

# Listen

NOVEMBER 2017

VOLUME 11

ISSUE 4

## THE INTIMACY OF SPIRITUAL COMPANIONSHIP

All of us are in community of various kinds every day, whether through the bonds with a partner, a family, a professional association, an affinity or interest group around a particularly activity, or a religious or spiritual group of some kind. As members of the human family, we are also in community with all sorts of “strangers” every day, say at an airport, or a gas station, or when we help someone in need despite our not knowing them.

Given all of this, what is unique about the relationship between a spiritual director/companion/friend/guide and the people they strive to support?

Perhaps the key element is that spiritual direction is all about intimacy, starting with the growing intimacy between a spiritual director and a spiritual directee, which is meant to foster growing intimacy between the directee and The Universe/God/Brahman/Tao (or

however you might name your Higher Power).

What is intimacy? Intimacy is trust. Intimacy is safety. Intimacy is letting your hair down, being at ease, comfortable, transparent and willing to open up, feeling welcome, and allowing yourself to immerse deeply and authentically, without fear of reprisal or harm.

Only when you allow yourself to be this open and vulnerable can you truly be one with your Higher Power.

Paradoxically, this is also the time when you are most susceptible to being hurt.

And yet the only way we can experience true intimacy is by letting our guard down. We can't feel a hug, or a kiss, or the warm embrace of our lover – or God – without being open. But, in our society, intimacy implies vulnerability, which is too often regarded as a weakness. You

should bulk up, cover yourself, and hide behind layers and layers of protection.

Or so we are told.

Achieving true, deeply rooted and lasting intimacy also implies discomfort. As anyone who has walked this path can attest, you don't become truly intimate with another person without going through phases of friction and disagreement, sometimes in very significant ways.

Spiritual directors have a special role to play by establishing a safe space for you, listening deeply and intently, spiritually, and letting your authentic self shine through. Ideally, we are mirrors that allow you to see yourself more clearly. We strive very hard not to impose our own vision, so as not to distort the image. All of this is meant to allow you to see what is already inside you. You are your own best teacher.

## THE INTIMACY OF SPIRITUAL COMPANIONSHIP *continued*

God is within us all, fully, completely, without reservation or limitation. We have but to look. What greater form of intimacy can there be than to see your true self, your soul, accurately reflected as if you were looking in a mirror?

This is what spiritual direction is meant to accomplish.

True community is impossible without intimacy. Deep connection depends on it. As we strive to become a more welcoming, inclusive community of spiritual directors and directees, we have to work harder and harder on becoming intimate with one another.

A worthy goal! \*

— Anil Singh-Molares

**PUBLISHER:** Spiritual Directors International  
**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AND EDITOR:**  
Anil Singh-Molares, MTS  
**PRODUCTION SUPERVISOR:** Tobias Becker  
**SUBMISSIONS:** [listen@sdiworld.org](mailto:listen@sdiworld.org)  
**ADVERTISING:** [www.sdiworld.org](http://www.sdiworld.org)

*Listen* is published four times a year (January, April, July, October). The names *Spiritual Directors International*™, *SDIWorld*™, and *SDI*™ and its logo are trademarks of Spiritual Directors International, Inc., all rights reserved. Opinions and programs represented in this publication are of the authors and advertisers and may not represent the opinions of Spiritual Directors International, the Coordinating Council, or the editors.

*Listen*

— **TWO YEAR COURSES** —  
DISTANCE LEARNING • WEEKEND INTENSIVES • CEU AVAILABLE

**DREAM WORK TRAINING**      **SPIRITUAL DIRECTION TRAINING**

Seekers from all over the country attend the Haden Institute because of the breadth and depth of our teachings on both spirituality and Jungian psychology. Each of the two-year programs prepares participants to accompany others on their journey to greater health and wholeness, as well as providing an opportunity for personal transformation. 

— Allen Proctor, Director

At Kanuga Conference Center  
NC BlueRidge Mountains

Registration & Info:  
[www.HadenInstitute.com](http://www.HadenInstitute.com)



**Know Yourself ...  
... Go Deeper**

"Who am I?"  
"What is my purpose?"  
"Who can I become?"



**"Experience Living Purposefully ...  
... Into Your Very Own Story"**



**See the video series at:**  
[www.virginiawatersselfcare.com.au](http://www.virginiawatersselfcare.com.au)

**Call for Workshop Proposals – Summit  
*Imagining the Self in a Spiritually  
Expansive World:* Margaret Silf  
18 –20 May 2018 Melbourne, Australia  
Hosted by Kardia Formation P/L  
Further info: [www.kardia.com.au](http://www.kardia.com.au)  
Contact: [enquiries@kardia.com](mailto:enquiries@kardia.com)**

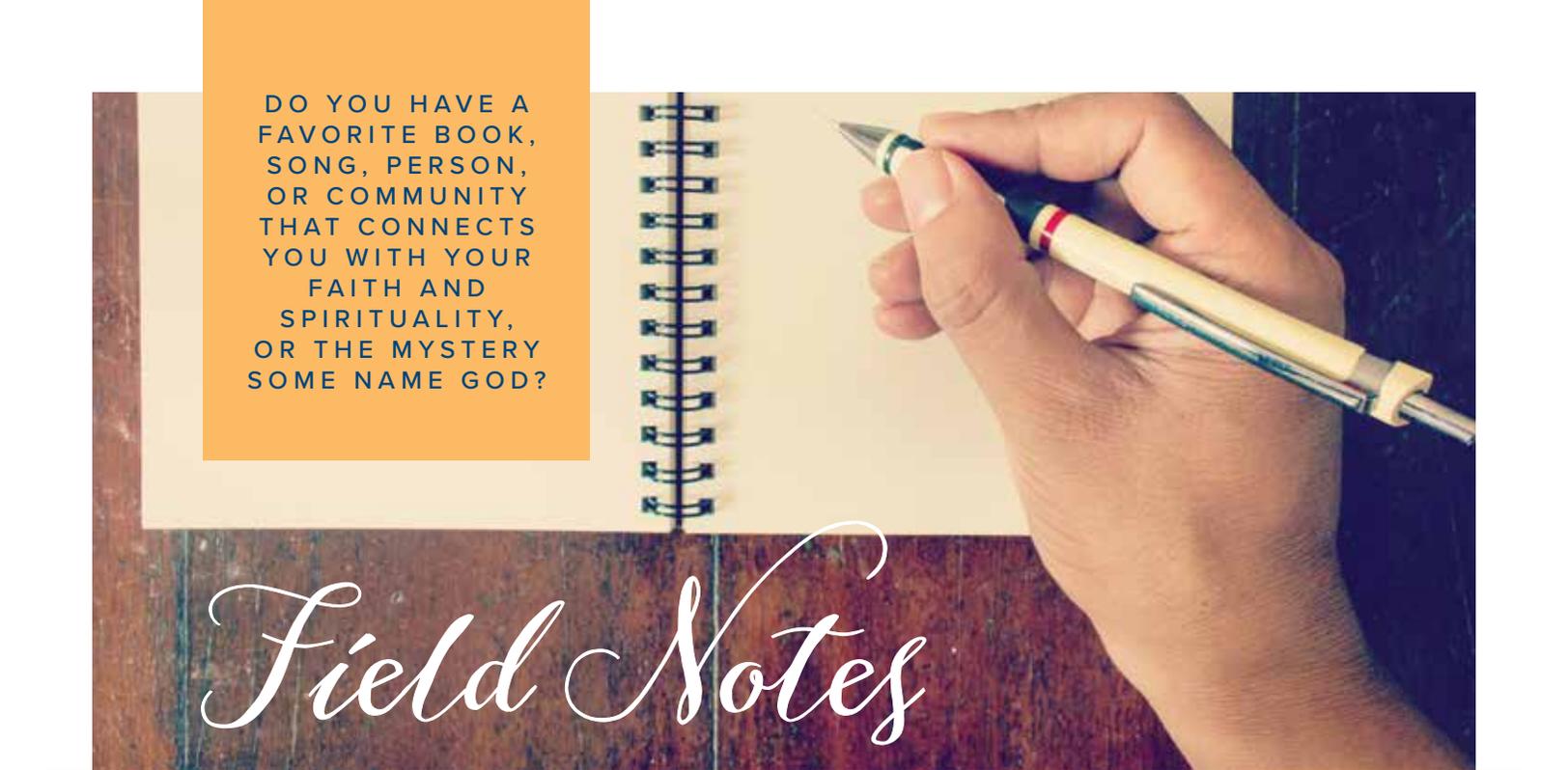


(Above, you will see SDI's new logo, painstakingly crafted by several of us, under the leadership of our Graphics Master, Tobias Becker).

Our new logo encapsulates the vision and mission of SDI:

- ◆ Two hands, mirrors one to the other, that of the spiritual director and that of the spiritual directee. The hands are reaching towards each other, in recognition of the intimacy of spiritual direction and of the relationship between both participants and God.
- ◆ In the foreground, a path, the path of spiritual direction, which begins everywhere and ultimately leads to Mystery, receding into the distance.
- ◆ In the background the night sky, and the stars, representing God and The Universe, that Higher Power which we are never separate from, though sometimes we struggle to remember that fact.

We hope you like it.



DO YOU HAVE A  
FAVORITE BOOK,  
SONG, PERSON,  
OR COMMUNITY  
THAT CONNECTS  
YOU WITH YOUR  
FAITH AND  
SPIRITUALITY,  
OR THE MYSTERY  
SOME NAME GOD?

# Field Notes

SPIRITUAL DIRECTORS INTERNATIONAL MEMBERS RESPOND:

## How does curiosity play a role in your own spiritual life? How do you use it in your spiritual direction?

“Curiosity keeps me wondering, being aware, never ceases to surprise me. Curiosity keeps me hungry for God, keeps me diligent in paying attention to life, to God’s people who come to me for spiritual direction.

Curiosity as a spiritual director is always partnered in my heart with compassion for the other. Hmmm, what do I need to know about this person that will help me help them as I sit in a Holy Place with the True Spiritual Director the Holy Spirit.” — Anna G ✨

“It keeps the flame of my spiritual journey alive. This awareness hones in on the right questions versus seeking the right answers. This flows naturally into those I am companioning. I can not visualize growth in my spiritual life without being curious!” — Christina G ✨

“Curiosity is central to my own life and spiritual directees. So often, following our interest is the trail of breadcrumbs toward expansion. Where curiosity

naturally leads is a life of never-ending “beginner’s mind” discoveries. More than any other discipline, cultivating a sensibility of curiosity is essential to a deeply lived life.” — Richard B C ✨

“I have been a trained Spiritual Director since 2000. I am also a Jungian psychotherapist. I bring curiosity to my practices through my own search for nonverbal expressions of soul and through using symbol formation as expressed in Sandplay. I have miniatures available and two sandtrays, wet and dry. After entry with minutes of silence together, I encourage my directee to go to the shelves of miniatures, and to choose those that seem to demand attention. These are placed in the sandtray as seem to need their space. Forming the sand, leaving sand images and adding water help in the curious unfolding. The individual then sits in curious meditation, seeing what soul has communicated out of the depths of the inner life. I witness the unfolding without comment. We then enter our conversation with more clarity in the focus of our direction together.” — Dr. Trudy C R ✨

“The main question to ask is ‘I wonder .....?’ “ — Jane M E ✨

“I see curiosity and skillful questioning as the key to all spiritual growth and learning. In the space of “not knowing,” of questioning and inquiry, we open up the doors of our imagination and make space for something new to emerge. In my work as both a therapist and spiritual director I listen carefully to both the explicit and implicit questions that arise in each session. Shared moments of silence make room for new questions to emerge. True curiosity requires open-mindedness and what Buddhists call Beginner’s Mind. One must be able to tolerate uncertainty to be curious, because we never truly know what will be revealed when we allow ourselves to “not know.” The divine Mystery is the ultimate unknown and unknowable Source that we circle with our sacred curiosity and imagination. We seek to know this unknowable Mystery. Yet, no matter how much we seek and learn, ultimately we know nothing. We can only become infinitely curious. I find it interesting that whenever God speaks to humans in the Torah (Bible) it is almost always in the form of a question. This suggests that God’s voice is revealed to us most clearly when we listen for the questions that are emerging within us. For instance, Adam hears God’s voice saying “Where are you?” after he eats from the forbidden fruit and is hiding. This question reflects Adam’s spiritual awakening. He hears God asking him to take stock, to look at himself and see where he is hiding from his true self. Like Adam, we must listen for the voice of the divine hidden within our questions. Our spiritual “quest” will then be guided and graced by our questions and curiosities.” — Estelle F ✨

“I have found it in several mysteries of the Rosary. In the Annunciation, both Mary and Joseph could have said “No”; in fact, Joseph could have put her to death as an adulteress. This tells me that, from the beginning, their relationship was based in trust, and that to do otherwise was against their nature.

The same with the 5th Joyous Mystery: they could have acted in anger, as many parents might do. But that too would have been against their nature.

Again. It tells about their relationship and love of their Son.

Then, in the Wedding Feast at Cans, we’re shown the relationship that Mary and Jesus had developed, culminated by her Assumption: she could have come down on Him, but that wasn’t her nature. She simply responded “Just do as He tells you.” Did she know her Son? Yes.

And He could have responded like many of us: “I don’t wanna do it!” Maybe we’re seeing a temptation to the human side of Jesus, but He chooses to act out of love for her.” — Robert M ✨

“Curiosity is such an important guide to authentic listening. I sometimes notice that, in a mistaken attempt to understand, I want to identify with a directee’s experience. “Oh I know how that feels,” I think as a similar experience of mine comes to mind. But that identification filters and limits my hearing of the directee’s experience. So I intentionally practice curiosity. I give space within me to wondering’s. “What was this experience like for them?” “How did they feel that?” “How was the Holy present to them in this experience?” Presence and authentic listening are restored.” — Brad S ✨

**Department of Theological Studies**  
**Redesigned Master of Theological Studies**  
**New Graduate Certificate in Theological Studies**

Creating sacred spaces for transformational learning is what we're all about at St. Stephen's College. We embrace diversity and interfaith dialogue. If you are looking to enhance your professional development enquire today!

(P) 780.438.7311  
[www.ualberta.ca/st.stephens](http://www.ualberta.ca/st.stephens)

St. Stephen's College

We welcome your feedback on any aspect of this issue of Listen, or on SDI as a whole. Please send your comments to [listen@sdiworld.org](mailto:listen@sdiworld.org)



# Seeking Connection

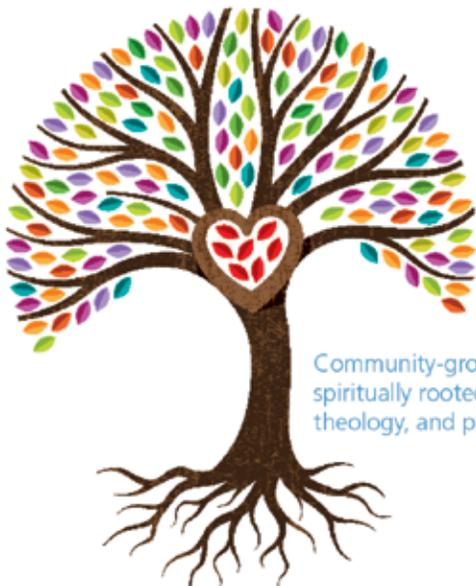
April 26-29  
2018

“GOD IS WITHIN US ALL,  
*fully,  
completely,  
without reservation  
or limitation.*  
WE HAVE BUT TO LOOK.”

## Spiritual Formation at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary

*Where do we begin? Begin with the heart.*

Julian of Norwich



Community-grounded and  
spiritually rooted in Scripture,  
theology, and practice

Discerning a Call to Spiritual Direction and Leadership  
Nov. 8-11, 2017

Discipleship: An Examination of the  
Inner and Outer Life of Faith  
March 11-14, 2018

Writing the Spiritual Life  
May 18-19, 2018

Thomas Merton and the Journey to True Self  
June 10-13, 2018

Immersion Experience: An Invitation  
to a Deeper Spiritual Life  
June 24-27, 2018



Office of Continuing Education | [www.pts.edu/Listen](http://www.pts.edu/Listen) | [ConEd@pts.edu](mailto:ConEd@pts.edu) | 412-924-1345



## P O E M

### OLD PEOPLE LIKE OLD BARNs

Old people like old barns  
Lure light through weathered  
Planks in sagging frames.  
It spills in speckled streaks  
Onto the foundations of their souls  
Where young visitors can sprawl  
And play at life.

Rita Hemmed Kowats, Shoreline WA

*Rita H Kowats resides in a little anchorage of an apartment where she companions seekers on their spiritual journeys.*

### WITNESS

Invisible fingers  
embroider soft white threads  
through the warm dark soil –  
organic nurturer.  
The soil feels the movement –  
determination and commitment.  
The stake honors the light  
as it transforms  
white to pale green to emerald.  
It holds and guides the sapling,  
offers shade from heat,  
support when wilting.

Marlene Marburg, Melbourne Australia

*Marlene Marburg is a spiritual director and formator. She is a co-director of Kardia Formation Pty Ltd in Melbourne Australia. She is the author of four books including Grace Undone. Love and Grace Undone. Passion. Email: marlene.marburg@kardia.com.au*

## W W W . S D I W O R L D . O R G

*Listen* is an outreach publication of Spiritual Directors International. When you visit the SDI website at [www.sdiworld.org](http://www.sdiworld.org), you can learn about retreats, programs, conferences, and other educational events related to spiritual companionship. You can read descriptions of the spiritual direction relationship from a variety of

spiritual traditions, and discover excellent questions to ask yourself and any potential spiritual directors you choose to interview. To locate a spiritual director or guide, go online to *Seek and Find Guide: A Worldwide Resource of Available Spiritual Directors*. More than 6,000 spiritual directors are listed by geographical location at [www.sdiworld.org](http://www.sdiworld.org). ✨



spiritual directors international

*Publisher of Presence: An International Journal of Spiritual Direction*

PO Box 3584 | Bellevue, WA 98009 | USA

“Tending the holy around the world”

This autumn join Matthew Fox, Bruce Chilton, Rabbi Gross, Marvin Anderson, Mirabai Starr, Jacob Watson, Mary Reaman & other stellar professors for new courses & our Grand Opening Gala



**FOX INSTITUTE**

*for Creation Spirituality*

Education that Enlivens your  
Mind, Body and Spirit  
and Nourishes your Work in the  
World

Offering Certificates, Masters and  
Doctoral Programs

Program Concentrations in:

**Sacred Activism**

**Gender Perspectives**

**Ecological Justice**

**Community Leadership**

**Intergenerational Wisdom**

and Masters in Spiritual Direction in  
Partnership with Shalem Institute

Join faculty of Fox Institute and Shalem Institute for a free webinar on the  
Spiritual Direction Masters Program on July 22, 2017

Visit us @ [www.foxinstitute-cs.org](http://www.foxinstitute-cs.org) for details