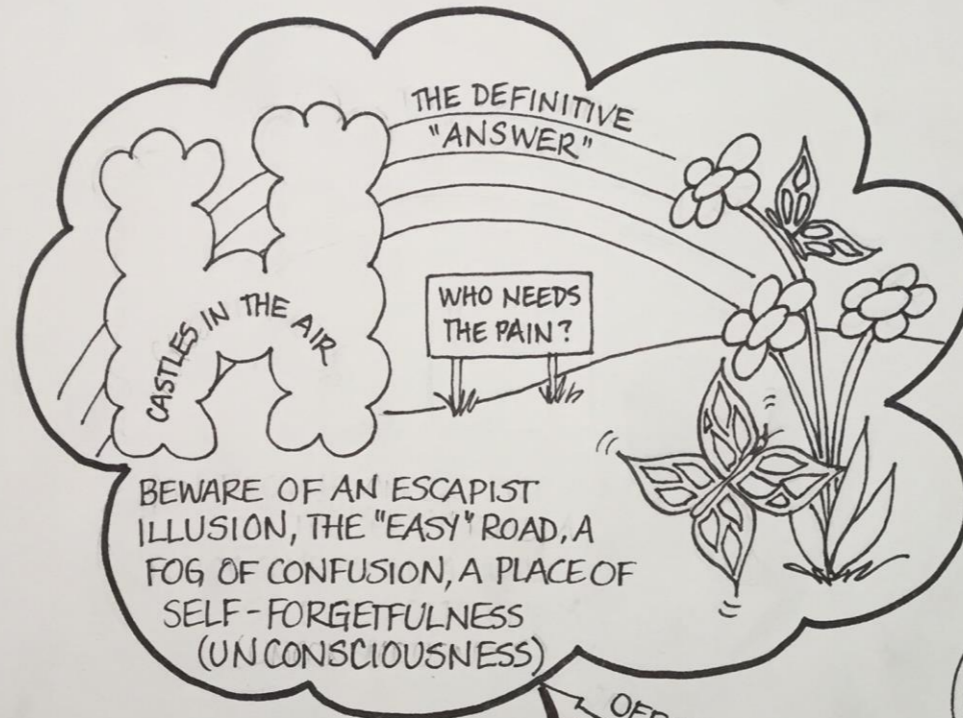
NOTE "ALWAYS" & "NEVER" ON THE WAY TO DESOLATION

STRIVING TOWARD A PRE-SET GOAL, WITHOUT ATTENDING TO INNER MOVEMENTS, WE MAY MISS THE GOOD THAT IS RIGHT IN FRONT OF US IN THE **PRESENT, THE NOW**



CHOOSING THE "GOOD"?

THE "HAPPY PLACE"

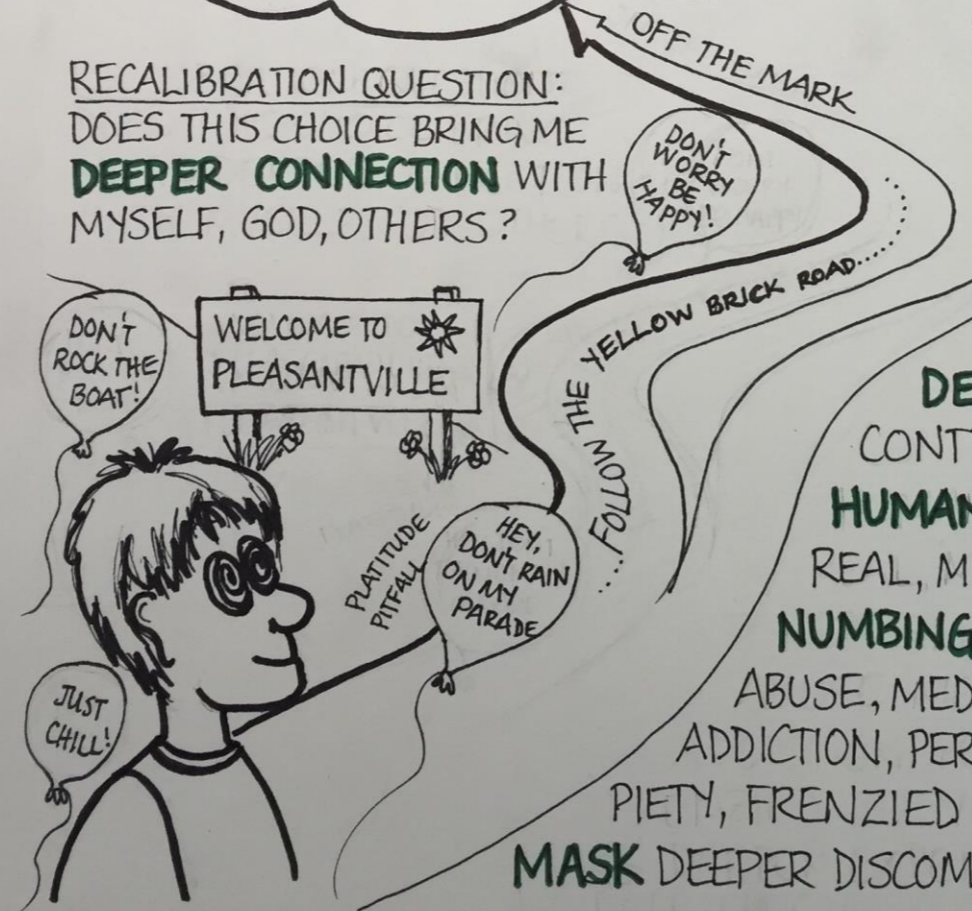


THE HIGHEST GOOD
THE REAL DEAL

WE MAY CONFUSE THE "GOOD" WITH WHAT "FEELS GOOD" OR AT LEAST LESS ARDUOUS. JUST BECAUSE IT FEELS GOOD IN THE **SHORT**

TERM DOES NOT MEAN IT IS TRUE SPIRITUAL CONSOLATION THAT LEADS TO DEEPER **LIFE & CONNECTION**

RECALIBRATION QUESTION:
DOES THIS CHOICE BRING ME **DEEPER CONNECTION** WITH MYSELF, GOD, OTHERS?



THE PITFALL OF THIS PATH OF **ILLUSION** IS THAT WE AVOID **DEEPER FEELINGS** AND CONTRADICTIONS IN THE **HUMAN CONDITION**. WE REPLACE REAL, MESSY CONNECTION WITH **NUMBING** BEHAVIORS: SUBSTANCE ABUSE, MEDIA ADDICTION, EXERCISE ADDICTION, PERFECTIONISM, UNGROUNDED PIETY, FRENZIED BUSY-NESS, ETC., ALL TO **MASK** DEEPER DISCOMFORT

CHOOSING ~~DOWNWARD~~ MOBILITY AS GOOD

THE CHRISTIAN STORY OFFERS THE COMPELLING IMAGE OF THE CROSS AS A SIGN OF THIS SPIRITUAL DYNAMIC.

LIFE PASSION (AKA SUFFERING)

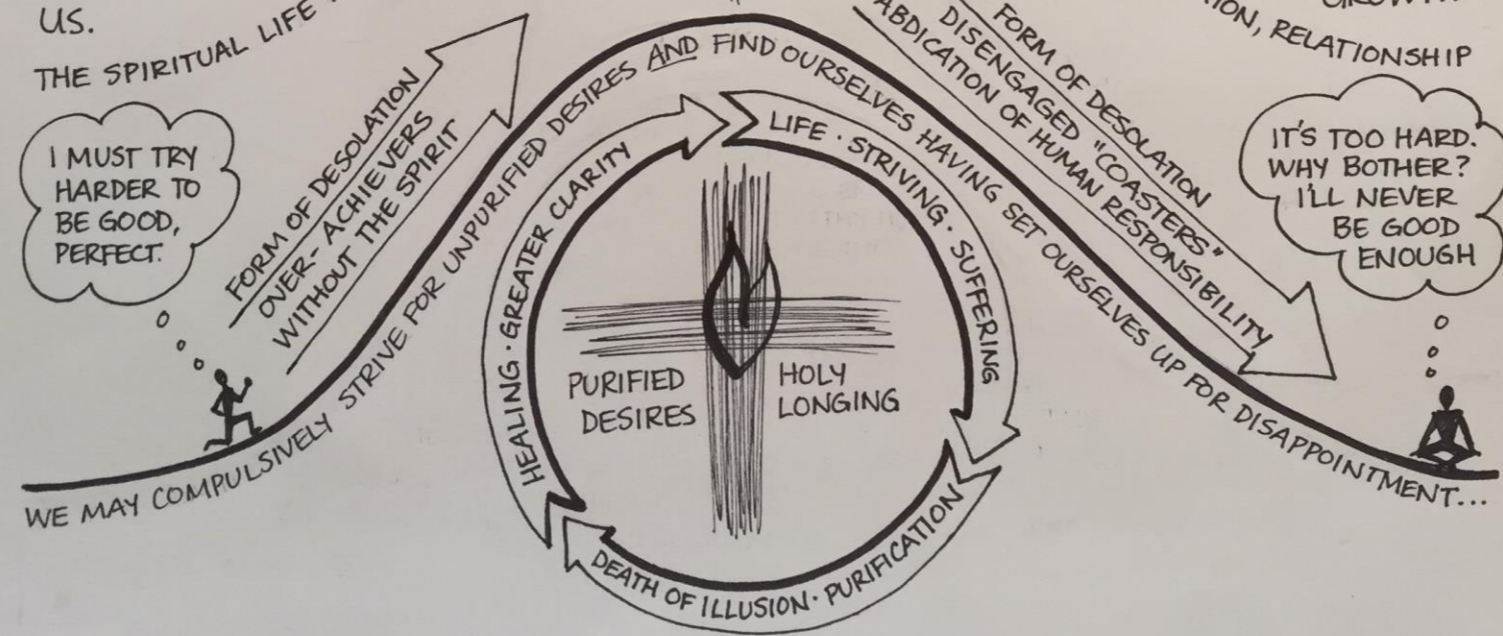
THIS CYCLE OF LIFE, SUFFERING, DEATH AND RESURRECTION TAKES A SOUL DEEPER WITH EACH PURIFYING ROUND. NATURE'S CYCLES ARE MIRRORED BUT THE SPIRITUAL JOURNEY DRILLS DOWN, DEEPER, GROUNDING US.



RESURRECTION

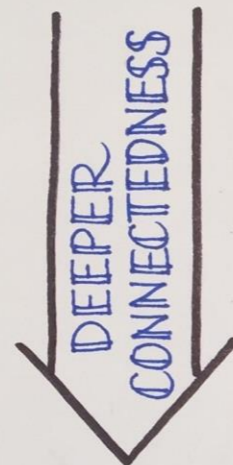
LIFE IS DIFFICULT. DECISIONS ARE CHALLENGING. WITH THIS MODEL TO MAKE SENSE OF LIFE, DESIRE AND INTENTION TO LIVE INTO THE HIGHEST GOOD MEANS THERE IS NO 'FAILURE'. COMPASSION IS FOUND AT THE BOTTOM OF THE HILL, WITH EVERY DEATH AND NEW GROWTH.

THE SPIRITUAL LIFE IS LESS ABOUT STRIVING AND MORE ABOUT TRUST, SURRENDER, CONNECTION, RELATIONSHIP



JOURNEY OF PURIFICATION & CONNECTEDNESS

DOWNWARD & INWARD (rather than upward & onward)

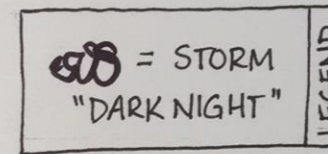
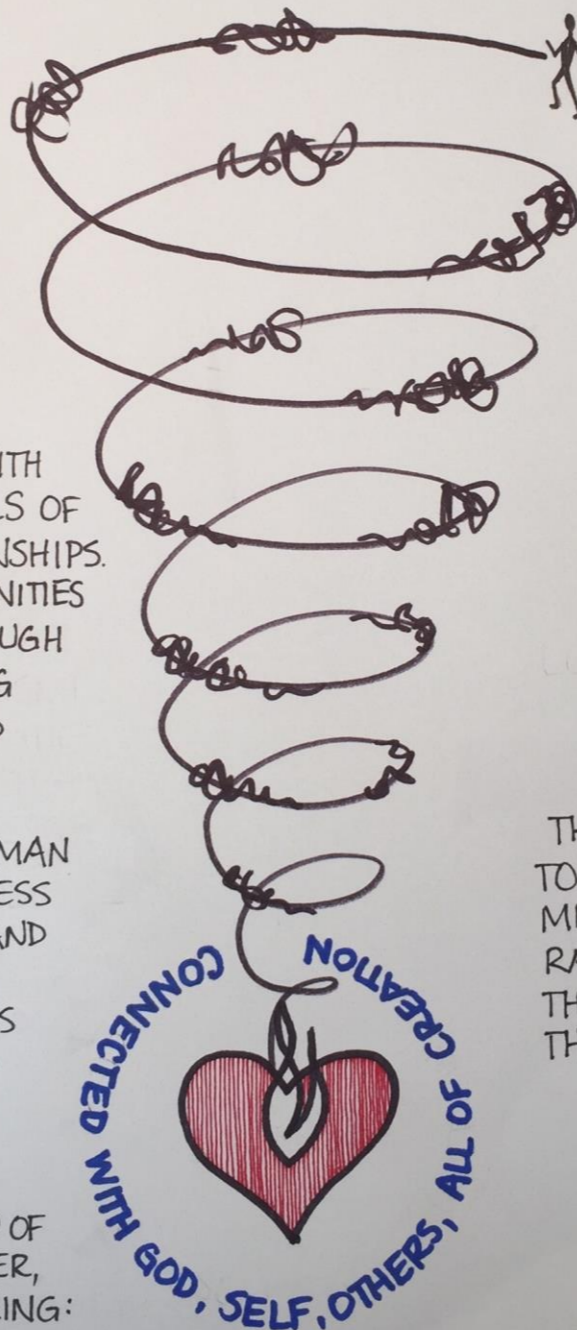


WE ARE ALL FAMILIAR WITH THE STORMS AND SQUALLS OF THE INNER LIFE & RELATIONSHIPS. THESE "BUMPS" ARE OPPORTUNITIES TO BREAK DOWN AND THROUGH CRYSTALLIZED WAYS OF BEING THAT NEED REORDERING AND HEALING.

WITH EACH STORM, OUR HUMAN LIMITATIONS AND BROKENNESS ARE REVISITED ON DEEPER AND DEEPER LEVELS. WHEN WE SURRENDER TO THIS PROCESS OF PURIFICATION, LAYERS AND LAYERS OF HEALING OCCUR.

PLACES WHERE "BAD" SPIRITS ATTACK ARE, THEN, NOT DEVOID OF GOD'S PURIFYING WORK. RATHER, WE COOPERATE BY SURRENDERING:

"I CAN'T DO THIS. HELP!"



OPPORTUNITIES TO HEAL...

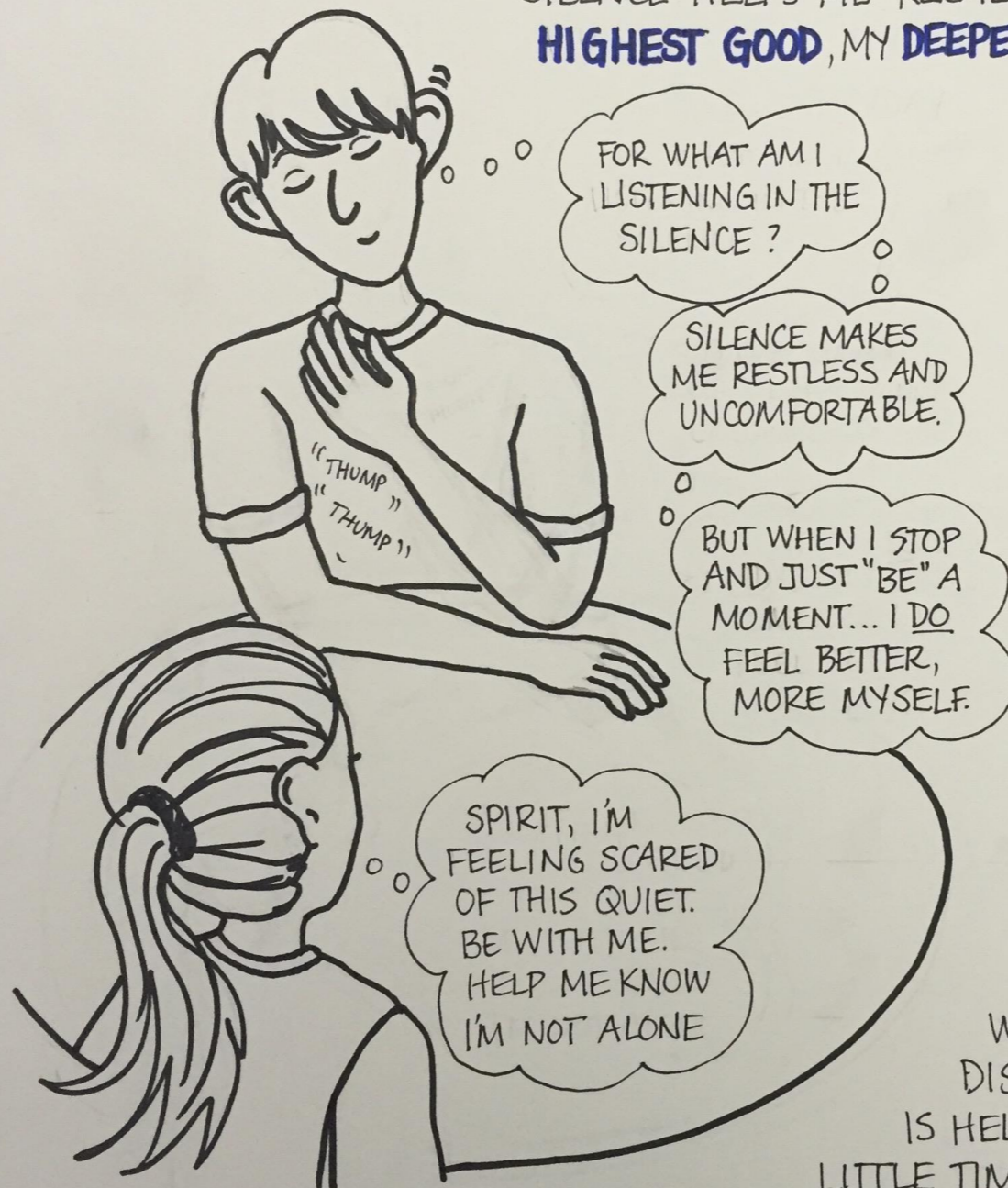
NUMBNESS
NARCISSISM
ENTRANCEMENT
ENMESHMENT
CO-DEPENDENCE
SELF-DECEPTION
EGOTISM
ADDICTION

THE CLOSER YOU COME TO THE CORE DOES NOT MEAN THE STORMS CEASE, RATHER, BY THIS TIME THERE IS MUCH EVIDENCE THAT "THIS TOO WILL PASS."

YOU BEGIN TO TRUST THE PROCESS AND THE CREATOR.

LISTENING ^{IN} THE **SILENCE**

LISTENING TO THE HEART OF THINGS, PEOPLE, SITUATIONS, MYSELF, I **WAIT** ON THE **DEEPER WISDOM**, BEYOND THE EASY "FIX," THE IMMEDIATELY EXPEDIENT "ANSWER." THE PRACTICE OF INTERIOR SILENCE HELPS ME RECALIBRATE TO THE **HIGHEST GOOD**, MY **DEEPEST VALUES**.



THE SILENCE IS NOT A **VOID**. THERE IS **SOMEONE** TO WHOM WE ARE LISTENING: TO OUR DEEPEST SELVES, TO SPIRIT, TO THE SPIRIT OF OTHERS WHO ARE PRESENT. IF YOU ARE HAVING TROUBLE, **RESET** THE INTENTION THAT YOU ARE LISTENING TO OR WITH SOMEONE WHO MAKES YOU FEEL SAFE.

TO "TUNE IN" OFTEN DURING THE DAY WHEN WE ARE TRYING TO DISCERN NEXT STEPS, IT IS HELPFUL TO SET ASIDE A LITTLE TIME EACH DAY TO **UNPLUG** FOR PRACTICE.



DEVELOPING A DISPOSITION OF INDIFFERENCE

DISINTERESTED
(MY "INTERESTS" ARE
NOT CAPTIVATED BUT FREE)

IMPARTIAL
(WELL, I CAN DESIRE ONE
THING BUT I CAN ALSO
LIVE WITHOUT IT)

DETACHED
(FROM DISORDERED, THAT
IS, "OUT OF ORDER",
IMPULSES)

UN"HOOKED"

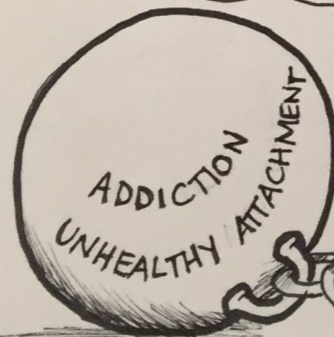
I CAN LIVE
WITH EITHER
OUTCOME IF MY
HEART IS IN LINE
WITH THE
"GOOD."

HOW FREE
AM I TO
CHOOSE IN
THIS CASE?

AM I UNDULY
ATTACHED TO A
PARTICULAR OUTCOME
OR EXPECTATION?

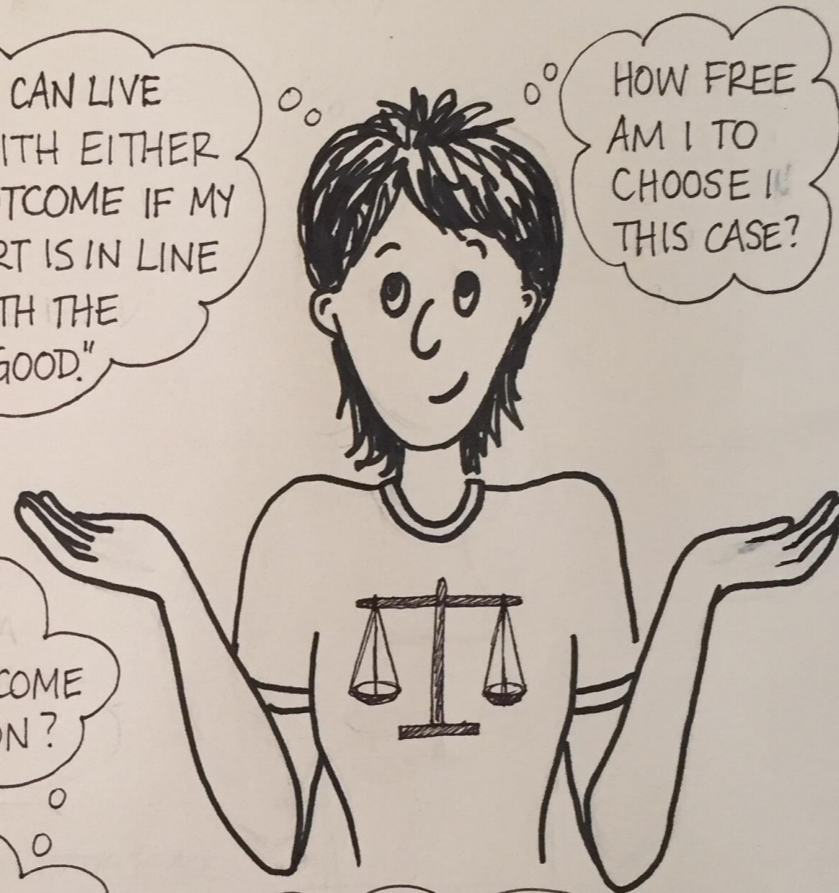
DO I HAVE PEACE OF HEART
WHEN I IMAGINE EITHER OUTCOME,
IF THIS DISCERNMENT SEEMS TO
BE IN THE HIGHEST GOOD IN
THIS CASE... FOR NOW?

IF I AM TRULY IN ALIGNMENT
WITH GOD/HIGHEST GOOD IT
SHOULDN'T MATTER IF THE CHOICE
OR OUTCOME IS HARD OR "EASY."



*I promise to be true to you in good times and in bad,
in sickness and in health. I will love and honor you
all the days of my life (no matter where it takes us...)*

WHATEVER MAY COME...



Spiritual Discernment

What is Spiritual Discernment?

What is Spirit?

Body/Soul in Time

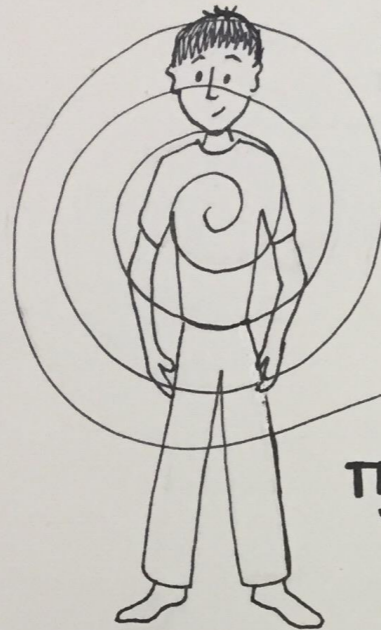
Body/Spirit and the "Spiritual" Pitfall

Good/Bad Language

Polarization

Description: This chapter deals with foundational definitions regarding spirit, soul, body, time, and discernment in an attempt to ground what could otherwise be an unmoored spiritual mist of self-deception. The Ignatian language of good and bad spirits that may be polarizing to the current generation is also explored, though there is an attempt to honor the tradition as closely as possible.

WHAT IS "SPIRIT"?



I THINK
THEREFORE
I AM

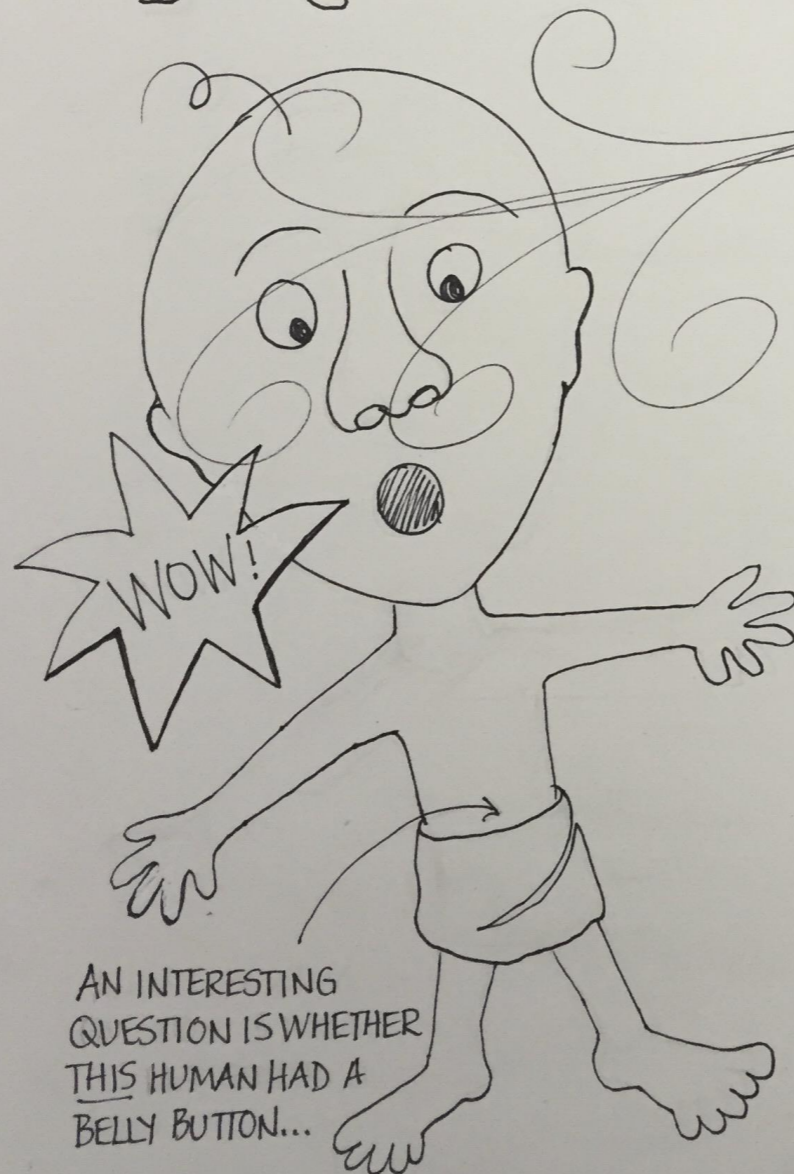
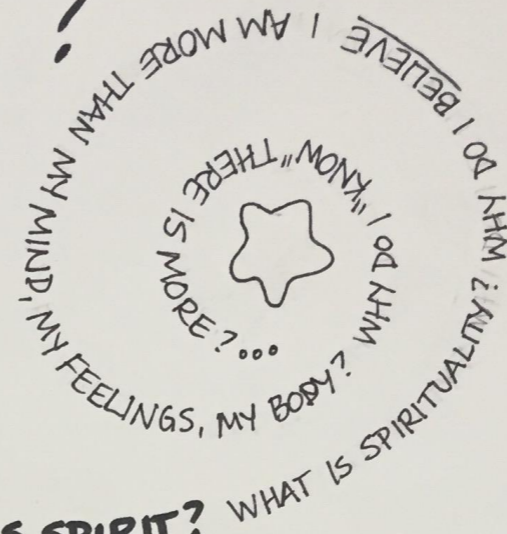
YES... AND NO.
I AM MORE THAN
MY MIND...

I FEEL
THEREFORE
I AM

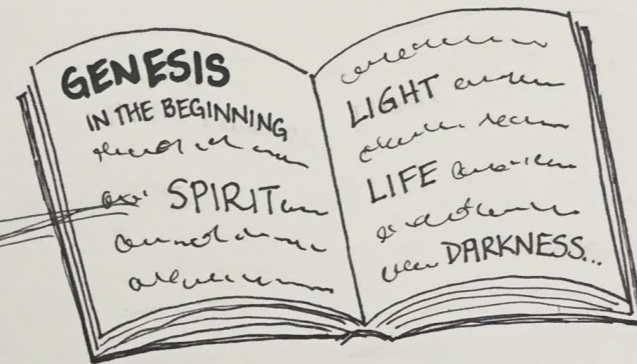
YES... AND NO.
I AM MORE THAN
MY FEELINGS...

**I AM MORE
THAN MY BODY
YET I AM
MY BODY TOO.**

WHAT IS SPIRIT?



AN INTERESTING
QUESTION IS WHETHER
THIS HUMAN HAD A
BELLY BUTTON...



IN THE JUDEO-CHRISTIAN SCRIPTURES
"SPIRIT" IS RESPONSIBLE FOR **LIGHT**
AND **LIFE**. THE WORD MEANS
"WIND" OR "BREATH." IN THE BOOK OF
THE "BEGINNING," GOD BREATHES INTO
THE NOSTRILS OF THE HUMAN THE
BREATH OF LIFE

(AKA "SPIRIT"). THIS HUMAN SPIRIT IS
THE LIFEFORCE THAT SUSTAINS US, PART
OF US THAT IS ESSENTIAL (ESSENCE =
I AM-NESS), AND BY WHICH WE CAN
EXPERIENCE THE **SPIRIT OF GOD**
WHO CREATED US.

BODY-SOUL IN TIME BOUND



THE JOURNEY IS A DELICATE WALK BETWEEN AND WITH TWO REALITIES...

TIME and **ETERNITY**

HISTORICAL, LINEAR, EM-BODIED

IN-SPIRITED

we cannot escape either reality as we discern each step

THE BODY-SOUL EXPERIENCE IS VERY PURPOSEFUL. IT IS OUR HUMAN DESTINY, INDIVIDUALLY AND COLLECTIVELY. WE ACT ON THE WORLD. WE EXPERIENCE CONSEQUENCES OF ACTION AND INACTION.

WE WORK OUT OUR SPIRITUAL LIFE IN THESE BODY-SOULS, AND THAT IMPLIES HISTORY, AND THEREFORE CONSTRUCTION TO THE PARTICULAR: FAMILY, GEOGRAPHY, PLACE AND TIME IN HUMAN HISTORY, ETC. NONE OF THESE "GIVENS" CAN BE SEPARATED OUT FROM THE "SPIRITUAL LIFE." THESE FACTS ARE OUR SPIRITUAL LIFE AS BODY-SOULS!



BODY~SPIRIT & the "spiritual" pitfall



AS HUMAN BEINGS WE ARE BODY AND SPIRIT, MATERIAL AND SPIRITUAL, **INDIVISIBLE**. IF WE IDENTIFY TOO MUCH WITH THE SPIRITUAL, TO THE EXCLUSION OF OUR BODILY NATURE, WE LOSE OURSELVES AND OUR CONNECTION TO GOD AND OTHERS.

SELF-STYLED "SPIRITUAL" PEOPLE OFTEN TRY TO LIVE OUTSIDE OF OR DESPITE THEIR BODIES, PERCEIVING THE MATERIAL WORLD TO BE CONSTRICTING, A PRISON FROM WHICH THEY STRIVE TO BE FREED. SEEN THIS WAY, THE BODY BECOMES A LIABILITY THAT MUST BE ABANDONED, IGNORED OR FORCED INTO SUBMISSION, OFTEN THROUGH RIGOROUS "SPIRITUAL" PRACTICE.

WHEN I REJECT MY BODILY HUMANITY I AM LIKELY TO REJECT THAT OF OTHERS, AS WELL AS THE FULL RANGE OF HUMAN EXPERIENCE.



NO "SPIRITUAL" PRACTICE CAN FREE US FROM THE **GIFT** OF THE **BODY**. WE MUST HONOR **BODY=SOUL** AS **ONE REALITY**

THIS ESCAPISM FROM BODILY REALITY CAN BE A REACTION TO FORMER SLAVERY OR ADDICTION TO BODILY IMPULSES... OR A COPING MECHANISM FOR VICTIMS OF OTHERS' NEGLECT OR ABUSE

Rules for Discernment

Orientation I (First Set)

Orientation II (Second Set)

Consolation

Desolation

Change

Doing What We Can (Go-Against)

Hope and Surrender

Negotiating Desolation with Patience

Desolation as Stuckness

Savor Consolation

Consolation and Surrender

Setting Boundaries on Interior Bullies

Sscrets

Sseducer

Self-Knowledge and Achilles Heel

Anatomy of a Movement

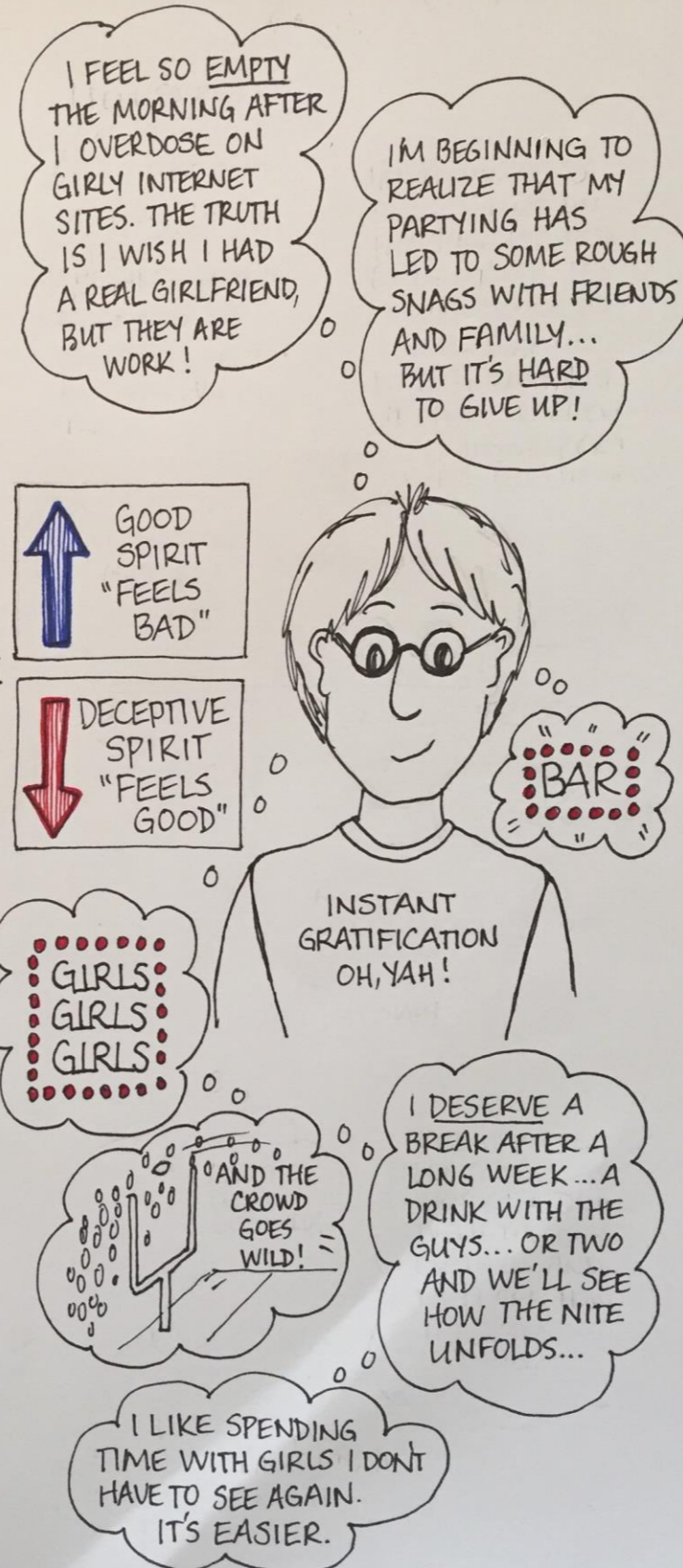
ORIENTATION I

FOR A PERSON WHO IS CAUGHT IN THE WEB OF ADDICTION OR FALSE REASONING, WHO IS STILL STRUGGLING WITH EXTERIOR DISTRACTIONS TO THE DETRIMENT OF INTERIOR CONNECTEDNESS, THE SPIRITS WORK THIS WAY:

THE GOOD SPIRIT OR IMPULSE WILL FEEL **WRENCHING** AND **UNCOMFORTABLE**, AS IT INVITES THE PERSON TO **CHANGE**, TO HEALING & GREATER CONSCIOUSNESS.

THE DECEPTIVE SPIRIT OR IMPULSE WILL FEEL **COMFORTABLE** AND **EASIER**, KEEPING A PERSON LOCKED INTO OLD, **FAMILIAR** HABITS AND ATTITUDES.

THIS ORIENTATION USUALLY CORRESPONDS TO A PERSON WHO IS RELATIVELY NEW TO THE SPIRITUAL LIFE, AND IT MAY ALSO BE TRUE OF A VETERAN IN THE SPIRITUAL LIFE WHO IS BLIND OR UNFREE IN A PARTICULAR AREA.



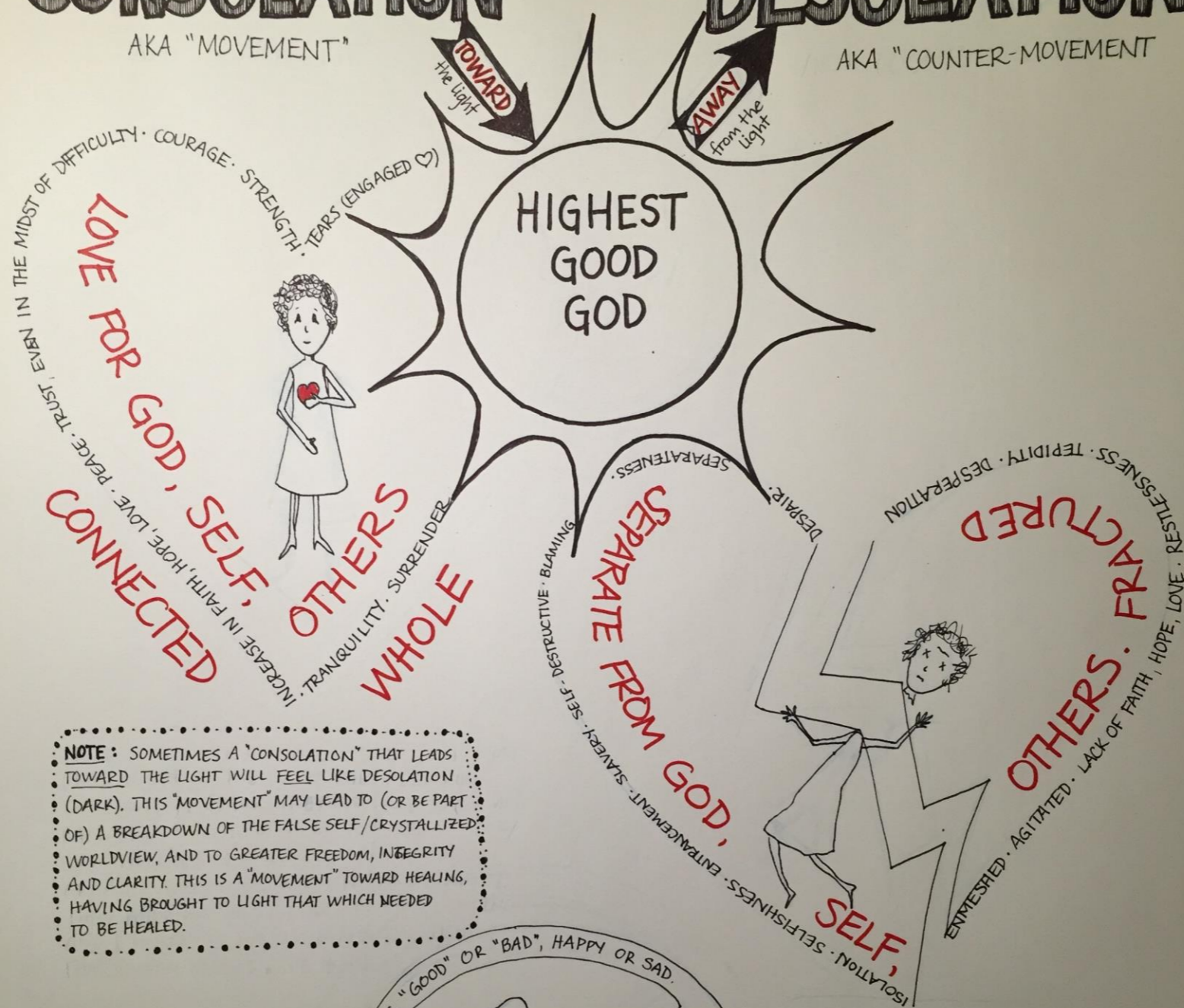
SPIRITUAL CONSOLATION

AKA "MOVEMENT"

SPIRITUAL DESOLATION

AKA "COUNTER-MOVEMENT"

NOTE THE ADJECTIVE "SPIRITUAL"



IN THE MIDST OF DIFFICULTY · COURAGE · STRENGTH · TEARS (ENGAGED ♥)

INCREASE IN FAITH, HOPE, LOVE · PEACE · TRUST · EVEN IN THE MIDST OF DIFFICULTY · TRANQUILITY · SURRENDER

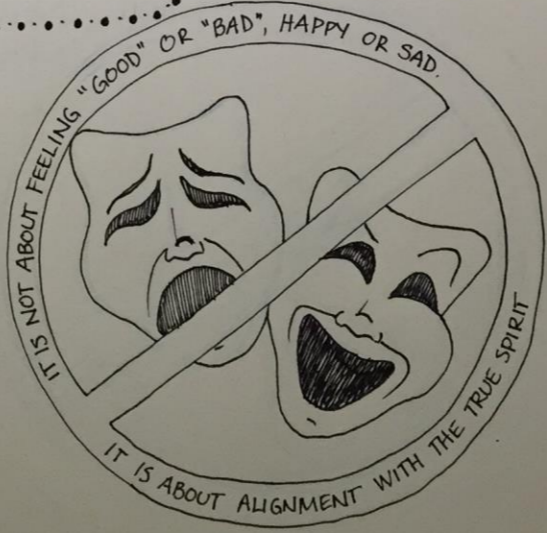
SEPARATENESS · DESPAIR · SELF-DESTRUCTIVE · BLAMING

RESTLESSNESS · TEPIDITY · DESPERATION

ISOLATION · SELFISHNESS · ENMESHED · AGITATED · LACK OF FAITH, HOPE, LOVE

NOTE: SOMETIMES A "CONSOLATION" THAT LEADS TOWARD THE LIGHT WILL FEEL LIKE DESOLATION (DARK). THIS "MOVEMENT" MAY LEAD TO (OR BE PART OF) A BREAKDOWN OF THE FALSE SELF/CRYSTALLIZED WORLDVIEW, AND TO GREATER FREEDOM, INTEGRITY AND CLARITY. THIS IS A "MOVEMENT" TOWARD HEALING, HAVING BROUGHT TO LIGHT THAT WHICH NEEDED TO BE HEALED.

NOTE: IF THE FEELINGS OF DESOLATION LEAD TO DESPAIR AND NUMBING, ADDICTIVE, SELF-PROTECTIVE, SELF-DESTRUCTIVE THOUGHTS AND BEHAVIORS THEY MAY BE "BAD" SPIRITS. IF HEEDED, THE "BAD" SPIRITS MAY LEAD ONE INTO A "DENIAL LOOP" UNTIL AND IF A CRASH OR REPEATED CRASHES LEADS ONE TO CONVERSION, DEEPER SELF-KNOWLEDGE AND SURRENDER.



TESTING THE SPIRITS

FACED WITH A LIFE-GIVING PROPOSAL OR IMPULSE: THE "GOOD" (TRUE)

FACED WITH A PROPOSAL OR IMPULSE THAT LEADS TO LESS FREEDOM, NOT IN ALIGNMENT: THE "ILL" (FALSE)

"GOOD" SPIRIT MOVES TOWARD THE HIGHEST GOOD/GOD AND BEST SELF CONNECTEDNESS

STIRS UP
COURAGE, STRENGTH,
CONSOLATION
TEARS (ENGAGES THE ♥)
INSPIRATION
TRANQUILITY
TRUST & SURRENDERING

"BAD" SPIRIT MOVES AWAY FROM HIGHEST GOOD/GOD AND BEST SELF, RATHER THE "ILL"

MOVES TOWARD THE "ILL" WHICH SEEMS ATTRACTIVE, PLEASURABLE SEDUCTIVE BECAUSE OF COMPULSION, WEAKNESS, BLIND SPOT

SEPARATION, ISOLATION

NOTE:
This does not necessarily "feel" good, but there is a deeper good and a deeper peace, a trust in the long haul & God.

NOTE:
None of us may presume we have moved beyond this illusion/entrancement across all parts of our psyche and spirit. We must test the spirits.



"BAD" SPIRIT

CAUSES ANXIETY, SADNESS, INNER ATTACK
OBSTACLES, CONFUSION
FALSE REASONING (CIRCULAR THINKING, STAYING IN THE HEAD, UNINTEGRATED)
TOXIC SHAME
TRIES TO DISSUADE FROM TRUE INTENTION

"GOOD" SPIRIT

REPULSED BY THE "ILL" IMPULSE
CAUSE "DIS-EASE"
"STING OF CONSCIENCE"
HEALTHY REMORSE
AGITATION MEANT TO AWAKEN PERSON FROM ALLURE OF FALSE PERCEPTIONS (FOG, CONFUSION)
STIRS COURAGE TO RESIST TEMPTATION OR

Presumes a well-formed conscience, not distorted or shaming

PERSON IS IN ALIGNMENT WITH HIGHER GOOD/SPIRIT. FREE IN THIS INSTANCE (or in general)

QUESTION: WHAT IS THE ORIENTATION (TOWARD OR AWAY) OF THIS PERSON IN THIS PARTICULAR INSTANCE?

DETERMINE THE ORIENTATION

QUESTION: HOW FREE ARE YOU AROUND THIS PARTICULAR ACTION/OBJECT/PERSON/CIRCUMSTANCE? IS THERE ANY AGENDA OR INORDINATE ATTACHMENT?

"GOOD" SPIRIT

NOTE:
If grace (inspiration) is there to identify why there is dis-ease, then ask for grace to overcome resistance or addiction.

CAUSES "DIS-EASE", FEELS "WRONG"
DISTURBS STATUS QUO
SEEMS UNFAMILIAR, UNCOMFORTABLE
CALLS TO CONVERSION: CHANGE IN DIRECTION, HABITS

"BAD" SPIRIT

ENTICES, ATTRACTS, SEDUCES
ENGAGES COMPULSIONS, ADDICTIONS
APPEARS "GOOD", SAFE, FAMILIAR, COMFORTABLE

PERSON NOT IN ALIGNMENT. UNFREE IN THIS INSTANCE (or in general)

"BAD" SPIRIT

NATURAL REPULSION TO CHANGE, SEEKS TO DISSUADE FROM RE-DIRECT AND RETURN TO COMFORT ZONE, SOMETIMES FALSE PEACE/"ENTRANCEMENT"
"HAZE" OF TRANQUILITY
ATTACKS TO MAINTAIN STATUS QUO

"GOOD" SPIRIT



MOVE TOWARD "GOOD" IMPULSE • DISTANCE YOURSELF FROM THE "BAD", BUT...
ALL THIS IN ORDER TO CHOOSE; EVEN SURRENDERING IS A CHOICE.
TEST TO SEEK HIDDEN UNMET NEEDS OR SHADOW WISDOM... (more to come on this)

EXTRAORDINARY CONSOLATION

ONLY GOD CAN GIVE CONSOLATION WITHOUT PREVIOUS CAUSE, AN EXTRAORDINARY GIFT WE DO NOTHING TO MAKE HAPPEN, AND WE CANNOT RECREATE THE EXPERIENCE ON OUR OWN.

THIS "GOD-TOUCH" WILL BE CLEAR, UNDENIABLE, AND WILL CONTINUE TO "BEAR FRUIT," THAT IS, COMFORT, STRENGTHEN AND GIVE COURAGE WHEN IT IS BROUGHT TO MIND OR THE EVENT IS RETOLD.

STILL, GOD IS EVER RESPECTFUL OF HUMAN FREEDOM. SOMEWHERE THERE MUST HAVE BEEN AN INVITATION, A CRACK IN THE DOOR. THERE IS A COMPONENT OF HUMAN COOPERATION, A SURRENDER, HOWEVER SMALL, THAT PREPARES US TO RECEIVE

IN-BREAKING OF THE SPIRIT

ATLION



WOW! I AM LOVED. FOR THE FIRST TIME I KNOW THIS. I BELIEVE IT. I TRUST THAT I AM UNIQUE AND PRECIOUS. WOW...

SENSE OF ENOUGH-NESS

INSPIRIT

COMFORT & TRUST IN SUFFERING

ALL OF A SUDDEN I FELT A TREMENDOUS PEACE. I KNEW IT WAS GOING TO BE OK EVEN THOUGH THE SITUATION SEEMED HOPELESS, NO MATTER WHAT THE OUTCOME. I FELT DEEP CALM, LIKE I WAS BEING HELD LOVINGLY. I FELT SAFE.

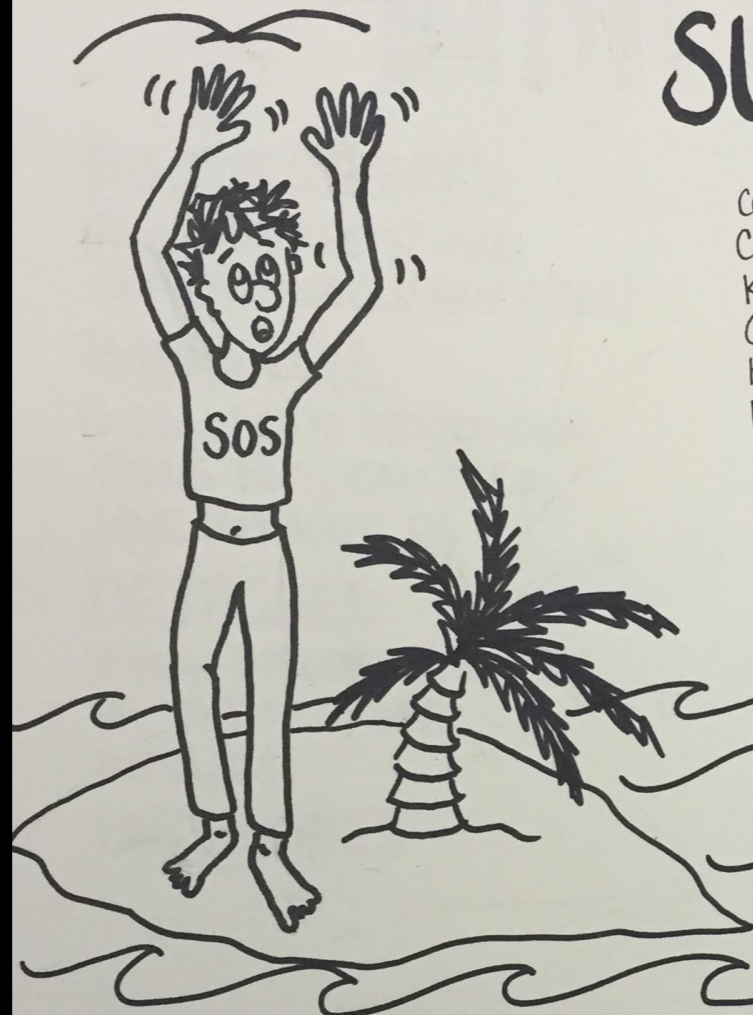


CONVERSION

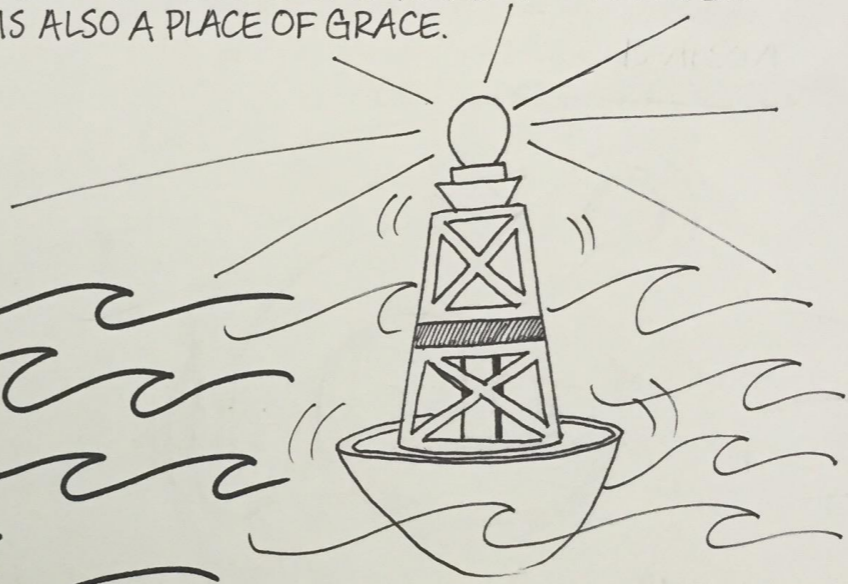
YEAH, I HAD AN AMAZING CONVERSION. I STRUGGLED WITH ADDICTION FOR YEARS. IT WAS BAD. I HAD PRAYED FOR RELEASE SO OFTEN. THEN, IN A MOMENT I HEARD THESE WORDS, I CRIED TEARS OF GRIEF FOR DAYS. SOMETHING SHIFTED. I'VE BEEN TEMPTED BUT THAT MOMENT AND FRIENDLY SUPPORT KEEP ME SAFE. STILL AMAZED!



CONSOLATION AND SURRENDER



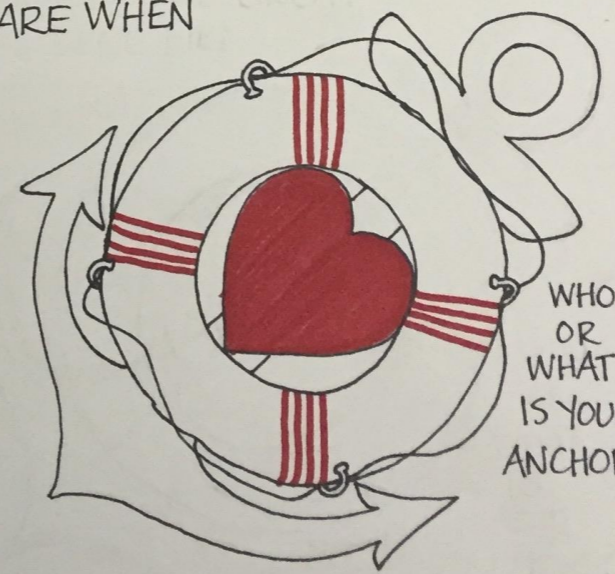
CONSOLATION OFTEN CORRESPONDS TO CIRCUMSTANCES THAT BROUGHT US TO OUR KNEES, TIMES WHEN WE SURRENDERED CONTROL, ONLY TO FIND WE WERE BEING HELD ALL ALONG. THIS PLACE OF SURRENDER IS ALSO A PLACE OF GRACE.



WHEN IN CONSOLATION, TAKE TIME TO REMEMBER AND TO REFLECT HUMBLY ON HOW VULNERABLE YOU ARE WHEN IN DESOLATION... WITHOUT GOD'S GRACE. CULTIVATE GRATITUDE.

IT IS HARD TO PULL OURSELVES UP OUT OF THE MUCK BY OUR OWN DEVICES. GOD CREATED US TO NEED ONE ANOTHER AND THE CREATOR, TO BE IN RELATIONSHIP.

MEMORIES OF CONSOLATION WILL HELP US TO NEGOTIATE DESOLATION, LIKE A BOUY IN THE GREAT OCEAN WHEN WE FEEL ABANDONED.



WHO OR WHAT IS YOUR ANCHOR?

TIPS ON SPIRITUAL DESOLATION

DURING SPIRITUAL DESOLATION
DO NOT MAKE A CHANGE.
TRUST DECISIONS MADE DURING
CONSOLATION, OR AT LEAST BEFORE
DESOLATION SETTLED LIKE A CLOUD.



I'M GOING TO GIVE
UP ON THIS DREAM. NO
ONE CARES ANYWAY.



I CAN JUST DROP
ALL THESE MUNDANE
RESPONSIBILITIES
AND MOVE TO AFRICA

DESOLATION CAN
ALSO TEMPT US TO
CHANGE GOOD,
MEASURED DECISIONS
WHEN WE ARE IN A MANIC

OR ENTRANCED MOOD, I.E., OVER-
EXTENDING OURSELVES TO THE
DETRIMENT OF OUR REAL LIFE CALL.

FACING DESOLATION

DOING WHAT WE CAN...

DURING SPIRITUAL DESOLATION IT IS DIFFICULT TO **REMEMBER** CONSOLATION, WHO WE ARE, AND WHAT WE WANT, BECAUSE OF THE INNER FOG, CONFUSION, DEPRESSION, LACK OF ENERGY OR MOTIVATION. THE TEMPTATION CAN BE: TO ACT RASHLY IN ORDER TO ESCAPE THE DIS-EASE, WITHOUT REFLECTION AND CENTEREDNESS OR; TO REMAIN STUCK IN DESPAIR...

(HOWEVER, NONE OF THESE ARE POSSIBLE WITHOUT GOD'S GRACE... AND ALL WE CAN DO IS SURRENDER...)

IF WE HAVE **SPIRITUAL PRACTICES** THAT ARE A PART OF OUR MORE CENTERED SELVES, THESE MAY BECOME HELPFUL TOUCHSTONES IN TIMES OF CRISIS, TO BRING US BACK TO OURSELVES, TRIED AND TRUE DISCIPLINES SUCH AS...

PRAYER

WHEN I AM SAD OR EXHAUSTED WITH NO WORDS OR DESIRE TO PRAY, THE REPETITION OF THE ROSARY HELPS ME TO FIND MYSELF AGAIN



REFLECTING QUIETLY ON THE WORDS AND STORIES OF SCRIPTURE HELP REMIND ME OF MY GREATEST DESIRE AND RECONNECT ME TO MY ORIGINAL INSPIRATION OF THE PERSON I WANT TO BE.

MEDITATION

EVERY DAY, BEFORE I FALL ASLEEP I ASK MYSELF WHERE I FOUND LIFE TODAY, AND WHAT WAS HARD. I UNBURDEN MY HEART. I ALSO TRY TO BE THANKFUL



EXAMEN

WHEN I'M FEELING THE MOST DEJECTED AND STUCK, IF I RETURN TO THE FOOD PANTRY TO WASH DISHES AND SERVE, IT HELPS ME FIND SOME PERSPECTIVE.



ACTS OF CHARITY

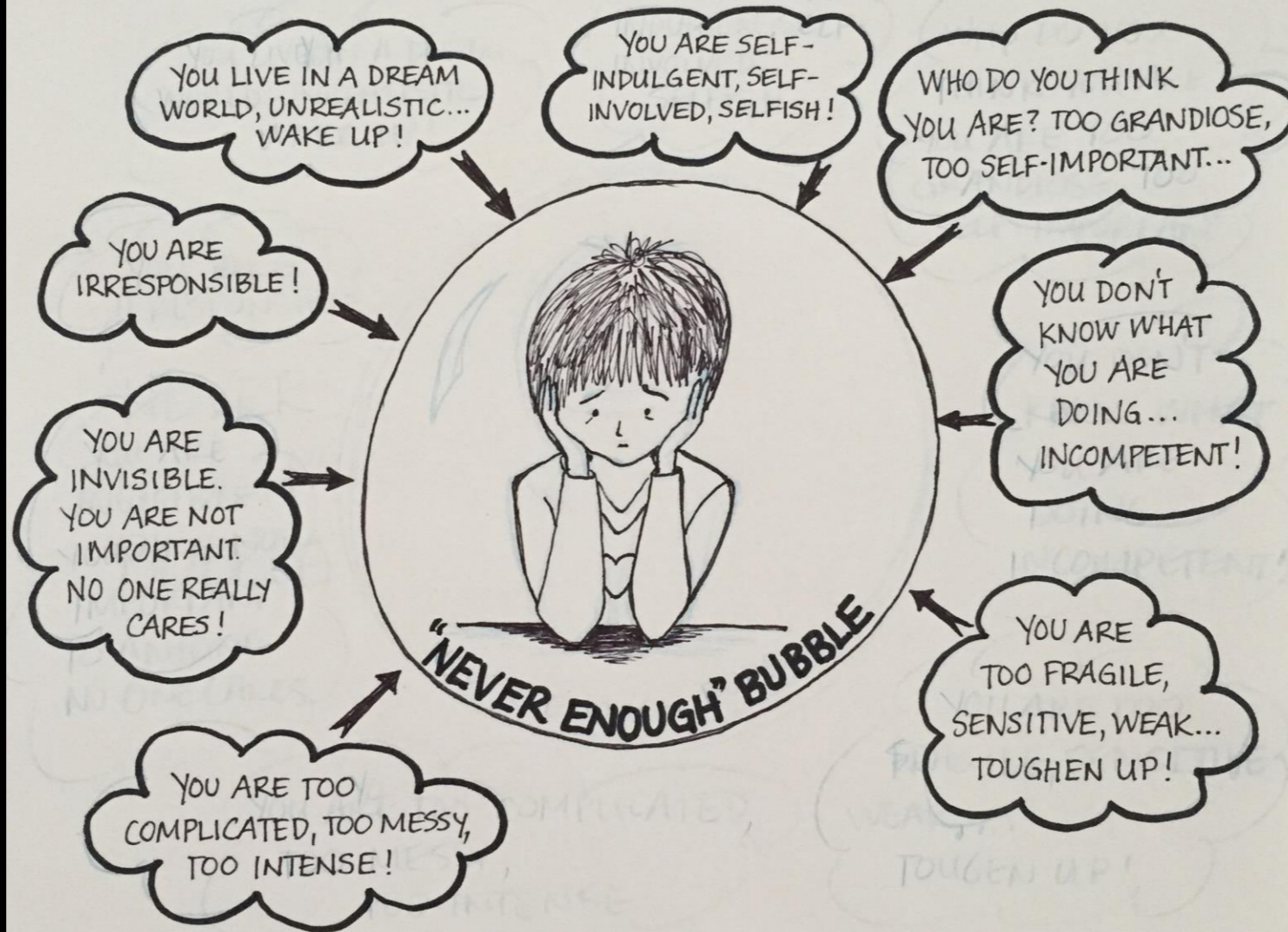
OWNING UP TO MY HUMAN FAULTS & WEAKNESS TO A TRUSTED FRIEND OR PRIEST OFTEN UNSTICKS ME IN MY CONFUSION & SELF-HATRED. IT'S NEVER AS BAD AS IT IS IN MY HEAD.



PENANCE

"GO AGAINST" DESOLATION

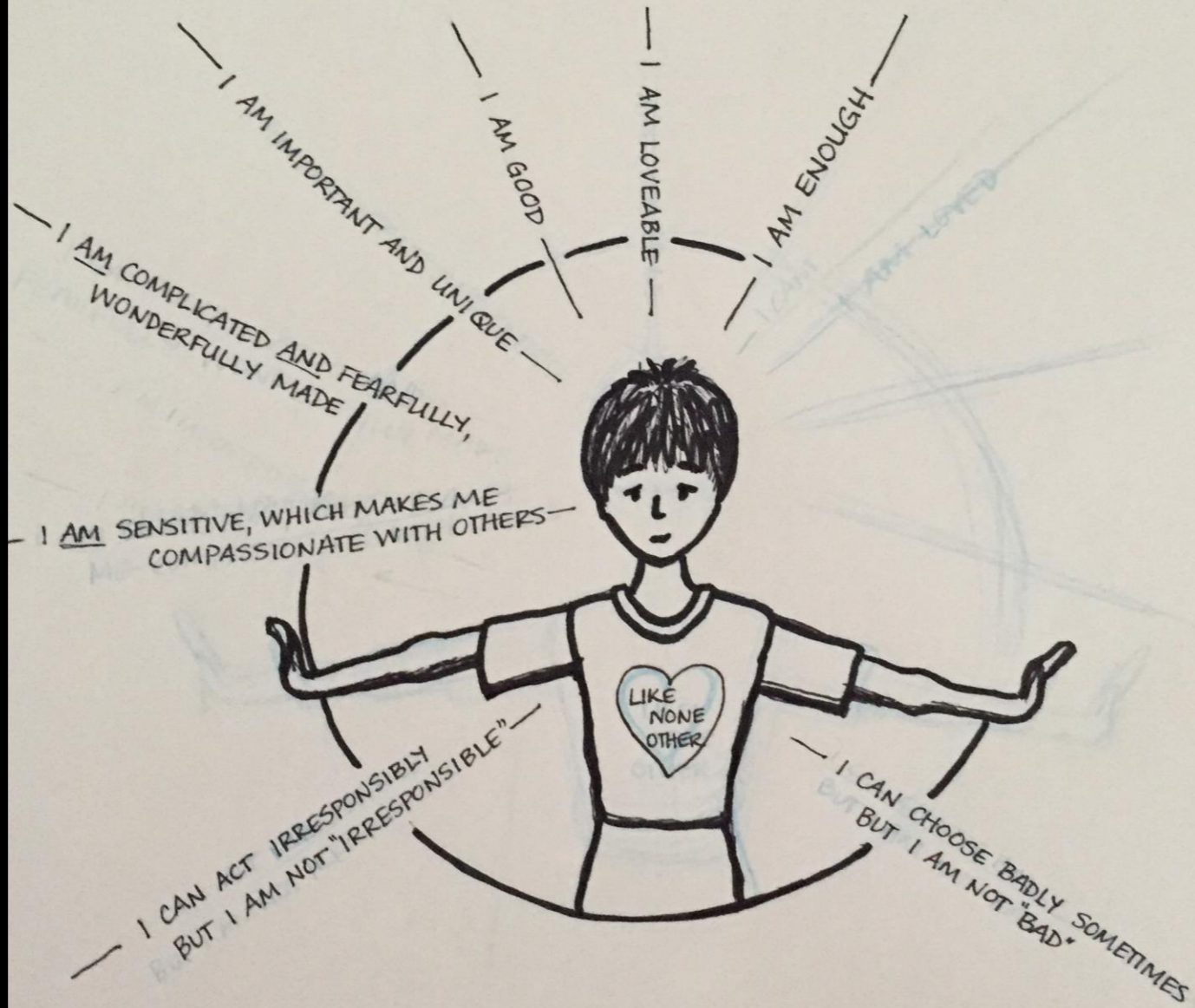
WHEN WE DISCERN AN IMPULSE OR THOUGHT IS AWAY FROM THE HIGHEST GOOD, CHOOSE THE OPPOSITE OR DRAW A BOUNDARY.



CONTRARY SPIRITS OR ATTACK THOUGHTS T UNDERMINE HOPE AND FURTHER AN AGENDA OF SEPARATION AND ISOLATION. THEY NEED TO BE "CALLED OUT" WITH A "REALITY CHECK."

"GO AGAINST" II

"REALITY CHECK" MESSAGES... SETTING BOUNDARIES

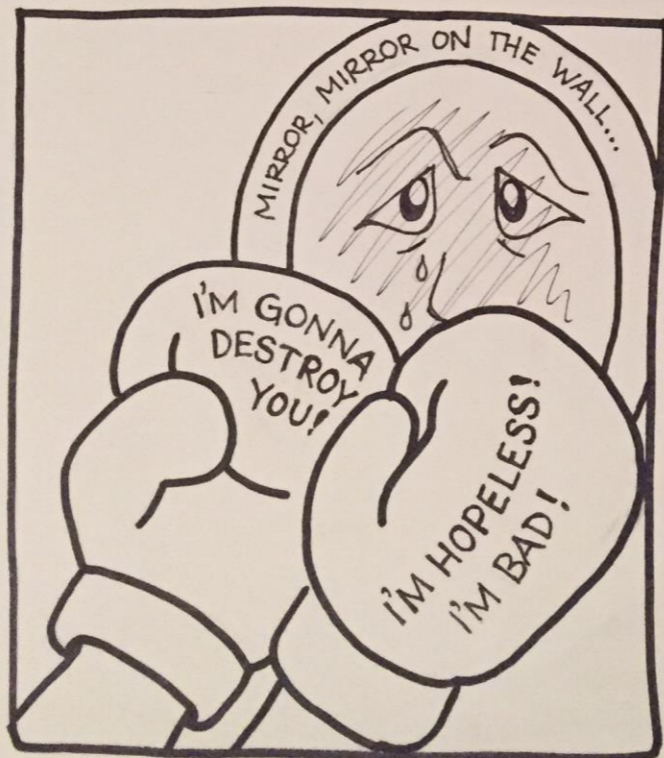
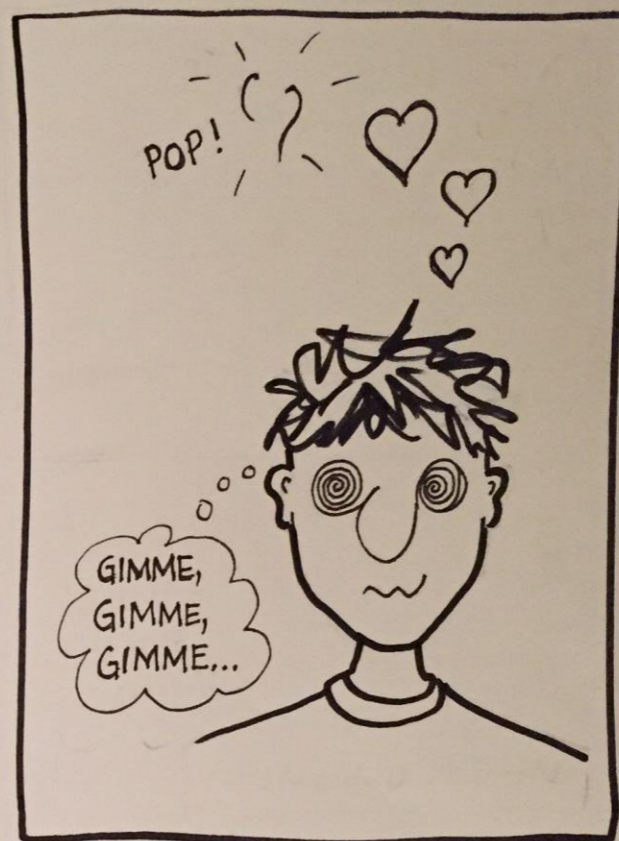


"GO AGAINST" III

SETTING BOUNDARIES ON ACTION

SOME IMPULSES ARE CLEARLY ILL-ADVISED, PARTICULARLY, A COUNTER-PRODUCTIVE ACTION. GO AGAINST THE IMPULSE. STAY AWAY. AVOID THE SITUATIONS THAT TRIGGER INORDINANT (OUT OF ORDER) DESIRE: I.E., ADDICTIVE SUBSTANCES AND HABITS, INFIDELITY IN COMMITTED RELATIONSHIPS, GOSSIP, SLANDER, ETC.

EVEN THESE CLEARLY "BAD SPIRITS" CAN BE HARD TO RESIST, HOWEVER WELL-ORIENTED WE ARE TO THE "GOOD." A CYCLE OF SELF-DISAPPOINTMENT IN OUR WEAKNESS CAN SEND US AGAIN AND AGAIN BACK INTO UNHEALTHY BEHAVIORS (WHAT'S THE POINT?).



THIS DOES NOT NEED TO BE SO MUCH A "FIGHT" AGAINST OUR DISORDERED IMPULSES AS MUCH A MOVING TOWARD GOD/HIGHER POWER IN **SURRENDER**. THIS MAY BE THROUGH PRAYER, OR REMEMBERING CONSOLATION (THAT I AM LOVED UNCONDITIONALLY, NOT DESPITE MY WEAKNESS, BUT IN MY PRESENT STATE, AS I AM), OR ASKING FOR TEARS. SINCE DESOLATION IS OFTEN LODGED IN THE HEAD WITH FALSE REASONING, CIRCULAR THINKING, AND NUMBING BEHAVIORS, TEARS CAN SOFTEN THE HARDENED SHELL.

"GO AGAINST" IV

SETTING BOUNDARIES ON SUBTLER ACTION

DISCERNING BETWEEN TRUE DESOLATION AND LEGITIMATE UNMET NEEDS.

SOMETIMES WE CAN JUDGE OURSELVES HARSHLY FOR CHOOSING WHAT WE DEEM FRIVOLOUS, ESCAPIST, LESS-THAN-NOBLE ACTIVITY, ESPECIALLY IF WE TEND TO BE PERFECTIONISTIC, TYPE-A, OR RIGID.

SOMETIMES THE "DESOLATION" IS THE SLAVE DRIVER (NO FREEDOM THERE!). GIVING OURSELVES PERMISSION MAY BE WHERE GRACE LIES... THAT IS, FREEDOM.



GO AGAINST DESOLATION

I CAN'T NOT GO!

I WILL FEEL GUILTY I WILL BE A BAD CHILD IF I DON'T CALL.

I CAN'T NOT HELP. IT WOULD BE UNCHARITABLE AND BAD.

↑
NOTE THE LACK OF **FREEDOM**

THOUGHT

I WILL GO FOR A RUN.

I WILL CALL MY MOM

I WILL SIGN UP TO VOLUNTEER.

↑
GOODS
IN AND OF THEMSELVES

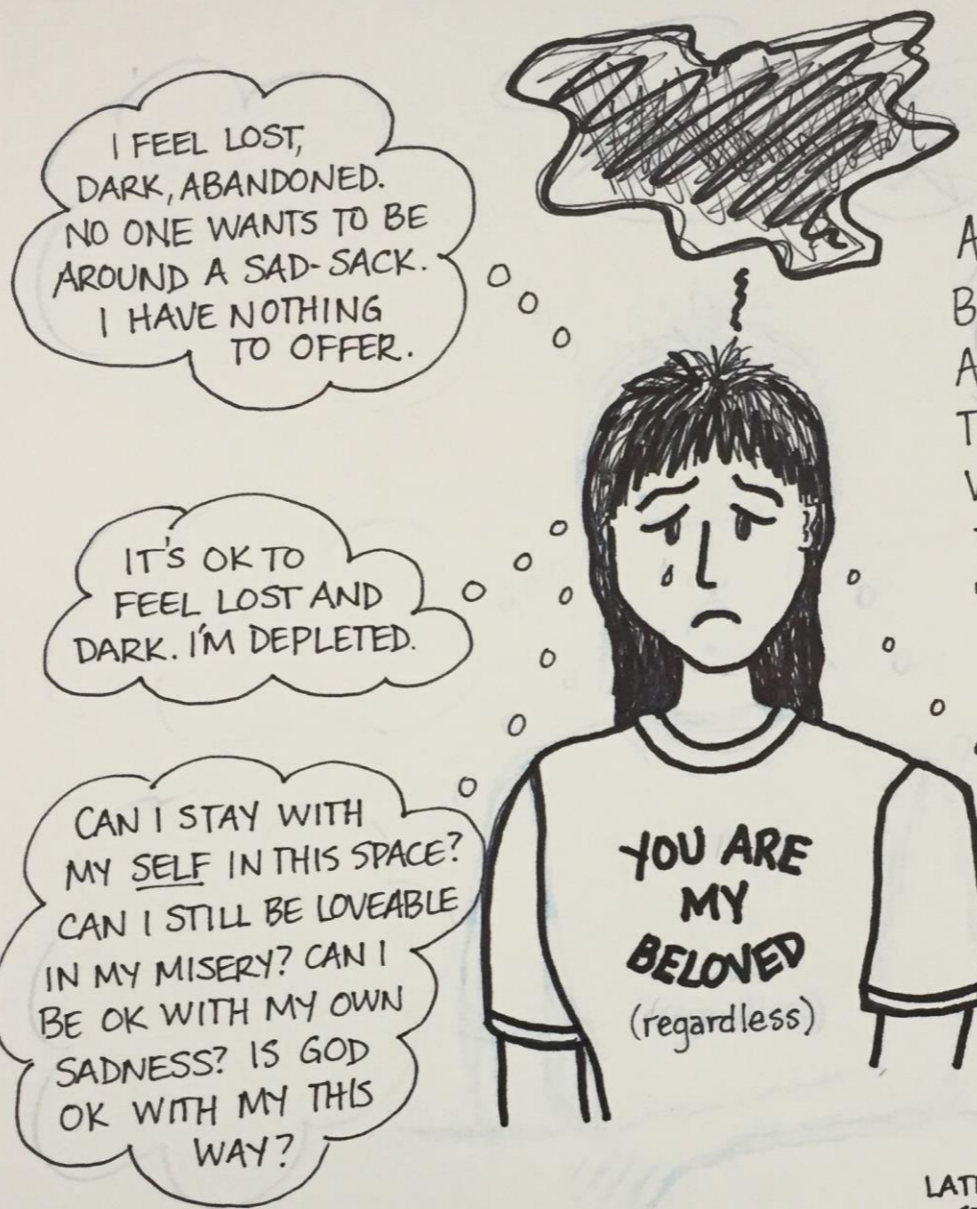
ACKNOWLEDGE UNMET NEED

I NEED SOME REST.

I CALLED YESTERDAY. I WANT TO GO AGAINST MY CO-DEPENDENT RESCUE-MODE TODAY, OR I'LL GET RESENTFUL.

I NEED SOME DOWNTIME I'VE HAD SO LITTLE TIME TO BE ALONE LATELY.

NEGOTIATING DESOLATION



LISTEN IN THE DARKNESS TO THE **UNCONDITIONAL** ACCEPTANCE & COMPASSION. BE HONEST ABOUT HOW YOU ACTUALLY FEEL. THIS CAN TAKE TIME AS WE HONOR WHERE WE ARE SO AS NOT TO SIMPLY REPRESS "DARK" THOUGHTS AND FEELING.

I WANT TO WANT TO BELIEVE THAT I AM NOT ALONE.

LATER...

I WANT TO BELIEVE EVEN THOUGH I DON'T RIGHT NOW.

LATER STILL...

I CHOOSE TO BELIEVE I AM NOT ABANDONED EVEN THOUGH MY HEART IS NOT THERE YET.

I DO BELIEVE... HELP MY UNBELIEF

PERHAPS, EVENTUALLY...

DESOLATION CAN MAKE US **FEEL** ABANDONED... BUT BY **FAITH** WE MAY **CHOOSE TO** REMEMBER: **GOD IS WITH US ALWAYS.**

CULTIVATE **PATIENCE** IN DESOLATION. IT CAN BE A JOURNEY THROUGH A DARKNESS OF PURIFICATION. REMEMBER TIMES OF CONSOLATION TO GIVE **HOPE. TRUST. SURRENDER.**

"DESOLATION" AS INVITATION TO MOVE OUT OF STUCKNESS

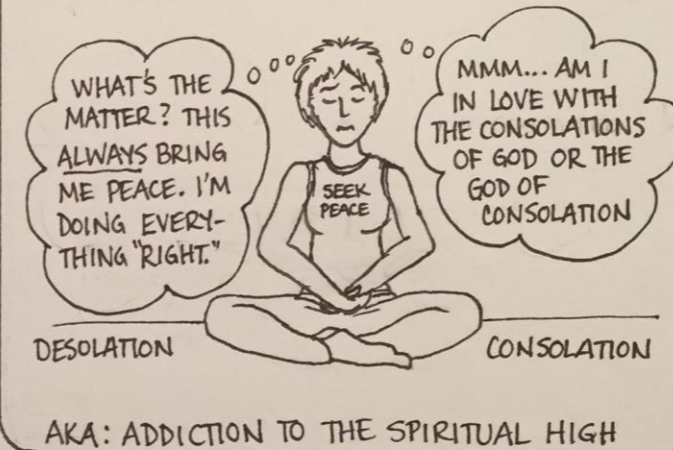
SOMETIMES WHAT FEELS LIKE "DESOLATION" IS ACTUALLY **CONSOLATION** FROM THE SPIRIT THAT DRAWS ONE TO DEEPER AND MORE REAL **CONNECTION** TO SELF, GOD & OTHERS. THREE PURPOSEFUL REASONS FOR DESOLATION INCLUDE:

1) DESOLATION MAY DISLODGE US FROM OUR **NEGLIGENCE** IN THE SPIRITUAL JOURNEY, THE INNER LIFE: A WAKE-UP CALL...

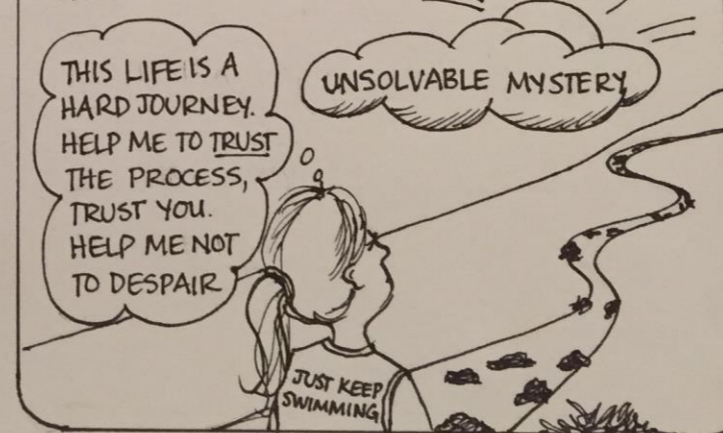


EACH OF THESE DIFFICULTIES HAS THE POTENTIAL TO HELP US SURRENDER OUR ILLUSIONS, THAT WE MAY SEE MORE CLEARLY, AND CHOOSE MORE FREELY & WISELY.

2) DESOLATION MAY **TEST OUR RESOLVE** AND MOTIVATION, A CHECK TO OWN EXPECTATIONS IN PRAYER AND RELATIONSHIP.



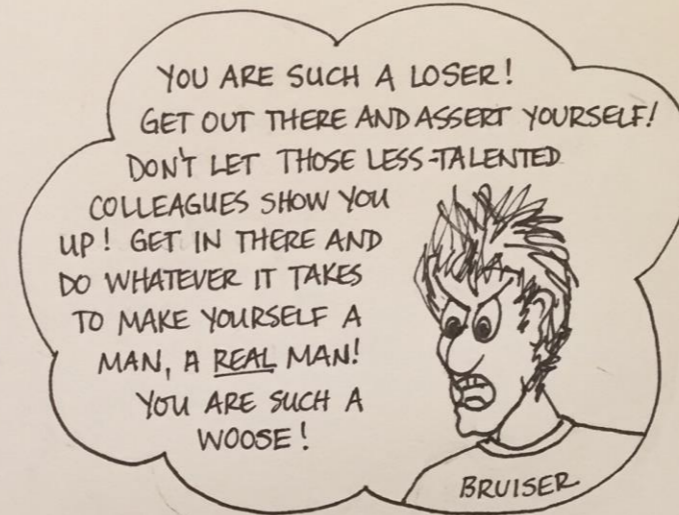
3) DESOLATION MAY BE A REMINDER THAT **ALL IS GRACE**. DESOLATION IS AN INVITATION TO **SURRENDER** THE DESIRE TO CONTROL THE JOURNEY. GOD IS IN CHARGE.



SETTING BOUNDARIES

ON INTERIOR BULLIES

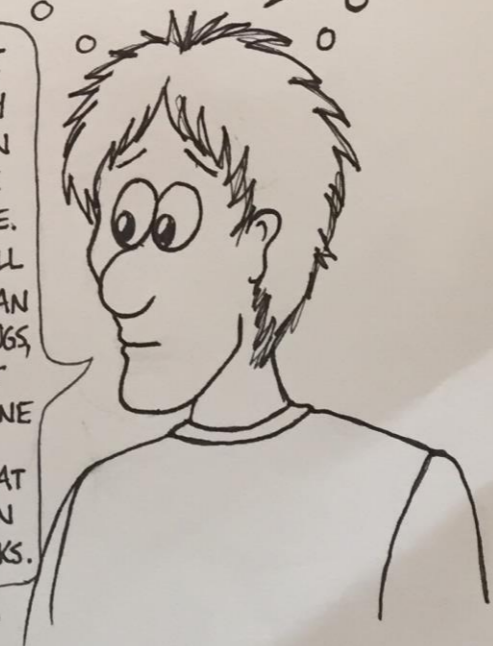
A CONTRARY SPIRIT IS LIKE A BULLY OR A TANTRUMING, DEMANDING CHILD WHO NEEDS FIRM BOUNDARIES AS A REALITY CHECK. EVEN AN ENTITLED CHILD, HOWEVER, NEEDS TO BE CHECKED WITH LOVE RATHER THAN VIOLENCE, OR BEING SHUT DOWN. THERE MAY BE AN UNMET NEED TO BE EXPLORED.



I HEAR THE CONCERN FOR MY FINANCIAL & PROFESSIONAL STABILITY. I AM WORKING WITH INTEGRITY WITH OTHERS. THIS IS WHO I WANT TO BE. I DON'T NEED TO BE TOP DOG. COOL IT.



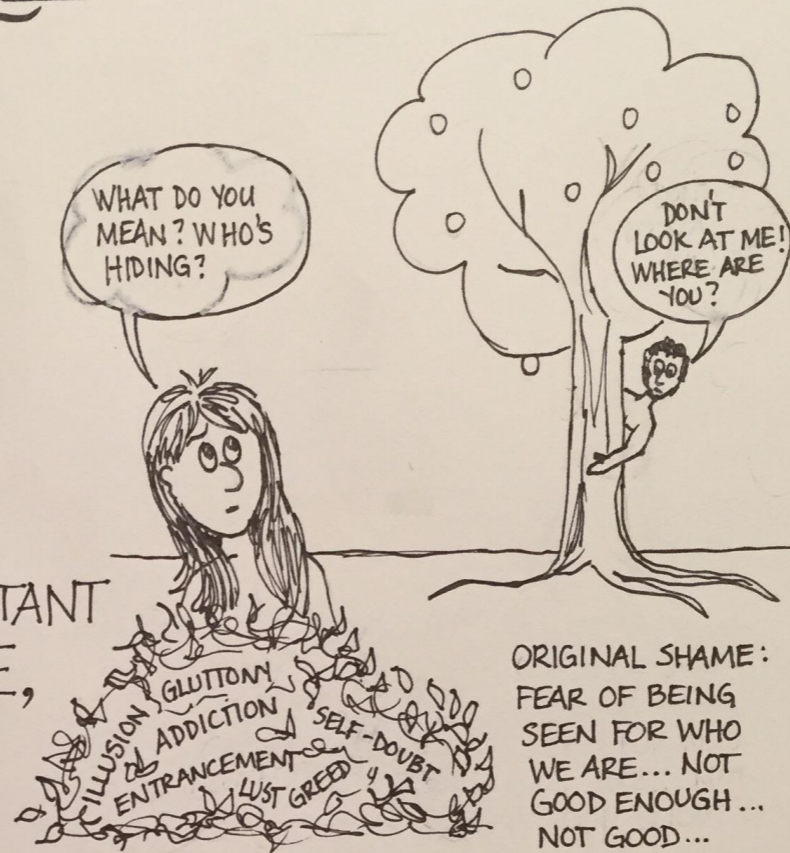
I CAN HEAR THAT YOU ARE ANGRY FROM THE MEAN THINGS YOU ARE SAYING ABOUT ME. I DO NOT ACCEPT ALL THESE LABELS. I CAN BE ALL THESE THINGS, I AM HUMAN, BUT THEY DO NOT DEFINE ME. HELP ME TO UNDERSTAND WHAT YOU REALLY MEAN WITH THESE ATTACKS.



WHILE SETTING THE BOUNDARIES ALSO...
TRY TO DETERMINE THE UNMET NEED, THE BACK STORY

SSSSSECRETS SPIRIT OF DECEPTION

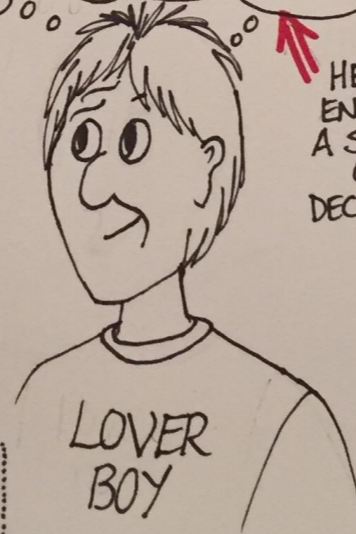
A SPIRIT OF DECEPTION ENCOURAGES **SECRECY**, ISOLATING A PERSON IN HIS OR HER OWN THOUGHTS AND IMAGINATION. IF **AFRAID** TO SHARE SOMETHING WITH YOUR MOST TRUSTED, LOVING MENTOR/FRIEND/FAMILY/WISDOM FIGURE, IT IS IMPORTANT TO **REVEAL** THE **STRUGGLE**, DISARMING THE POWER OF SHAME AND CONFUSION. ADMIT WHAT IS **TRUE**, NO MATTER HOW EMBARRASSING.



ORIGINAL SHAME:
FEAR OF BEING SEEN FOR WHO WE ARE... NOT GOOD ENOUGH... NOT GOOD...

I HAVE BEEN SPENDING MORE AND MORE TIME WITH MY NEIGHOR'S WIFE. SHE'S SUCH FUN. BUT WE HAVE BEEN MEETING WITHOUT TELLING HER HUSBAND. I HAVEN'T TOLD HER HOW I FEEL ABOUT HER. PERHAPS I SHOULD TALK TO MY BEST FRIEND ABOUT THIS DILEMMA. HE ALWAYS GIVES ME GOOD FEEDBACK. I'M NOT SURE I TRUST MYSELF.

NAAAH! THIS IS NO ONE ELSE'S BUSINESS. I CAN HANDLE MYSELF. NOTHING HAS HAPPENED.



HERE ENTERS A SPIRIT OF DECEPTION

WARNING:
IT IS NOT HELPFUL TO REVEAL THE STRUGGLE TO THE OBJECT OF YOUR DESIRE (PARTICULARLY A LOVE/INFATUATION INTEREST) AS THIS FLAMES THE FIRES OF PASSION AND THUS INCREASES THE CONFUSION (ENTER BIOLOGY).
CHOOSE TO SPEAK YOUR TRUTH TO A DISINTERESTED, WISE THIRD PERSON.

NOTE: CHOOSE A TRUSTED SOURCE OF WISDOM AND DISCERNMENT WHO ASKS GOOD QUESTIONS WITHOUT SHAMING SO YOU DO NOT BACK OFF THE TRUTH

SSSEDUCTOR SPIRIT OF DECEPTION

SEDUCTION CAN TAKE THE FORM OF ENTANGLING, UNTRUE OBSESSIVE THOUGHTS, AS WELL AS IMPULSIVE ACTIONS THAT HAVE THEIR OWN "REWARD." THERE IS A PAY-OFF OR WE WOULD NOT BE TEMPTED.

SLOW, INCREMENTAL SEDUCTION CREEPS IN LITTLE BY LITTLE, SUBTLE AN SEEMINGLY IMPERCEPTIBLE. IT'S "NO BIG DEAL"... UNTIL IT IS. SECRECY COMPOUNDS THE ISSUE, AS WE BECOME CAUGHT IN A WEB IN WHICH WE FEEL TRAPPED BECAUSE OF SHAME... ANOTHER SECRET.

ACTION

FIRST THOUGHT...

I CAN DO THIS **JUST** ONE TIME. IT WON'T HURT **JUST** THIS ONCE. I KNOW A LOT OF PEOPLE IN MY FAMILY HAVE ADDICTION ISSUES, BUT I'M **DIFFERENT**. I CAN HANDLE MYSELF. I'M **STRONG**. I HAVE A **GOOD** HEAD ON MY SHOULDERS. I'M **JUST** ADVENTUROUS. IT'S **JUST** AN EXPERIMENT.

LATER...

I CAN DO THIS AGAIN. IT DIDN'T DO ME IN LAST TIME. **JUST** ONE MORE...

NOTICE ALL THE "JUST"-IFYING AND THE PRIDE BEFORE THE **FALL**...



LATER IN EXAMINING MY CONSCIENCE:
WHAT "HOOKED" ME?
WHAT DID I WANT?
ACCEPTANCE? ESCAPE FROM MY DIS-EASE?

THOUGHTS

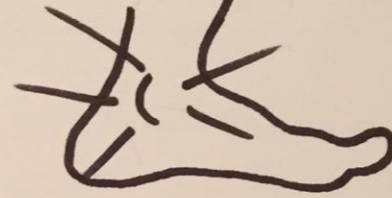
I JUST **KNOW** THEY KNOW I'M AN IMPOSTER. I DON'T KNOW WHAT I'M DOING. I'M AFRAID ALL THE TIME I WILL BE FOUND OUT!

THE **TRUTH** IS YOU HAVE A LOT TO LEARN, YES. IN FACT, THEY HIRED **YOU** FOR A REASON. YOU HAVE THE DESIRE AND THE CREDENTIALS.

OH NO, THERE SHE IS. I HATE HER. SHE THINK SHE'S "ALL THAT," AND I FEEL SO SMALL AROUND HER, BUT EVEN SMALLER FOR BEING SO MEAN AND ANGRY. I HATE MYSELF FOR HATING. I AM SO BAD!

THE **TRUTH** IS THAT YOU WANT TO FEEL LOVED AND ACCEPTED FOR WHO YOU ARE. YOU FEEL THREATENED BY HER AS YOU HAVE BEEN HURT BY HER CRITICISM AND NEGLECT. IF YOU DIDN'T WANT HER REGARD IT WOULDN'T HURT.

SELF-KNOWLEDGE OF THE ACHILLES HEEL



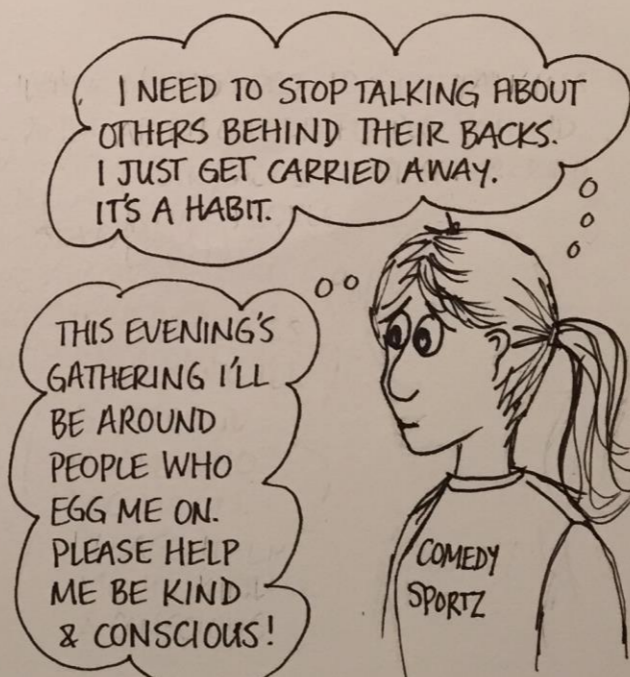
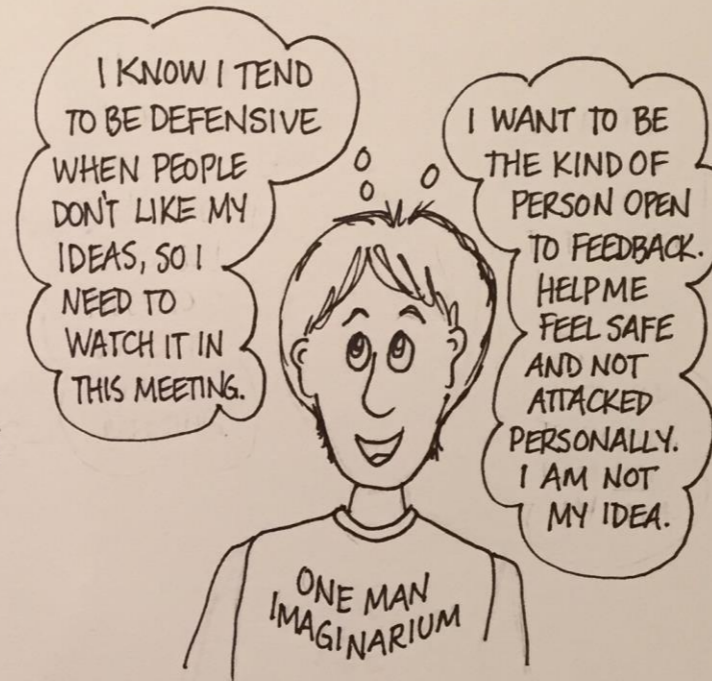
THE CONTRARY SPIRIT ATTACKS AT OUR **WEAKEST** POINT, OUR ACHILLES HEEL. WE MUST PURSUE SELF-KNOWLEDGE TO BE PREPARED FOR THE DESOLATION.

ACKNOWLEDGING OUR WEAKNESS AND EMBRACING THEM AS AREAS IN NEED OF HEALING, INSTEAD OF DENYING, HIDING, OR MINIMIZING THEM **DISARMS** THE ATTACK MORE READILY.

AREAS OF ADDICTION & TEMPTATION MAY BE **SURRENDERED** TO GOD EVEN IN ANTICIPATION. SET THE INTENTION



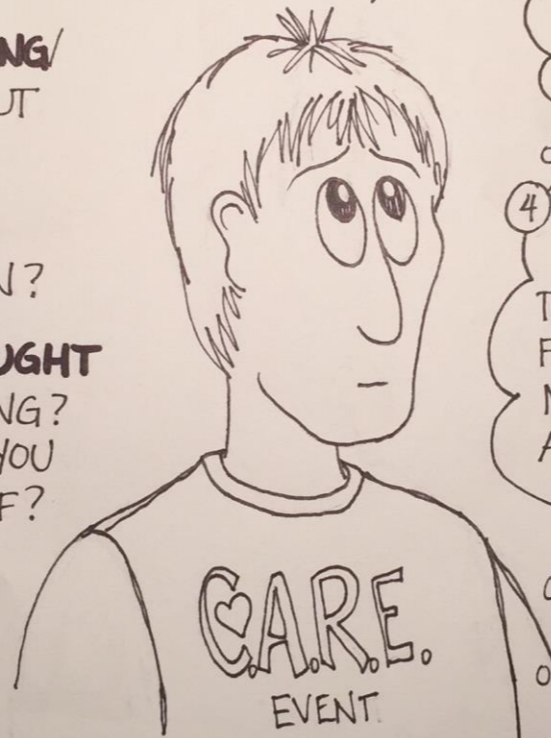
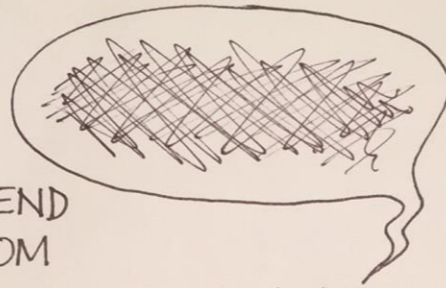
OF WHAT ARE YOU THE MOST **AFRAID** OF ADMITTING TO YOURSELF? OTHERS



ANATOMY OF A MOVEMENT

OF DESOLATION TO CONSOLATION

1. INARTICULATE FEELING
2. **CENTER** AND ATTEND TO DEEPER WISDOM
3. NAME THE **FEELING**/MOVEMENT WITHOUT JUDGMENT.
4. WHEN DID THE DESOLATION BEGIN?
5. WHAT IS THE **THOUGHT** BEHIND THE FEELING? WHAT WERE/ARE YOU TELLING YOURSELF?
6. HOW IS THE SPIRIT SPEAKING? DO I **RECEIVE** OR **MOVE AWAY** FROM THE IMPULSE? HOW DO I RESPOND?



① I FEEL ICKY... NOT MYSELF

② ... QUIET MIND ...

③ AH... I AM ANGRY AND HURT. WOW. I DIDN'T REALIZE.

④ THIS **SHUT-DOWN*** FOGGY FEELING STARTED THIS MORNING WHEN MY FRIEND SEEMED TO MINIMIZE MY ANXIETY ABOUT THIS UPCOMING EVENT.

* NOTE THE **DESOLATION**, TRYING NOT TO FEEL OR DEAL WITH MESSINESS THAT NEEDS HEALING.

⑥ PLEASE HELP ME TO STAY WITH THIS DISCOMFORT LONG ENOUGH TO UNDERSTAND MYSELF AND ALLOW YOU TO HEAL ME IN THIS DARKNESS. HELP ME TO SURRENDER.

⑤ I FELT DISMISSED, NOT IMPORTANT, INVISIBLE, LIKE I DON'T REALLY MATTER TO ANYONE. THAT'S A TRIGGER FOR ME: YOU DON'T CARE... TO NO ONE CARES! **

IF THIS REALIZATION ** LEADS TO SURRENDER AND A DESIRE FOR HEALING THEN THIS MOMENT OF TRUTH IS ACTUALLY A **CONSOLATION**, SHINING LIGHT ON A CORE BELIEF OF INVISIBILITY IN NEED OF HEALING FROM SPIRIT

Rules for Discernment

Second Set

Conscience

Pure Inspiration

Discerning True Consolation

"Angel of Light"

Train of Thought

Catch a Thought by Its Tail

The Sound of Water

Afterglow

Description: This chapter is a blow-by-blow description and exploration of the two sets of rules for discernment found in the *Spiritual Exercises* using contemporary examples. These examples also offer cautions about the possibility that the movements may also have psychological roots that need to be explored. The point of the latter is that every movement may be brought to prayer for greater healing and clarity.

"ANGEL OF LIGHT"

FOR A PERSON STRIVING TO LEAD A "GOOD" LIFE, A DECEPTIVE SPIRIT OFTEN APPEARS AS AN "ANGEL OF LIGHT," THAT IS, A "GOOD" IMPULSE. THIS PERSON, ATTUNED TO THE INNER LIFE, QUITE EASILY RECOGNIZES A FRONTAL TEMPTATION, SO A DECEPTIVE SPIRIT IS **DISGUISED** AS A "GOOD" **THOUGHT**, THAT LEADS ULTIMATELY TO ILL, A DISTORTION OF THE ORIGINAL INTENT.

THIS IS OFTEN A PITFALL FOR THOSE WHO ARE ZEALOUS AND ACTIVE, THOUGH THE DECEPTION CAN ALSO TRIP THOSE WHO FEEL MOVED TO A DEEPER INTERIOR LIFE.

THE ORIGINAL INVITATION WAS CONFIRMED AS A CONSOLATION.

I THOUGHT I WAS DOING GOOD, BREAKING OUT OF MY SELFISHNESS & CAREFULLY CONTROLLED WORLD. IT WAS SO CLEAR WHEN I WAS MOVED TO VOLUNTEER AT THE SHELTER BACK IN DECEMBER. THERE WAS A DEEP SENSE OF PEACE... CONFIRMATION

WHERE THE DECEPTION ENTERED...

BUT THEN I STARTED LOOKING AT OTHERS AROUND ME WHO WERE DOING FUN THINGS ON SATURDAYS, AND I WAS JUDGMENTAL... AND THEN RESENTFUL, NO LONGER FOCUSED ON THE PEOPLE I WAS SERVING, BUT ON WHAT I WAS MISSING. I'M EXHAUSTED. I HAVE **NO TIME TO PRAY OR ATTEND** TO WHAT'S GOING ON IN ME..

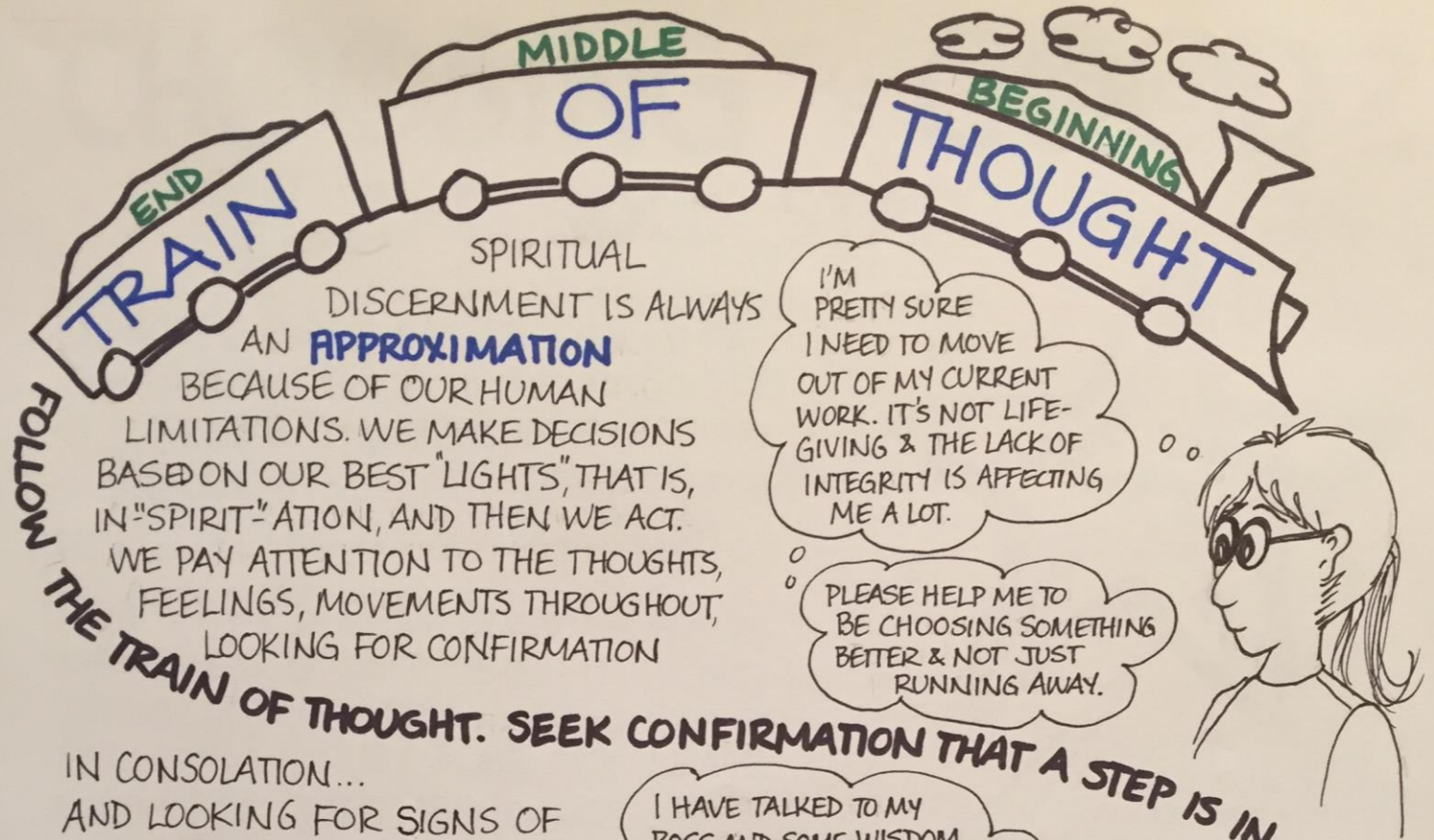


"IF ONE DAY A MONTH IS GOOD, MORE IS BETTER," I THOUGHT. SO I STARTED WORKING EVERY SATURDAY

DERAILING THOUGHTS

"NO ONE CAN RUN THIS PANTRY AS EFFICIENTLY AS I DO." I GETS LOTS OF KUDOS. THAT'S "CONFIRMATION."





SPIRITUAL
 DISCERNMENT IS ALWAYS
 AN **APPROXIMATION**
 BECAUSE OF OUR HUMAN
 LIMITATIONS. WE MAKE DECISIONS
 BASED ON OUR BEST "LIGHTS," THAT IS,
 IN "SPIRIT" ACTION, AND THEN WE ACT.
 WE PAY ATTENTION TO THE THOUGHTS,
 FEELINGS, MOVEMENTS THROUGHOUT,
 LOOKING FOR CONFIRMATION

I'M
 PRETTY SURE
 I NEED TO MOVE
 OUT OF MY CURRENT
 WORK. IT'S NOT LIFE-
 GIVING & THE LACK OF
 INTEGRITY IS AFFECTING
 ME A LOT.

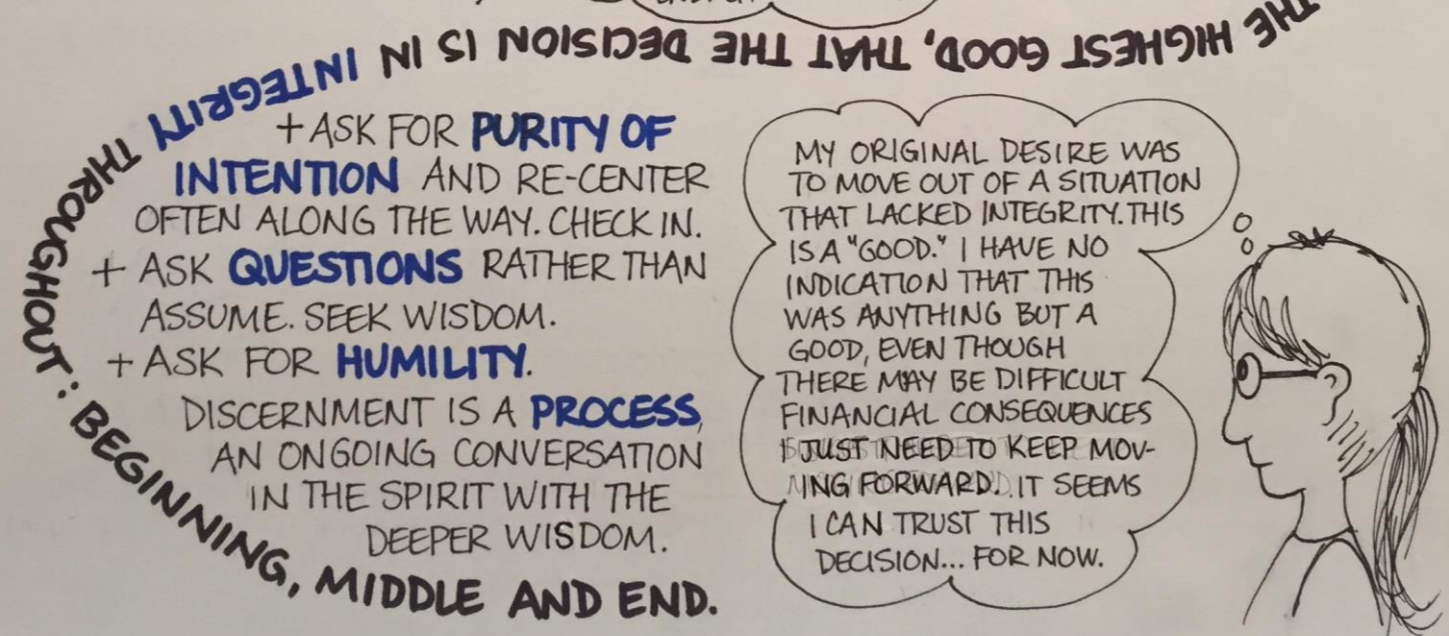
PLEASE HELP ME TO
 BE CHOOSING SOMETHING
 BETTER & NOT JUST
 RUNNING AWAY.



IN CONSOLATION...
 AND LOOKING FOR SIGNS OF
 DESOLATION AND CONFUSION
 ANYWHERE ALONG THE
 PROCESS THAT CAUSED OR
 MAY CAUSE A DERAILMENT
 (I.E. SHORT CUTS, "SLIPPERY
 SLOPES," RATIONALIZATION,
 SELF-JUSTIFICATION, ETC.)

I HAVE TALKED TO MY
 BOSS AND SOME WISDOM
 PEOPLE ABOUT MY CONCERNS.
 I WANT TO BE UP FRONT
 ABOUT LOOKING FOR OTHER
 EMPLOYMENT. SCAREY.

I FEEL ANXIOUS ABOUT
 MOVING ON TO SOMETHING
 NEW BUT I ALSO HAVE
 ENERGY AROUND IT.



+ ASK FOR **PURITY OF INTENTION** AND RE-CENTER
 OFTEN ALONG THE WAY. CHECK IN.
 + ASK **QUESTIONS** RATHER THAN
 ASSUME. SEEK WISDOM.
 + ASK FOR **HUMILITY**.
 DISCERNMENT IS A **PROCESS**,
 AN ONGOING CONVERSATION
 IN THE SPIRIT WITH THE
 DEEPER WISDOM.

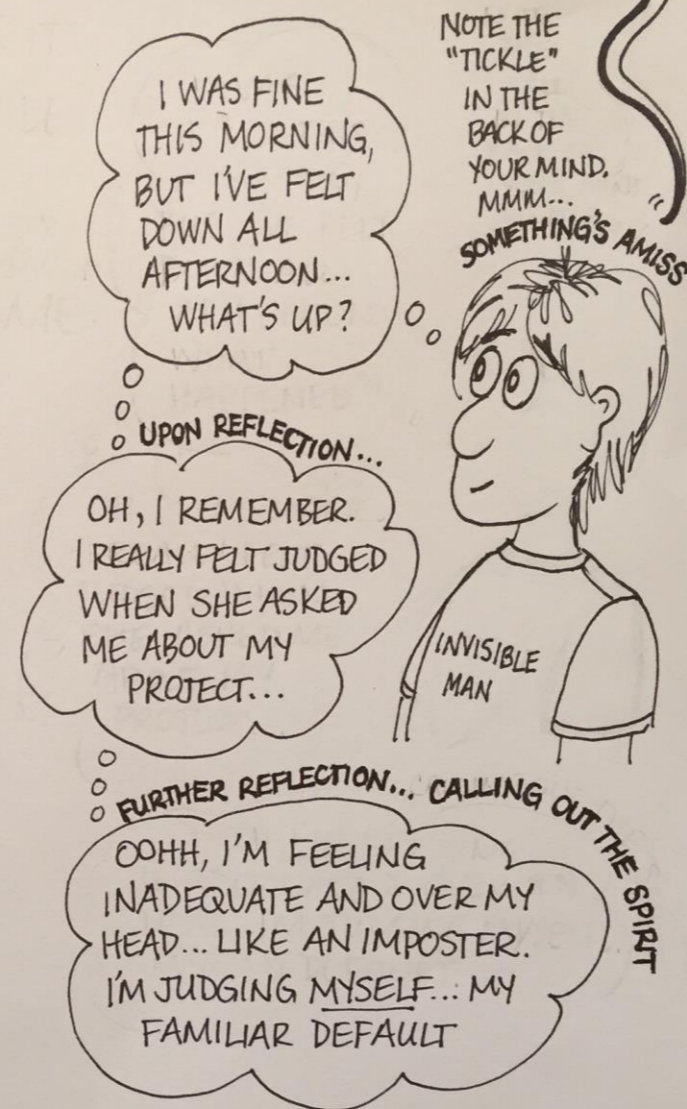
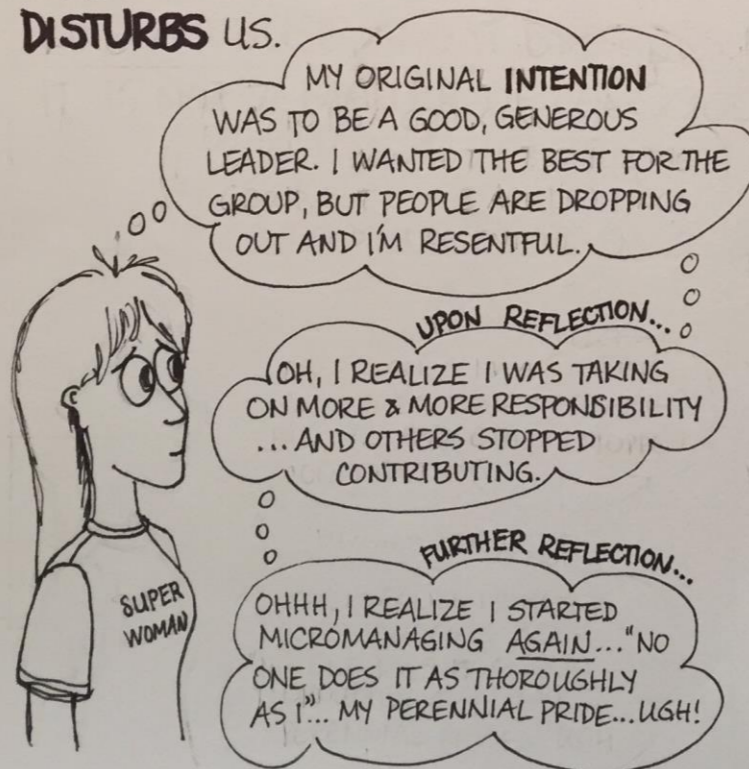
MY ORIGINAL DESIRE WAS
 TO MOVE OUT OF A SITUATION
 THAT LACKED INTEGRITY. THIS
 IS A "GOOD." I HAVE NO
 INDICATION THAT THIS
 WAS ANYTHING BUT A
 GOOD, EVEN THOUGH
 THERE MAY BE DIFFICULT
 FINANCIAL CONSEQUENCES
 I JUST NEED TO KEEP MOV-
 ING FORWARD. IT SEEMS
 I CAN TRUST THIS
 DECISION... FOR NOW.



CATCH A THOUGHT BY ITS TAIL

THE "SNEAKY," DISTURBING SPIRIT ACTS IN SUBTLE WAYS: IN **SMALL MOVEMENTS** LIKE THE FLICKER OF THE "SERPENT'S TAIL", LITTLE BY LITTLE THE INTENTION AND THE OUTCOME SHIFTS SLIGHTLY, ULTIMATELY LEADING US **OFF COURSE**. WE WOULD HAVE RECOGNIZED BIG INCONGRUENCIES.

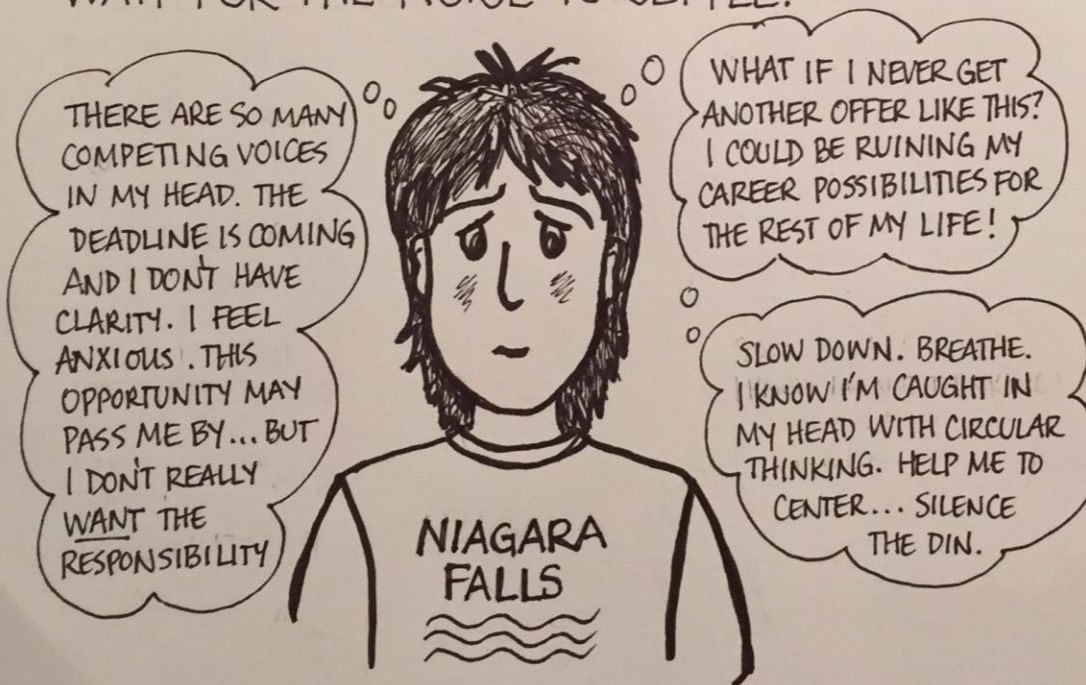
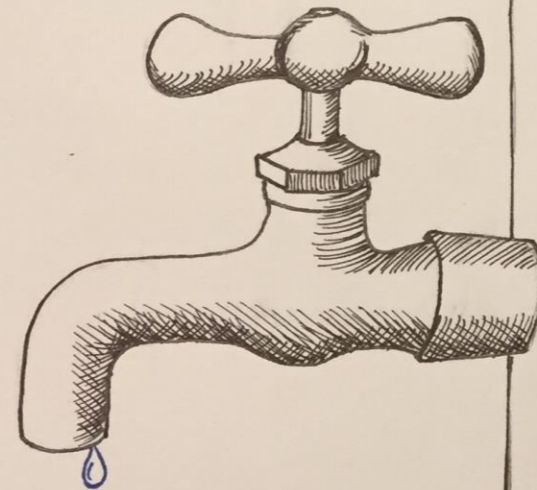
SOMETIMES WE NOTICE SOMETHING OUT OF PLACE OUT OF THE CORNER OF OUR EYE (OUR CONSCIOUSNESS), A MOVEMENT LIKE A SKITTERING MOUSE, AND IT **DISTURBS** US.



FIND THE **BEGINNING** OF THE DESOLATION, THE FEELING, AND THE THOUGHT. WHAT WERE SAYING TO YOURSELF? WHAT WERE YOU HEARING? WHAT WAS THE TRIGGER INCIDENT? WHAT WAS THE PROGRESSION FROM GOOD INTENTION TO **FALSE PERCEPTIONS** AND/OR ACTION? USE THIS **SELF-KNOWLEDGE** PATTERN FOR FUTURE REFERENCE AND SELF-UNDERSTANDING.

THE SOUND OF WATER

FOR A PERSON BASICALLY IN ALIGNMENT WITH THE SPIRIT AND ONE'S DEEPEST SELF, THE SUGGESTIONS OF A CONTRARY SPIRIT WILL SOUND "NOISY," VIOLENT, DISTURBING, CONFUSING, LIKE WATER HITTING HARD ON STONE. THE "NOISE" CAN DEAFEN US TO A DEEPER WISDOM. RECENTER. DO NOT MAKE A DECISION WHEN IN DESOLATION. WAIT FOR THE NOISE TO SETTLE.



OMG!
THAT IS SO ANNOYING!
CAN'T SOMEONE TURN THAT THING OFF!?

"CONTAIN" THE DIN WITH PRAYER & SURRENDER AND/OR PLACE THE CONFLICT OUTSIDE YOURSELF BY ADMITTING (CONFESSING) TO ANOTHER TRUSTWORTHY PERSON THE INTERIOR STRUGGLE. SPIRITUAL JOURNALING ALSO HELPS TO "CALL OUT" THE FALSE REASONING: NOT JUST SELF-ANALYSIS BUT A CONVERSATION WITH GOD.



THE SOUND OF WATER

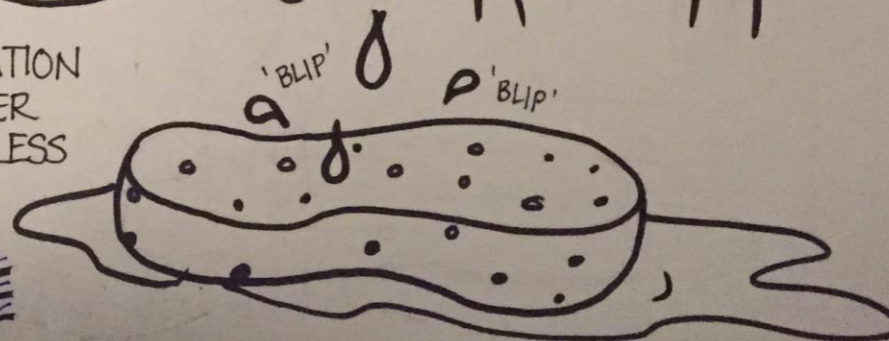
FOR A PERSON MAKING PROGRESS IN THE SPIRITUAL LIFE, GAINING IN INTEGRITY, FREEDOM AND CLARITY, THE SUGGESTIONS OF THE "GOOD" SPIRIT WILL SOUND LIKE A **DROP OF WATER ON A SPONGE: SOFT, GENTLE, DELICATE**, LIKE A "COMING HOME," EVEN IF THE ACTION MAY BE DIFFICULT.

I KNOW I AM SUPPOSED TO BE WITH MY AUNT THIS WEEKEND RATHER THAN HELPING THE HOMELESS, MY USUAL SATURDAY COMMITMENT WHERE I'D RATHER BE. SHE CAN BE A HANDFUL, BUT MY UNCLE REALLY NEEDS A BREAK. I **KNOW** THIS IS RIGHT... BUT HELP ME.

I'VE BEEN SO RESISTANT TO MAKING THIS JOB CHANGE, BUT IT DOESN'T FEEL SO OVERWHELMING LATELY. I HAVE A GREATER SENSE OF CONFIDENCE AND LESS FEAR, A SENSE OF POSSIBILITY RATHER THAN DREAD LATELY. I THINK I NEED TO MOVE ON IT, EVEN THOUGH IT IS A BIG JUMP FOR ME.



MOVEMENT TOWARD CONSOLATION WILL CORRESPOND TO A DEEPER PEACE AND WISDOM, REGARDLESS OF SHALLOWER AGITATION.



Making a Decision

Seeking God's Guidance

Three Ways of Making a Decision

1st Way: Grace Blast (See Pure Inspiration)

2nd Way: Discernment of Spirits

3rd Way: Data Analysis

Preparing a Proposal

Reasoning Pros and Cons

Tracking "Movements"

Expanding the Data: Imagination

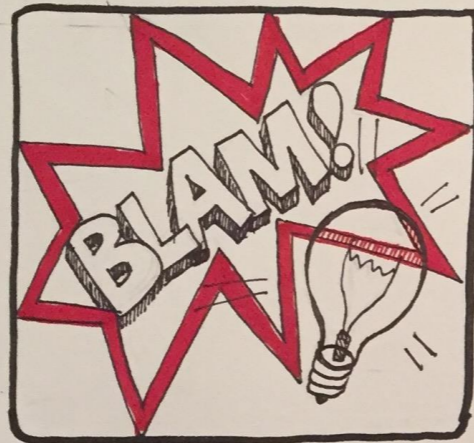
Expanding the Data: Body and Memory

Expanding the Data: Exterior Wisdom

Seeking Confirmation

Description: This chapter gives step-by-step instructions using Ignatius' model to make a decision in keeping with the wisdom of the Spirit, thus making it a *spiritual* discernment. These clearly outlined steps have proven very fruitful in the discernment of decisions of greater consequence again and again.

INTRODUCING THREE WAYS of MAKING a DECISION

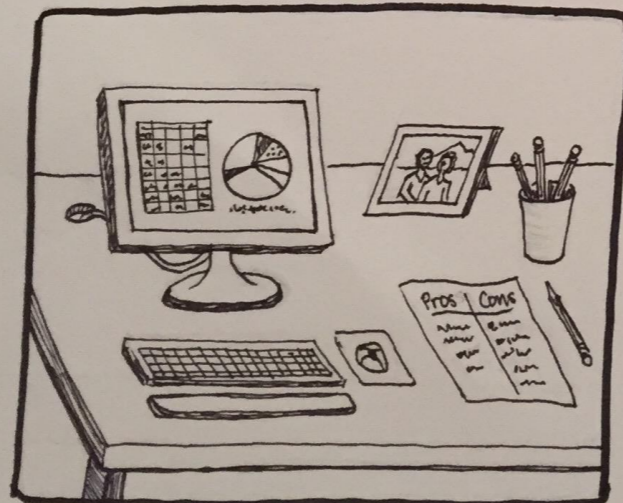
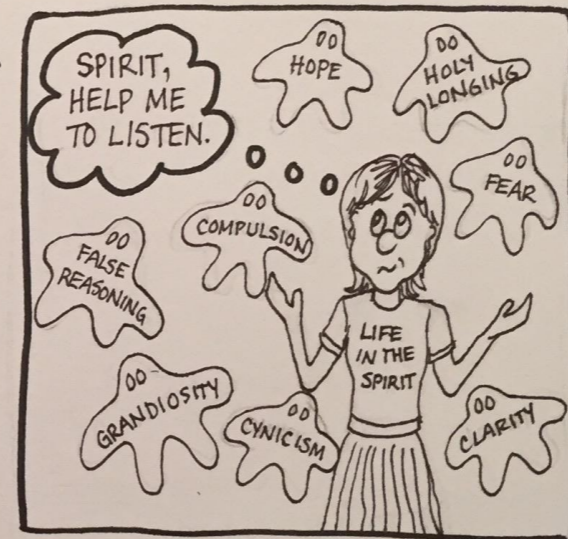


FIRST WAY: GRACE BLAST

YOU ARE IN-SPIRED (THE SPIRIT IS IN YOU) AND YOU "KNOW" WITH YOUR WHOLE BEING (NOT JUST YOUR HEAD) WHAT TO DO OR THE WAY FORWARD. THIS IS A RARE OCCASION OF CLARITY TO MOVE YOU TOWARD THE HIGHEST GOOD AND THE WILL TO FOLLOW THROUGH. NOW THIS IS CONSOLATION!

SECOND WAY: DISCERNMENT OF SPIRITS

IS A PROCESS OF INNER LISTENING TO THE MOVEMENTS OF CONSOLATION AND DESOLATION IN CONVERSATION WITH THE SPIRIT. YOU TUNE IN TO DEEPER WISDOM AS YOU SEEK THE LIGHT, THE HIGHEST GOOD MOMENT BY MOMENT.



THIRD WAY: DATA ANALYSIS

WHEN THERE ARE NO "MOVEMENTS" IN THE SPIRIT, NO SENSE OF CONSOLATION OR DESOLATION, YOU WEIGH ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES AND MAKE A REASONED DECISION.

PREPARING A PROPOSAL

1. SET THE INTENTION
2. CHOOSE AMONG OPTIONS
ONE CONCRETE, SPECIFIC STATEMENT RATHER THAN MANY POSSIBILITIES AT ONCE.

WHO? WHERE?
WHAT? WHEN?

DEPENDING ON DEADLINES TEST THE PROPOSAL OVER A SPECIFIED TIME (DAYS, WEEKS, MONTHS). WE OFTEN SET ARTIFICIAL DEADLINES THAT HEM US IN AND MAKE US UNFREE WITH LITTLE ROOM FOR THE SPIRIT... OR WE PROCRASTINATE SO WE DO NOT CHOOSE AT ALL.

TEST THE STATEMENT OFTEN. ATTEND TO THE "DATA" THAT INCLUDES:

INTERIOR WORK

REASONING
MEMORY
IMAGINATION
FEELINGS
BODY/GUT RESPONSE

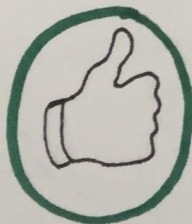
EXTERIOR WORK

RESEARCH/EXPERTS
FRIENDS/MENTORS
WISDOM PEOPLE
CHURCH/TRADITION
HOLY WRITINGS
(FOR YOU)

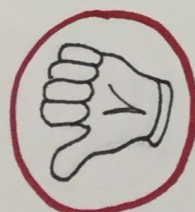
3. JOT DOWN OR TRACK THE RESULTS AS THEY CHANGE.

A DIRECTION IS LIKELY TO EMERGE OVER TIME IF YOU CONTINUE TO CHECK IN TO ALL THESE SOURCES OF WISDOM.

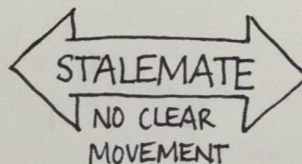
4. THE "ANSWER" WILL BE...



OR




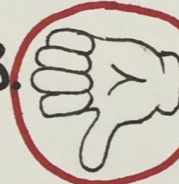
OR



PROPOSAL: I will begin the L.A. zoo internship in September.

PROS	CONS

5A.  **PURSUE THE GOAL** AND SEEK CONFIRMATION (CONSOLATION) IN THE SPIRIT... IF YOU TRULY WANT TO MAKE A SPIRITUAL DISCERNMENT.

5B.  **CHOOSE TO TEST ANOTHER OPTION...**

NEW PROPOSAL: I will return to UCLA fulltime in September.

OR

5C. DEFER A DECISION. GIVE YOURSELF & SPIRIT MORE TIME FOR CLARITY...

IF YOU HAVE THE TIME, WHICH WE OFTEN HAVE... MORE THAN WE ADMIT, IF WE ARE UNCOMFORTABLE WITH THE AMBIGUITY OF PROCESS.



REASONING WITH PROS & CONS

PROPOSAL: I will begin L.A. zoo internship in September

PROS

Want to be zoologist
 Very prestigious position
 Mom proud
 Brother jealous!
 Girlfriend will be there
 Passion for animals & species preservation
 Educated for this
 Support & encouragement from faculty
 Can start at higher salary \$
 Foot in the door

CONS

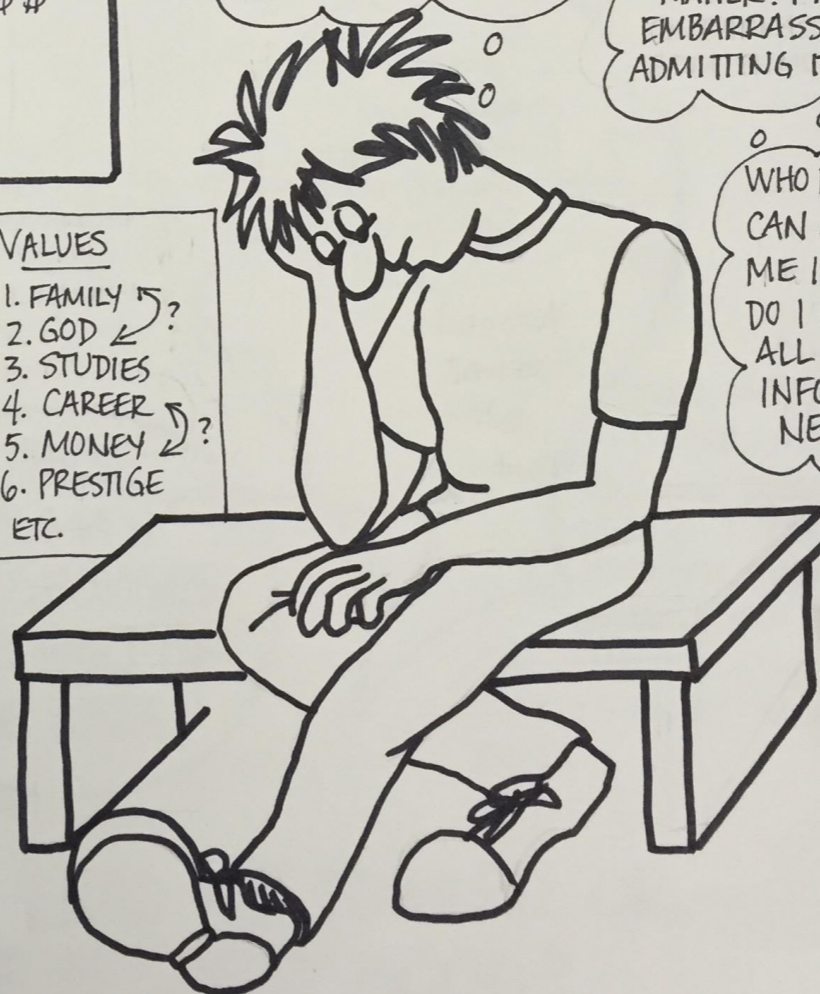
Far from home, friends
 Expensive gas
 Unreliable car
 Not enough time to study
 Allergic to most animals
 Dad wants me to take over butcher business
 Internship doesn't pay - more student loans \$\$

THE DECISION IS BASED ON MORE THAN THE NUMBER OF LISTS PROS AND CONS. SOME "WEIGH" MORE THAN OTHERS BECAUSE OF YOUR HEIRARCHY OF VALUES. SOMETIMES THIS HEIRARCHY WILL BE CALLED INTO QUESTION AND RE-ORDERED.

BE HONEST ABOUT THE PROS AND CONS. YOU MAY BE TEMPTED NOT TO ACKNOWLEDGE THOSE YOU DEEM SELFISH OR LESS "NOBLE." THE PROCESS WILL ONLY HAVE INTEGRITY IF YOU ARE HONEST WITH YOURSELF. IT HELPS TO SET THE INTENTION OFTEN.

VALUES

1. FAMILY ↗?
2. GOD ↙?
3. STUDIES
4. CAREER ↗?
5. MONEY ↙?
6. PRESTIGE
- ETC.



I'M NOT SURE IF I SHOULD INCLUDE MY GIRLFRIEND OR BROTHER IN THE LIST.

I'VE WANTED TO WORK AT THE ZOO MY WHOLE LIFE!

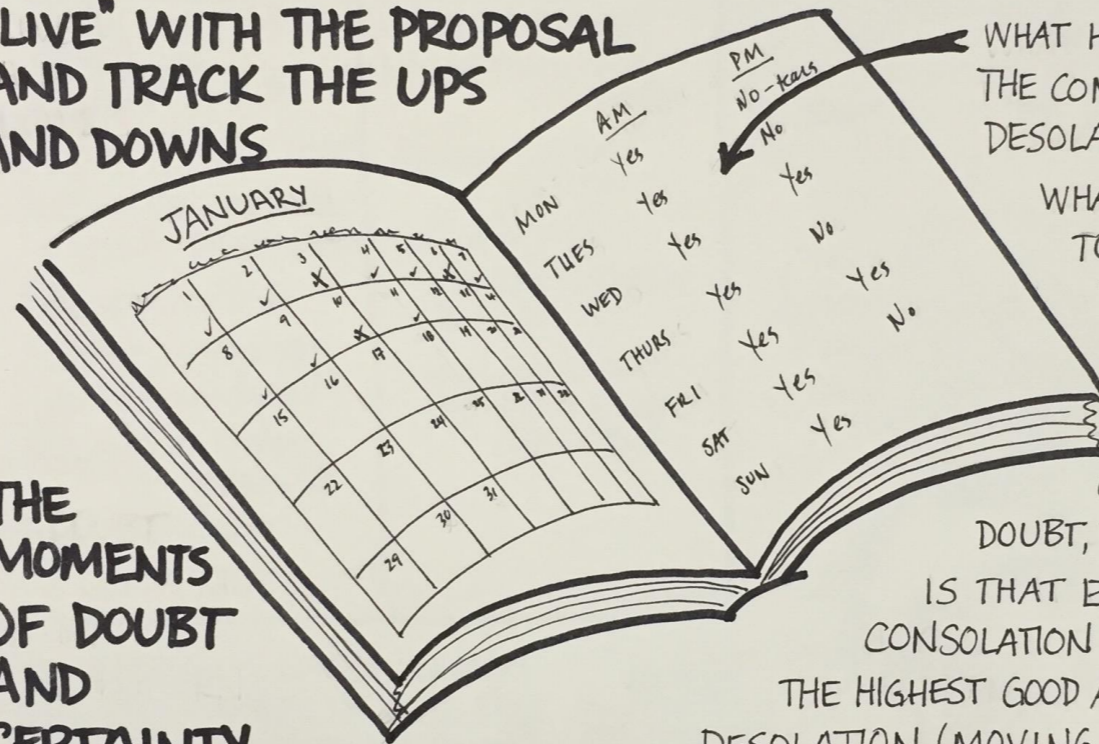
MY DAD IS THE MOST IMPORTANT PERSON IN MY LIFE. I DON'T WANT TO DISAPPOINT HIM OR HURT HIM!

SHOULD PRESTIGE EVEN MATTER? I FEEL EMBARRASSED ADMITTING IT DOES.

WHO ELSE CAN GIVE ME INSIGHT? DO I HAVE ALL THE INFO I NEED?

TRACKING "MOVEMENTS" AROUND A PROPOSAL: DATA ANALYSIS

"LIVE" WITH THE PROPOSAL
AND TRACK THE UPS
AND DOWNS



WHAT HAPPENS BETWEEN
THE CONSOLATION AND
DESOLATION?

WHAT SHIFTED? WHEN?
TO WHOM DID I SPEAK?

WHAT DID I DO?

WHAT HAPPENED
IN MY DAY

BETWEEN THE
CERTAINTY AND THE

DOUBT, THE "YES" AND THE "NO"?

IS THAT EVENT/ENCOUNTER A
CONSOLATION (MOVING ME TOWARD

THE HIGHEST GOOD AND BEST SELF) OR A

DESOLATION (MOVING ME AWAY)?

THE
MOMENTS
OF DOUBT
AND
CERTAINTY.

WHAT ARE THE PATTERNS?

I FELT FINE THIS
MORNING, REALLY EXCITED
ABOUT THE PROSPECT. BUT
THEN I TALK TO MY SISTER.
MMM. I DIDN'T TALK TO HER
ON WEDNESDAY OR FRIDAY.
WOW. I'M REALLY AFFECTED
BY HER PERSPECTIVE! SHE
KNOWS ME REALLY WELL. I
TRUST HER... BUT DO I TRUST
MYSELF?

WHAT DO
I WANT,
REALLY?

IS THERE
ANYONE ELSE
I SHOULD BE
CONSULTING?

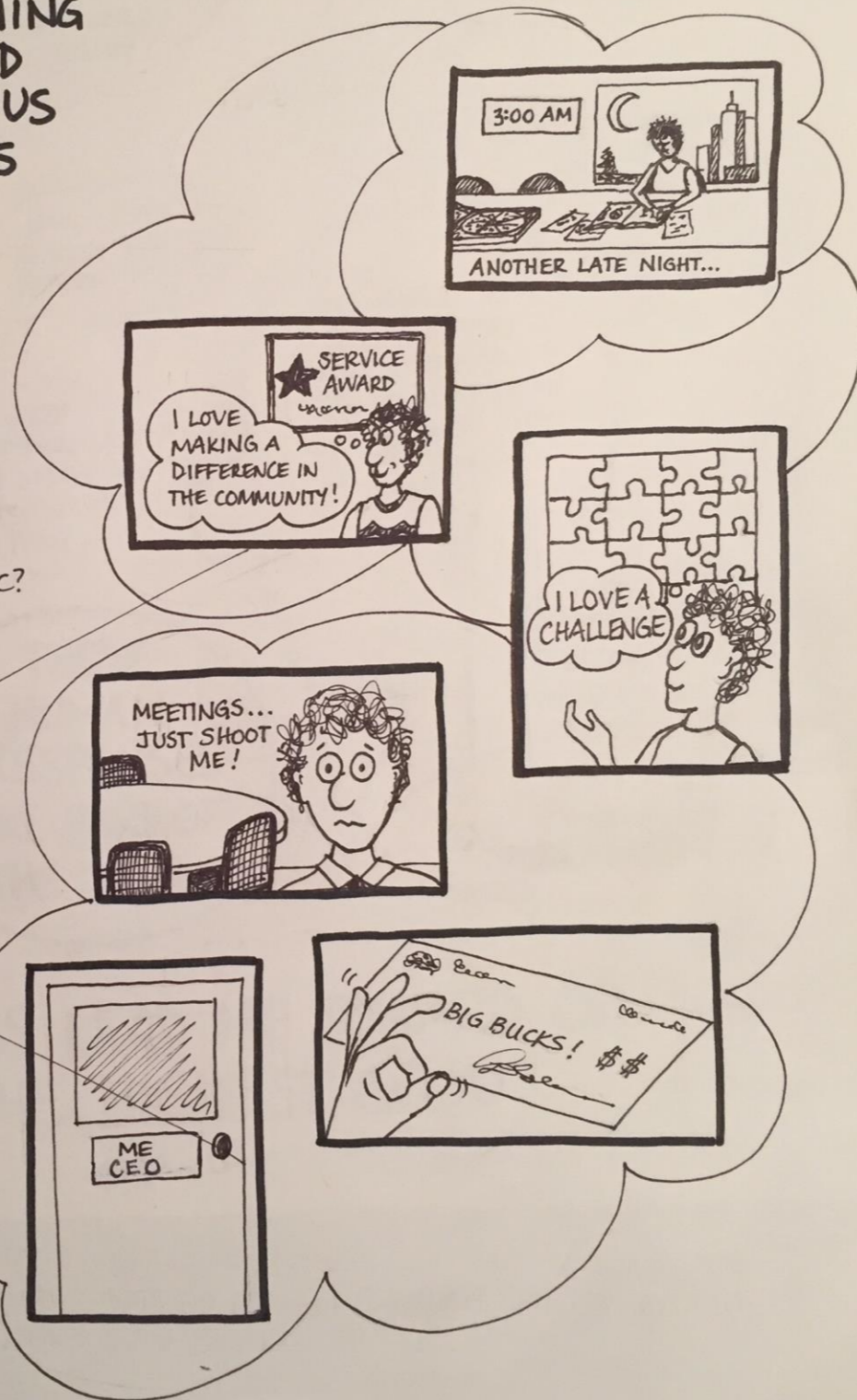
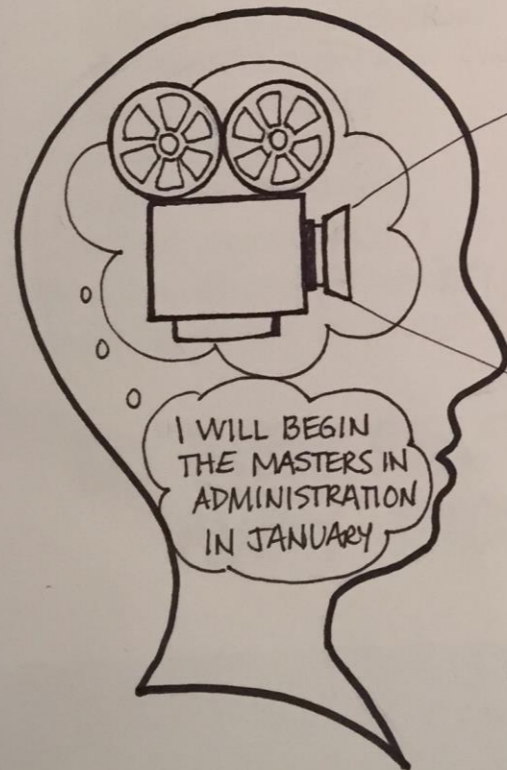


EXPANDING THE DATA:

IMAGINATION: THE MOVIE

WE ARE CAPABLE OF IMAGINING POSSIBLE ALTERNATIVES AND CONSEQUENCES, ALLOWING US TO CHOOSE AMONG OPTIONS THAT MAY LEAD TO THE HIGHEST GOOD.

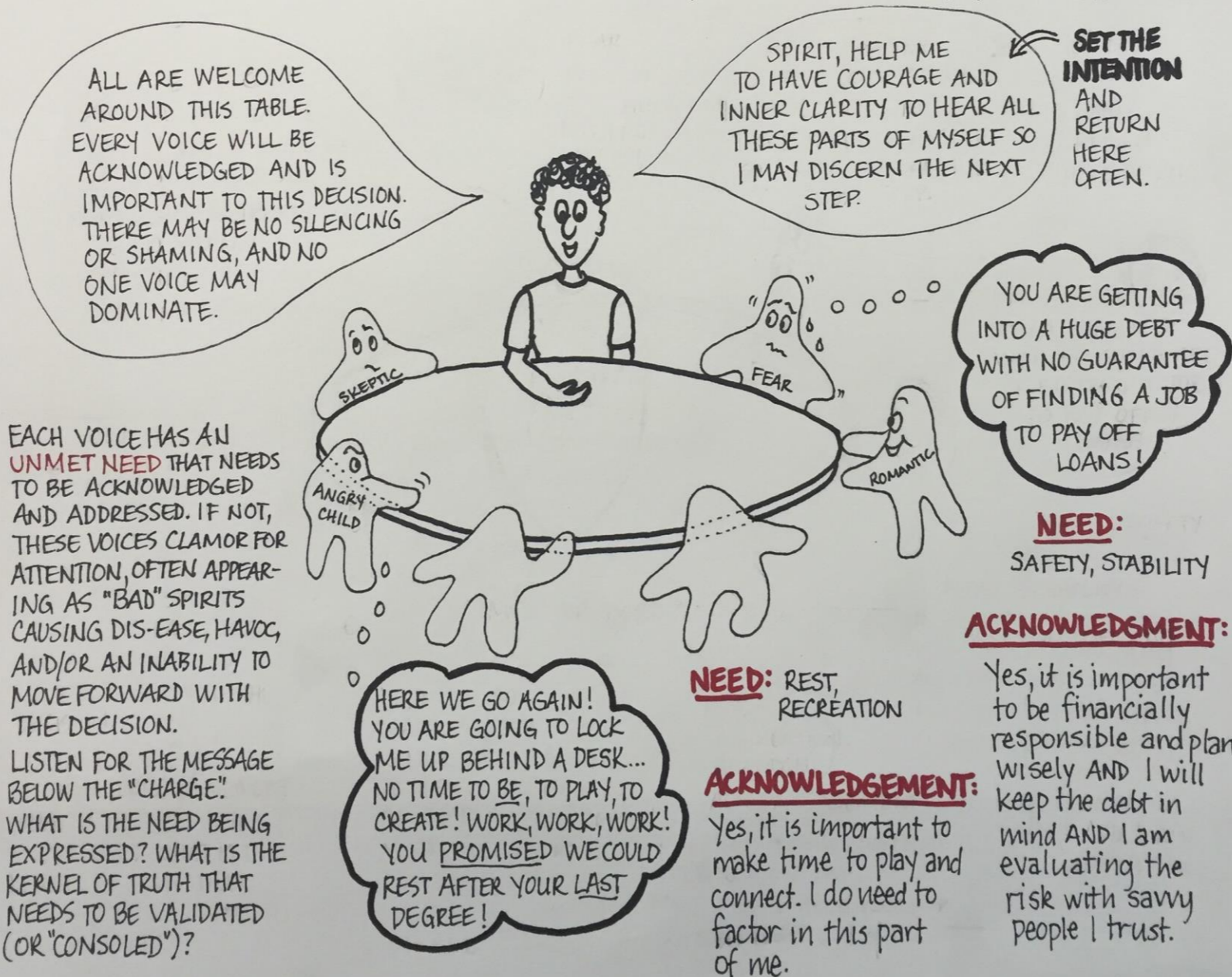
THE MOVIE: PLACE YOURSELF IN THE SCENE AND ACTUALLY "LIVE" THE POSSIBLE PROPOSAL. WHAT DOES IT FEEL LIKE? SMELL? TASTE? SOUND? WHAT ARE THE LIKELY CONSEQUENCES? ARE MY EXPECTATIONS GROUNDED? REALISTIC? CATASTROPHIC? ROMANTICIZED? CYNICAL?



EXPANDING ^{THE} DATA:

IMAGINATION: THE TABLE

AS WE PONDER A GIVEN PROPOSAL WE MAY ALSO IMAGINE THE **PLAYERS/ACTORS** IN THE INTERIOR DRAMA THAT UNFOLDS. IDENTIFY THE VOICES IN THE INTERIOR DIALOGUE SO THAT ALL ARE HEARD AROUND THE "**TABLE**" OF OUR CONSCIOUSNESS. SOME VOICES MAY SEEM LIKE CONTRARY SPIRITS — WHICH THEY MAY BE — BUT THEY MAY ALSO BE PARTS OF OURSELVES THAT NEED TO BE ACKNOWLEDGED AND "CARED FOR", EVEN AS WE SET A BOUNDARY ON THEIR CONTRARY ENERGY.



WHAT TO DO WITH THIS DATA

DISCERNING THE SPIRITS

IMAGINATION THE MOVIE SCENE FOR THE M.B.A.

SCENE = YES TO M.B.A. =

= NO TO M.B.A. =

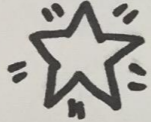
GOOD SPIRIT

CONTRARY SPIRIT

GOOD SPIRIT

CONTRARY SPIRIT

SERVICE AWARD



I am consoled (WITHOUT BEING ATTACHED) serving the community. It is mutually life-giving and fun for me. This will give me more access to make a difference.

I love it when people notice me & think well of me. I don't really care about the service or the people, just the recognition.

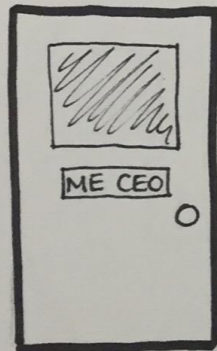
There are other ways I can contribute to the community. Business-kinds of leadership is not my thing.

There is no way I am going to take on service. I only serve myself... ever. Who cares about making a contribution

↑ IF THIS IS THE TRUTH OF SELF-KNOWLEDGE, IT MAY BE A CONSOLATION (GOOD SPIRIT) THAT MAY CHOOSE NOT TO PURSUE THIS GOAL. OUR MOTIVES ARE OFTEN MIXED.

→ I realize I am pursuing this for false, ungrounded reasons.

THIS MAY BE A TRUTH, A TRUE CONSOLATION THAT DISLODGES FALSE VIEWS OF MYSELF, LEADING TO GREATER GROUNDEDNESS... EVENTUALLY



I have gifts of leadership, as others have told me, and I too recognize. I am willing to use those gifts so as to serve the common good. But it's also OK if I never make CEO. (NOTE THE FREEDOM)

I love power. It gives me a kick think of my name on the door and not having to answer to anyone over me. I need this degree to make this happen. (NOTE THE ATTACHMENT/ LACK OF FREEDOM)

I am a good enough leader without the degree and I don't have the temperament to be CEO. I prefer being part of the rank & file. I'm a better support person.

I hate leadership. Too much work. I don't want the responsibility. I'll just resent all my incompetent underlings anyway.

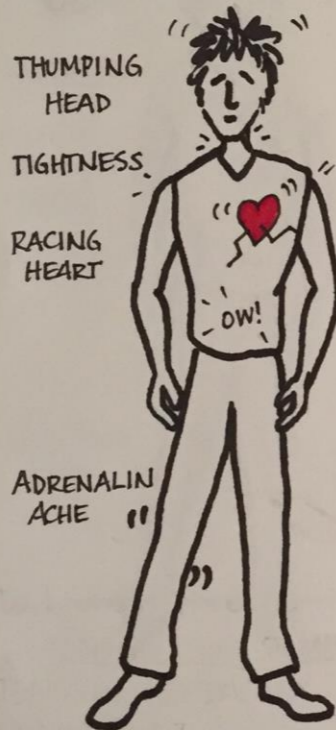
MORE DATA...

THE INTERIOR WORK

WHEN I PONDER A PROPOSAL, I NOTICE MY REACTION...

BODY

THE PRESENT



DO I HAVE A VISCERAL REACTION? TIGHT STOMACHE? TENSION HEADACHE? ENERGIZED? TIGHTNESS IN THE CHEST (PROTECTING THE HEART)? TEARS OF FEAR OR PANIC? TEARS OF RELEASE OR RELIEF? FIGHT, FLIGHT OR FREEZE RESPONSE?

MEMORY

THE PAST

WHAT HAPPENED LAST TIME I MADE A DECISION LIKE THIS? IS THIS A PATTERN IN MY BEHAVIOR? IN MY LIFE? HAVE I EVER REACTED THIS WAY BEFORE? DO I HAVE A SPECIFIC MEMORY ASSOCIATED WITH THIS FEELING?

THE LAST TIME THIS HAPPENED I WAS SUCCESSFUL. THIS SEEMS A GOOD OPTION. I TRUST MYSELF IN THIS.

THIS REMINDS ME OF THAT TIME I PANICKED AND FAILED. I DON'T TRUST THIS WON'T BE A REPEAT.

THIS IS GOING TO BE A DISASTER. I'M GOING TO FAIL MY CLASSES, DROP OUT, THEN END UP HOMELESS.

AM I GETTING TO FAR AHEAD OF MYSELF? AM I BEING REALISTIC OR GRANDIOSE OR ROMANTIC?

THIS DEGREE IS GOING TO MAKE ME RICH. I'M GOING TO BE SET FOR LIFE?

DECIDE PLAN
IMAGINE CONTROL
REMEMBER SENSE
FIGHT FLIGHT
VISUALIZE

IMAGINATION

THE FUTURE

WHAT TO DO WITH THIS DATA DISCERNING THE SPIRITS

MEMORY THAT CAUSED **BODY** REACTION:
TENSION

PONDERING THE PROPOSAL OF BEGINNING THE MBA :

MEMORY "I HAVE ALREADY FAILED FINANCIALLY ONCE..."
IS THIS A "GOOD" SPIRIT OR A "BAD" SPIRIT?



"BAD" SPIRIT

THAT REJECTS PROPOSAL

- Yes. You are a failure. What makes you think this time will be any different? You are just not smart enough and never will be.
(NOTE SHAMING TONE)

"GOOD" SPIRIT

THAT REJECTS PROPOSAL

- Yes. But this does not mean that you are a failure. It seems unwise, however, at this time - or perhaps ever - given your current circumstances & temperament. This may be your family's dream more than yours.
(NOTE LACK OF FEAR AND SELF-HATRED)

"BAD" SPIRIT

THAT ACCEPTS PROPOSAL

- Yes, but I have this in the bag. I got bailed out last time and I can manipulate the circumstances again if I have to. I will be nobody without this degree. It's my ticket. I want what I want. (NOTE THE LACK OF FREEDOM)

"GOOD" SPIRIT

THAT ACCEPTS PROPOSAL

- I do need to be careful but I am not the same person I was then. I'm more grounded and prepared. There seems to be sufficient evidence that this is a good option, and there are enough resources.

FOLLOW THE CONSOLATION (GOOD SPIRITS)

EXPANDING THE DATA: THE EXTERIOR WISDOM

MOVING FROM INTERIOR MOVEMENTS (CHECK "IN") TO CHECK "OUT" THE WISDOM BEYOND MYSELF, ESPECIALLY ON BIGGER CONCERNS.

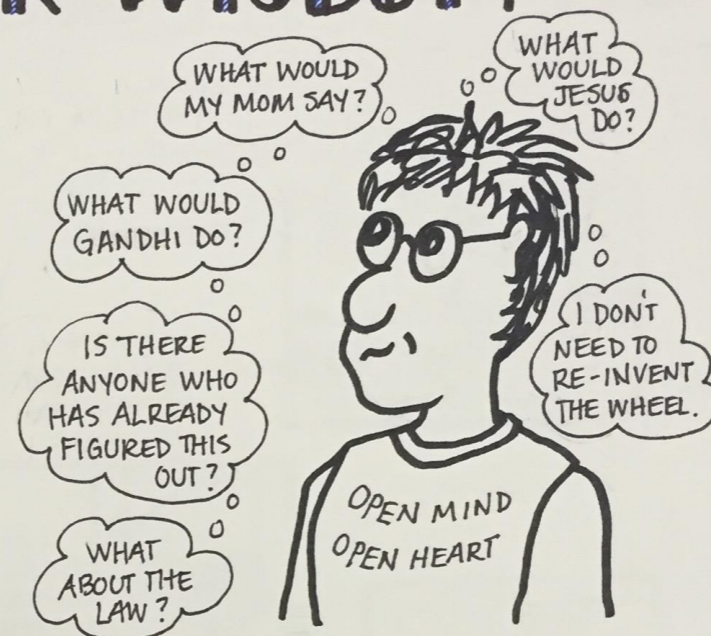
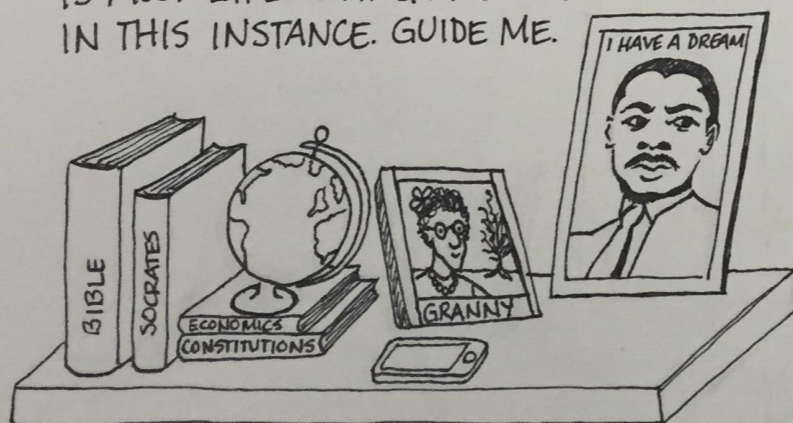
FRIENDS / MENTORS
RESEARCH / EXPERTS
WISDOM PEOPLE
CHURCH / TRADITION
"HOLY" WRITINGS (FOR YOU)

WHEREVER WE PUT OUR "FAITH," SOME OF THESE SOURCES "WEIGH" MORE THAN OTHERS IN OUR CONSCIOUSNESS.

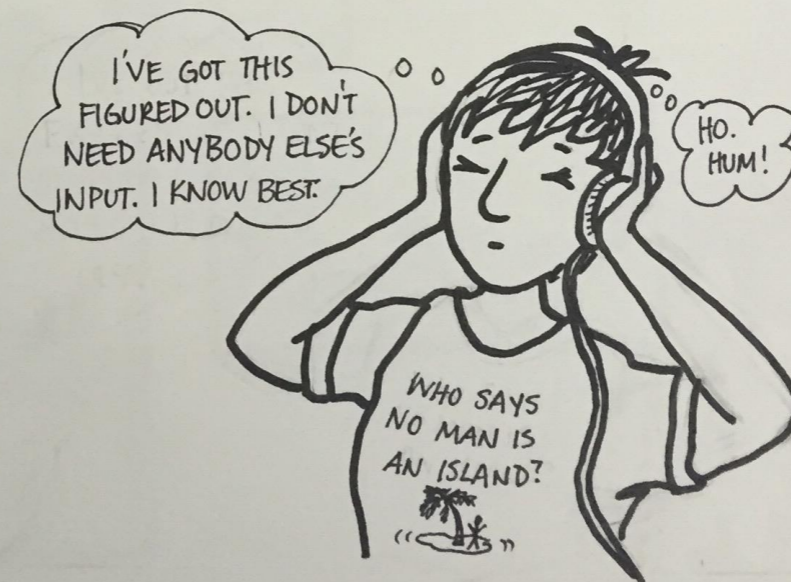
TO WHOM DO YOU LIKELY TURN FOR EXTERNAL AUTHORITY AND WISDOM IN YOUR LIFE? WHOM DO YOU ADMIRE?

EACH PERSON DISCERN HIS OWN "SAFE" TRUSTWORTHY NETWORK.

SPIRIT,
HELP ME TO KNOW
WHAT EXTERNAL WISDOM
IS MOST LIFE-GIVING AND TRUE
IN THIS INSTANCE. GUIDE ME.



IF YOU TEND TO OVER-THINK, IT MAY BE A GOOD EXERCISE TO TRUST YOUR INTUITION MORE. IF YOU TEND TO TRUST ONLY YOUR INNER LIFE TO THE EXCLUSION OF THE OUTSIDE REALITY, IT MAY BE GOOD TO ENGAGE RESOURCES OUTSIDE YOURSELF AS A CHECK TO SELF-DELUSION. CULTIVATE THE VIRTUE OF HUMILITY.

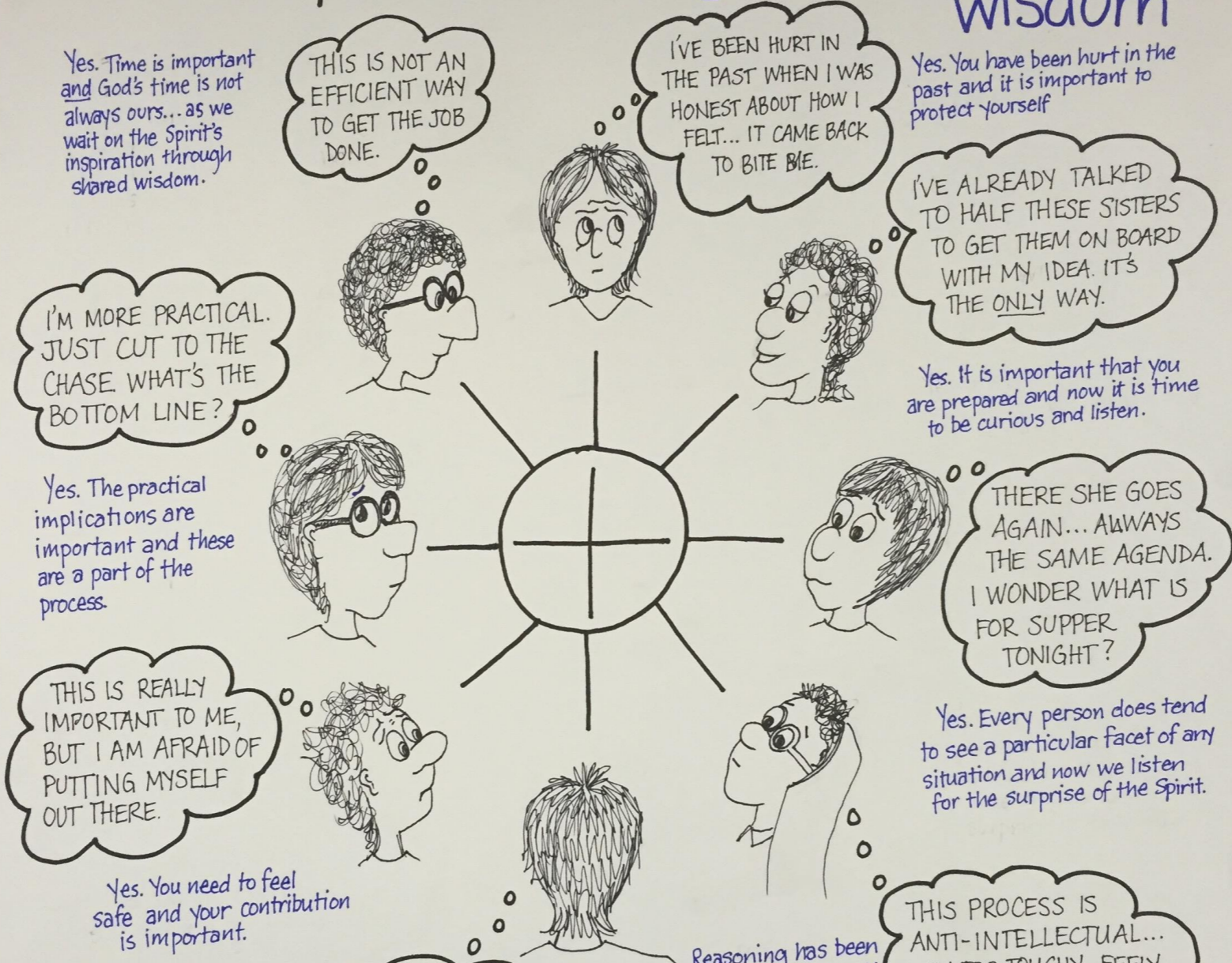


Communal Discernment

Setting the Intention
Benefit of the Doubt
Clear Proposal
Disposition
The Process
Gathering Data
Personal Preparation: Homework
Discerning Spirits
The Apt Question
Prayerful Clarifying Questions
Role of Silence
Shared Wisdom: Fruit of Discernment
Dissident Voice(s)
"Stepping Aside"
Confirmation

Description: This chapter is a how-to manual on communal discernment with two or more people, either to help an individual make and confirm a decision, or for a group to move together in the spirit regarding a collective decision. It is a combination of the Quaker "clearness committee" model and Jesuit communal discernment based on the First Fathers' experience. It also explores the inner dialogue and discipline that needs to be practiced by all participants so as to nurture truly *spiritual* discernment that is transformative to the individual and the group.

CONTRARY SPIRITS in discerning community...and validating their kernel of wisdom



WARNING:
IF YOU ONLY IDENTIFIED THESE AS "OTHER'S" VOICES AROUND THE TABLE, YOU MAY NOT BE ACKNOWLEDGING THE MANY VOICES PRESENT WITHIN ONE PERSON... ONESELF. THIS REFLECTION ON CONTRARY SPIRITS IS FOR SELF-KNOWLEDGE.

THE SAME PEOPLE ARE HEARD. THEIRS ARE THE ONLY VOICES THAT COUNT. NO ONE WILL HEAR ME ANYWAY.

Yes. You may feel invisible, but in this circle it is important to trust the intention that all may be heard to find Spirit's way forward.

I CAN'T IMAGINE THE DECISION HASN'T ALREADY BEEN MADE. WHAT'S THE POINT?

Reasoning has been part of each participant's "homework" in preparation, and now is the time to engage the whole person and the sense of the group wisdom...

Trust the original intention. The Spirit will use the raw material here present.

THIS FEELS WAY TOO MESSY... THAT CAN'T BE GOOD. ARE WE DOING THIS RIGHT?

