



Facing Our Own Soul

People will do anything, no matter how absurd, to avoid facing their own soul.” ☐ ~Carl Jung

Shortly after posting part one of TRUTH IS WHAT THE DARKNESS MOST FEARS, a friend, whom I consider part of my inner circle sacred counsel, asked if I was concerned that my outreach via a three-part opinion article might be viewed as opportunistic. In addition, although I've received numerous encouraging and supportive responses to part one, I also received two challenging comments. One individual objected to the recommendation portion in Part One, feeling that it smacked of sentencing. Another individual referred to me as an "...arrogant, self-righteous creature proclaiming to be Mr. Ray's judge, jury and confessor", urging readers to "beware of people that insist they know what is best for [the] healing of others." As synchronicity would have it, my reply to all three individuals is not only in keeping with the theme of this part of the opinion article series, but also a honing for my own process of self-introspection and free self-expression.

In the recommendation section of Part One, wherein I list several actions Mr. Ray might take to demonstrate a volitional flow of accountability and amends, my intent is to outline a possible roadmap of invitations, hearty recommendations and urgings. To my way of seeing it, sentence issuing doesn't suggest roadmaps nor contain requests. Next, I invite the "beware" reader to re-examine Part One, as in it I do not "insist" I know what is best for another's healing. My words are "I am implying here that I have an idea about what might..." My invitation to Mr. Ray is therefore an offering, not a proclamation. I don't feel that these articles slander Mr. Ray nor definitively label him a liar, charlatan, murderer, or saintly guru. I do not hurl ad homonyms such as creature, murderer, or snake oil salesman at Mr. Ray, and as we forge a middle ground path to the realm of spiritual adulthood, I recommend we all take care not to hurl these about at one another. When we avoid the larger complex issues that an event like the Sedona sweat lodge tragedy incites and reduce our reaction to labeling another as an "...arrogant, self-righteous creature proclaiming to be Ray's judge and jury and confessor", we perpetrate the very thing we criticize, becoming arrogant accusers who insist

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know what is best for the healing of others. I wonder if the “beware” reader would have responded the same way to Gandhi when he urged the English to leave India, maintaining that he believed that action to be the most healing for those involved; or to Nelson Mandela who urged the abolishment of apartheid in South Africa, professing that action to be the most healing for the black South Africans. One might leap to counter with an observation that I’m neither Gandhi nor Nelson Mandela, and might even levy the scrutiny - “who do you think you are?” My reply: who do I have to be? Lastly, the etymological root of the word ‘opportunistic’ speaks of good fortune and a favorable time to talk about something. Granted, the very act of disseminating information places one in the public forum affording readers the opportunity to construe that these opinion articles are motivated largely for personal gain. However, that isn’t the energy motivating my actions; I’m not charging for these offerings; and I’m not advertising my services nor soliciting allies.

In part one of TRUTH IS WHAT THE DARKNESS MOST FEARS, I urged James Arthur Ray to take a bold, brave champion’s stand and embody authenticity as the highest spiritual principle by going courageously within to obtain answers and garner insights on a vulnerable, accountable human being level. I cannot request that Mr. Ray take steps that contribute to bona fide transformation and not answer that same heroic call myself. Furthermore, walking my talk includes taking the precept “none of us can transform anything we are unwilling to acknowledge, no exceptions, no matter what” and applying this to myself. Therefore, in this part of the opinion article series I address the concepts of self-examination, personal authenticity, the middle ground and its relatedness to spiritual adulthood, as well as our looking inward to answer our own heroic call.

No doubt we can all agree that monumental things are occurring within humanity and that what transpired as part of the Spiritual Warrior Retreat program facilitated by Mr. Ray in Sedona, Arizona on October 8, 2009 is monumental. I suspect that most individuals on a spiritual path, particularly since approximately 1987, have come into contact with the concept of a paradigm shift. My use of the term “paradigm” is synonymous with a customary model of being, established standards, and/or patterns or precedents that one follows. Paradigm shifts are characterized by leaps in understanding and expansions in consciousness, whereby profound evolutionary changes take place. A paradigm shift is upon us, and at the heart of it is the opportunity to cross the threshold from spiritual adolescence to spiritual adulthood.

One of the passkeys to crossing the spiritual adulthood threshold is personal authenticity. Authenticity is the highest spiritual principle and the cornerstone of our humanity. The other passkey is self-examination, and self-examination is the main ingredient of enlightenment. *“Enlightenment doesn’t occur from sitting around visualizing images of light, but from integrating the darker aspects of the self into the conscious personality.” – Carl Jung.*

Therefore, to experience enlightenment we must first be willing to acknowledge the tentacles of deceit, neglect, cruelty, exploitation, narcissism, alienation and hopelessness within us and to integrate these into our “conscious personality”, our incarnate Earth Self.

What appears on the societal stage is a mirror for the unexamined, unhealed aspects of all of us. It seems uncomplicated to say that a person ought to have behaved a certain way and to find unmitigated fault with their behavior especially when it includes tragedies. Clearly, the issues surrounding and erupting from what transpired in Sedona on October 8th are hauntingly complex and, by their nature, engender polarized position mongering. However, care needs to be taken. For those holding the post of Mr. Ray as an absolute cavalier, counterfeit charlatan and even murderer, their pulpit now includes proclaiming conclusive contempt and condemnation in most areas of his life and work. For those holding the post of Mr. Ray as an irreproachable purveyor of integrity and indisputable contributions, their pulpit now includes a kind of elusive clemency. When unchecked, judgment and vengeance can run over our humanity in their unbridled haste to crucify. And when likewise unchecked, the armor of defensive denial pre-empts an answer to the heroic call.

The only way through this is the middle ground, which asks us to speak up about the disturbing, objectionable things appearing on the societal stage AND to allow our horror, disdain and bewilderment to escort us inward, to our own inner inquiry. Although bringing our “darker aspects” into consciousness might be disconcerting, doing so is not only infinitely preferable to covert lurking in the halls of pretense and careless denial, it is essential if we are to cross the spiritual adulthood threshold. The polarized positions are indicative of spiritual adolescence, while the middle ground, with its passkeys of self-examination and personal authenticity, is the threshold to spiritual adulthood. Furthermore, not only don't polarized viewpoints serve the highest purpose for the deaths of Kirby Brown, James Shore and Liz Neuman nor bring the profound healing sought by those struggling with post-traumatic bewilderment and betrayal, polarized positions prevent us from answering our own heroic call.

Just as the events surrounding the life of James Arthur Ray are an opportunity for him to walk his talk and apply the principles he teaches, they are also an opportunity for us to apply to ourselves the principles and standards we ascribe to Mr. Ray. Just as Mr. Ray is not exempt from the co-creation of what is transpiring in his life, we are not exempt from the co-creation of what is transpiring in ours. As within/so without. In this spirit, perhaps we might undertake asking ourselves questions such as –

In what areas are our defensive egos running roughshod over our willingness to humbly introspect and be accountable for our choices and behaviors?

1. In what areas are we detached from our intuitive knowing or diminishing the intuitive knowing of others?
2. In what areas are we not authentically self-expressing?
3. In what areas are we not self-empowered and not empowering others?
4. Have we ever required more than is reasonable or safe from others or ourselves?
5. In what areas are we projecting an image of ourselves as knowing best?
6. In what areas are we using our charisma to persuade or dominate?
7. Do we run and hid when uncomfortable situations or extreme events surface?
8. Where are we culpable for negligence?
9. What is required to make amends?

One might leap to counter this with a justification that their actions haven't touched the tragic proportions of Mr. Rays. I suggest that we refrain from allowing this position to deter us from our own heroic call. Let's go inward to expose and integrate our own controlling, righteous, usurious, terrified, impotent, hopeless aspects.

Because things that show up on the societal stage, particularly those that prompt our intense reaction, offer us a way into our own inner landscape, it would be irresponsible of me not to acknowledge Mr. Ray as a catalyst for my own recent inner inquiries. I still reach out to him, from the core of my hopeful, prayerful and expectant heart to take a bold, brave champion stand. However, no matter what another **does or does not do** in ways we recognize as authentically accountable, let's answer our own heroic call so that as facilitators we might continue to become more trustworthy, sincere and responsible custodians of our gifts and abilities demonstrating respect, admiration and empowerment to those we serve; and as participants, we might continue to seek and find spiritual programs, services and products that promote personal authenticity, self-trust, freedom of expression, self-empowerment and co-creative collaboration.

I therefore leave all of us with words attributed to the Christ:

*"If you bring forth what is within you,
what you bring forth will save you. If you do not bring forth what is within you,
what you do not bring forth will destroy you."*

~ *The Gospel of Thomas*

Mariangela Pino Landau is the founder and director of a spiritual organization called **The Center for True North**

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[Spiritual Adulthood](#)

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