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## **The Soul's High Adventure**

There comes a time in life--after the woundings of childhood, the growth of adolescence, the achievements of adulthood, the strivings to 'fix oneself' / to make ourselves perfect, or at least to look good enough-- when we may come face to face with ourselves just as we are! And see ourselves with all our woundings, personal resources, and skilled and unskilled behaviors, and begin to ask 'Now, just who am I?'

At this time we have to look ourselves in the eye, see our lives as they've unfolded, and say, yes, 'This is Me! This is who I am.' And we begin to see that we are who we are because of all of our history, and we are much, much more.

In the early stages of life, we've been faced with the necessity of healing the wounds of the inner child and learning how to maneuver in the world of relationship, education, occupation, and parenthood. We've learned to confront our fears and find some manner of success in our lives.

These are the primary tasks of the first half of life. Then, in mid-life somewhere, after we've gained life experience, we may, if our path is destined in this direction, begin to hear nagging questions arising within concerning exactly what we are going to do with our lives. And, sometimes, we experience that our life is not turning out the way we thought it would! Our fantasies fall around us. Our previously held values and belief systems may come crashing down around us. Affirmations don't really work any more. Dissatisfaction sets in. Confusion is rampant. Our old defense systems are collapsing. Our addictions no longer dull the dissatisfaction with our lives and we can no longer 'make do'. The difficult questions regarding 'Who am I?' 'What is my life all about?' and 'How can I make sense out of my life?' disturb our quiet times.

The world may think we are getting along quite well enough... we may even have achieved a measure of success. However, in our own evaluation, we feel we're really haven't achieved enough, certainly not what we thought we would or should. All we hear when we listen within are the critical, even cruel voices of the inner critic suggesting that we really aren't worth much, after all. We do everything we can to drown out these inner voices; they're much too painful. Easy answers are not forth coming for the questions and dilemmas we are facing.

The problem is that we try to solve the problem at the level of the problem. That is never possible. The problem is that by nature, by definition, our ego feels inadequate and, by comparison with others, never measures up. So when we look at ourselves through the eyes of the comparative, judging ego, we can never get out of the hole. We never seem to be able to effectively change our basic behaviors. Our irritating and less than perfect aspects never seem to go away. Anger, jealousy, fear, deceit continue to show up in our lives, regardless of what we do to pretend otherwise..

A new perspective is called for.

When we leave childhood and enter adolescence, we experience radical changes in our perspective. Our lives are no longer lived based on Santa Claus, the tooth fairy, asking permission for everything we do, and not crossing the street alone. When we leave young

adulthood and enter the possibility of a real maturity, another radical change in perspective is called for. We have enough life experience to begin to see Life as it really is.... To see ourselves as we really are.

When we look deeply at ourselves, we see that our lives have unfolded in front of us in a most amazing way. Nothing we could have seen could have prepared us for how things turned out. The personality level of our psyche is surprised. Sometimes dismayed. Sometimes delighted. There may be some similarities between how we thought it should be and how it turned out; however, I've found out there are more surprises than not.

We are confused, even shattered when we realize that we do not have the control over our lives that we thought. We wonder just what has been directing our lives in spite of our best intentions?

Many of us have come to realize that there is some Force outside of time and space that is amazingly powerful in the unfolding of our lives. We call this inner, invisible Force that each of us have, our soul. The soul belongs to the spiritual realm or the realm of 'The Mystery.' Its range extends beyond the time and space range of our personality level. We become aware of the needs, desires, intentions of our soul when we extend our awarenesses beyond those of our five senses. The soul speaks to us through that inner, small voice, through feelings, hunches, intuitions, and dreams.

Perhaps we've been afraid to listen within because we didn't trust the inner voices because all we've heard were self-judgments, criticisms, and comparisons. We've not learned how to be attentive to the soul. Through the soul, we connect to the spiritual dimension of life. As we attune to the soul, new dimensions of awareness and possibility present themselves. We see Life from a radically different perspective than before.

Many people sense that their soul is calling them... even though they aren't sure what their soul is. They experience that they want to change their career directions, their leisure time, and their social and spiritual lives. Many people find they must expand their experience of God since their perceptions of the soul and God are based on their childhood perceptions. An adult experience of the soul is bigger than a childhood belief and may open us to the realm of the experience of The Mystery of God.... As opposed to the iron clad version of 'I know exactly what God is and what God intends.'

The soul's high adventure, so labeled by Joseph Campbell, takes us out of the personality's path, out of the hero's journey. In fact, it's important that we've achieved some measure of success as a hero/heroine in our life, that we've conquered enough of life's dragons and met life's challenges so that as we open to the soul's journey we bring these life experience resources gained from the ego's journey. The ego's journey is one of forcefully directing our way, overcoming obstacles to each goal that we've ambitiously set, becoming a success in every way possible. This is appropriate.

One day we find this isn't enough. Our soul calls. And calls. And calls. And calls. If we do not listen, our soul may result to drastic means to get our attention. If we listen and follow our inner guidance, then we engage a journey that takes us to wholeness, to a complete relationship with our selves.

As we engage the soul's journey, we must learn to listen within to the inner voice that directs us in the soul's journey. We no longer set goals just for the purpose of becoming successful and achieving ambitions. We listen to the inner direction, to our inner wisdom before we take action. We connect to our lost, disowned, discarded aspects and find

value in all parts of ourselves. We find meaning in our inner world. We engage our soul's high adventure.

In the soul's journey, we learn to notice and observe, to accept and not pronounce judgments on ourselves until we can see more deeply and clearly just what is going on. We see our protections, our fears, and defenses as necessary steps along the way. We begin to see what is beneath these defenses and see the wisdom of not being able to see more clearly until we've had the necessary maturity to go deeper and claim ourselves in our totality. To engage the journey, we need all of the lessons we've learned in life, all of successes and failures, the psychological tools we've gained and the woundings and healings we've experienced. These life experiences are necessary for the next step, and they are not sufficient. We must learn how to listen within, how to notice ourselves without engaging in self-critical judgments, how to access the state of unconditional love, and how to live the mystery that our lives are. Attuning to the voice of your intuition, an integral part of this journey, enables you to feel connected at all time to your inner guidance system.

We slowly begin to realize that the journey is an inner journey. 'It' isn't out there. It's in side. It's an inner journey of remarkable magnitude that transforms the life we've lived through the limitations of the wounded child. It's inside each of us.

Our work here at the Center provides assistance for people in this journey based on what their needs are at the time. In particular, I would like to encourage those who've done basic psychological healing work and who are seeking on-going support with a group to consider joining the Adventurers in Consciousness I Group. See the announcement in the newsletter and call for more information and application. The Adventurers I provides an extended group process to support a person who desires to deepen into their soul's journey.

Namaste, Judith