

Courage

What do you think? If a man owns a hundred sheep, and one of the them wanders away, will he not leave the ninety-nine on the hills and go to look for the one that wandered off? And if he finds it, I tell you the truth, he is happier about that one sheep than about the ninety-nine that did not wander off. In the same way your Father in heaven is not willing that any of these little ones should be lost. ~Matthew 18:12

Can you commit to finding the lost sheep inside of yourself, with love and happiness, not judgment and rage?

This is courage:

To stand up in front of a class of teenagers
And talk about your son's suicide
As tears of loss and grief stream down your face,
Exposed, vulnerable and naked -

Defying the cultural injunctions to "be strong"
And to believe that, "He is in a better place,"
And all the other platitudes that frightened people hide behind.

And this is courage:

To own that you have murderous thoughts,
Fantasies of torturous revenge,
Blind annihilating rage
And spewing, caustic hatred -

Risking that another will trust your innate goodness
And not be alarmed by your venom
Or try to convince you to put on your plastic smile of niceness again.

It takes courage

To talk about the feelings of helplessness
Hopelessness and terror
Underlying your protective rage
Re-membered feelings from when you were just a little child -

Hoping you will not be pitied, scorned
Negated and minimized by another's blindness
To their own hauntings and tauntings that they pretend are not there.

What courage is needed

To face how you have failed as you tried,
Made mistakes no matter how careful you were,
Hurt others even when intending good,
Destroyed when you meant to help -

Accepting this with grace instead of judgment
Compassion instead of scorn
Not faking responsibility behind a screen of self pitying shame or self righteous blame.

Love - the force behind courage

Of a woman enraged at other people's
Insensitive imposition of their agendas
On her dying husband,
Frightened and yet prepared and willing,

To forfeit friendships and reputations
By speaking up and protecting him
After a lifetime of smiling pleasantly in the face of civilized insults.

And a lions courage is required to

Sit week after week searching in the darkest recesses of the mind
In hidden crevices and secret ravines of consciousness
To move behind the barriers of dissociation and repression
Where forgotten and lost children hide trembling, weeping and wounded

And bring them to the light of day
Face their shame, feel their injuries
And trust they can grow and thrive into the fullness of life.

And courage is the woman

Who insists on her story of incest being written
In the first person,
Not using a pseudonym
Despite the longing for anonymity

To bring to others the knowledge that they are not alone,
To share the insights of her journey
That they may be a light to others seeking their way on this winding road.

What courage

When dying would be so much easier
The oblivion of unconsciousness beckons
And deep sleep offers the opium of release
Tempting and luring one from life,

To find the energy and will to continue to struggle,
Gasp and breathe past the strangle hold of suffering
Fight and wrestle through the mists of obscurity to find meaning and light.

And do we have the courage

To recognize our desperate, clingy neediness
Lurking behind the protective mask of pretense
That desires anything and everything that will numb and
Allay the terrible fear that one is nothing and nobody.

And in reliving the dumb and brutish lie,
Come to know the truth,
Slowly growing into the intelligent consciousness of our infinite, loving beingness.
To my clients in love and gratitude - for the gift of trust and privilege of sharing - as you seek the lost parts of
yourselves and redeem them to the fullness of life - life abundant and joyful.

Thanksgiving 2004