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GOING TO OUR EDGES

By the time you're reading this, I, along with twelve other adventurous souls will be... not resting comfortably in a local Hilton... but resting comfortably in our two-person tents high in the Himalayas... having flown to Kathmandu, Nepal, and then to Lukla on the Everest Approach Trail to begin 2 weeks of trekking Climbing from 9,200 feet to almost 13,000 feet! We'll be taken care of by the very capable Sherpas, the natives of the High Himalayas who move up and down the high mountains as easily as if they were walking at sea level. We'll be hiking every day, eating out in the open, bathing in a much appreciated bucket of hot water or buying a shower in a local trekking hotel, communing with nature, with God, with our very own souls in a way we've never done before. We'll be meeting people very much like our own selves, yet very different.

This trip is a metaphor for what life is, or what it can be, if we engage it as a journey of deepening into the mystery of who and what we are, as a journey into the unfamiliar, into the unknown.

Living in the known and the familiar is the easy way to live. Engaging our own unknown edges as well as the edges of the physical universe, exploring peoples, and religious customs unfamiliar to us, will forever change us...change life for us. We will learn cooperation, caring, consideration, appreciation for that which is different, yet the same, as us.

We'll have the experience of being in the silence of the high mountains, as well as the silence of our inner depths. We'll have a family: a 75 year old "grandmother", two young men – one a teenager and one in his early 20's, and the other 9 of us ranging from mid/late 30's to near 60, along with our co-leaders Ken and Bpae.

We've been preparing our minds and bodies for this trip, engaging in aerobic exercise and holding in our awareness the necessity of leaving our expectations behind...learning to stay present to each moment...**opening to each moment and receiving it just as it is**...remembering not to make judgments, not to compare this experience with the previous ones or with what is familiar. We're entering into a strange, unknown land, at very high altitudes, taking ourselves to a physical edge, as well as mental and emotional edge that will open us to new spiritual awarenesses.

We can only guess what it'll be like to walk in these high places of Himalayas, said to be the home of the gods...silence so silent that it opens us to our depths ...clouds so high they bring us to their heights...mountain peaks so lofty they kiss the heavens...rope bridges, strong and fragile, crossing deep chasms, paths cut deeply into the rock, up and down the sides of mountains...camping on the grounds of ancient Tibetan Buddhist Monasteries, shopping in the local bazaar in Namche at 12,000feet elevation...praying in our own silent way as we sit on the edge of the world...knowing that our inner edges have just been extended...opening to find the levels of faith we've never known...finding experiences of faith we'd never get to otherwise...worshipping in Buddhist monasteries, under the starry skies, in each moment experiencing the awe and wonder of Life.

We'll be trekking, totally dependent upon people we don't know, in land that is

Unfamiliar, experiencing the high adventure of exploration and discovery, exploration and discovery not only of the High Himalayas, but also of the highs and lows within our own being. Everything that we've learned from our past will be valuable, but also at the same time be worthless, and must be set aside as we enter into this new space. Nothing can prepare us for the magnitude of this experience. We'll have a chance to notice our predictable mental and emotional reactions to everyday events...as well as to the unexpected.

Our most important preparation is centering at the Heart...opening to non-judgmental, Unconditional Love, that energy that joins together the opposites around a calm center – a center that produces a healing presence.

We'll join with the poet David Whyte, as he wrote of his experience at the high mountain Tilicho Lake in Peru:

In this high place
It is as simple as this,
Leave everything you know behind.

Step toward the cold surface
Say the old prayer of rough love
And open both arms.

Those who come with empty hands
Will stare into the lake astonished,
There in the cold light
reflecting pure snow
The true shape of your own face.

Perhaps you might challenge yourself here at home in your comfortable bed by taking a few hours or days out of the ordinary life to experience something that will extend your edges...that will take you out of the humdrum of ordinary life into deeper appreciation of what it is to be human. Find out something new about yourself. Live your life more fully and with excitement.

I invite you to make each day of your life a sacred journey into your own unknown regions, leaving the familiar ground of your pet assumptions, and daring to engage the Edge of God and of Life just beyond your comprehension, daring to engage the injunction above ancient Temple at Delphi – KNOW THYSELF.

Namaste,
Judith