

Readings and References from the Paramis class on Wisdom 12/6/19

David read this poem by West Indies poet Derek Walcott:

Love After Love

The time will come
when, with elation,
you will greet yourself arriving
at your own door, in your own mirror,
and each will smile at the other's welcome
and say, sit here. Eat.
You will love again the stranger who was your self.
Give wine. Give bread. Give back your heart
to itself, to the stranger who has loved you
all your life, whom you have ignored
for another, who knows you by heart.
Take down the love letters from the bookshelf,
the photographs, the desperate notes,
peel your own image from the mirror.
Sit. Feast on your life.

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Chris read this quote from Howard Thurman, 20<sup>th</sup> century African American minister who also studied Eastern religions, he wrote a very inspiring autobiography called *With Head and Heart*.

"There is something in every one of you that waits and listens for the sound of the genuine in yourself. It is the only true guide you will ever have. "

Bonus: a few more quotes from Thurman, he had a gift for words:

*Don't ask what the world needs. Ask what makes you come alive and go do it. Because what the world needs is people who have come alive.*

*Keep fresh before me the moments of my high resolve.*

*There is a quiet courage that comes from an inward spring of confidence in the meaning and significance of life. Such courage is an underground river, flowing far beneath the shifting events of one's experience, keeping alive a thousand little springs of action.*

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Below is the passage Chris read from *The Way of Tenderness* by Zenju Earthlyn Manuel. The book is relevant to the questions of reconciling no-self and our particular suffering, oneness and diversity, emptiness and empathy. She's an African-American bisexual woman Zen teacher.

"The way of tenderness appears on its own. It comes when the events of your life have rendered you silent, have sat you in the corner, and there is nothing left to do but sit until the mental distress or confusion about who you are or who you are not passes. ... It is a flexibility of perception, rather than a settling into belief. It brings affirmation of life, rather than of suffering, center stage. ... Instead of sinking into pain and separation I did a very scary thing. I allowed tenderness--a gentle opening, a softness of mind and body--to surface. I followed that opening until the way of tenderness unearthed itself as a liberated path. ... I say that complete tenderness is an experience of life that trusts the fluidity of our life energy and its extension into those around us. ...[nodding story] If I were to define the way of tenderness, I would say that it is acknowledgement--acknowledging and honoring all life and all that is in the world, fully, with heart and body."

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Finally, more information about the technique for inner inquiry that Chris referenced: it's from a school of inner work called 'Focusing'. There's a short book by that name by founder Eugene Gendlin, and the work has been further evolved by Ann Weiser Cornell, see <https://focusingresources.com/>. The website may seem a bit marketing-y, but Ann is quite wise and skillful.