

# Listen

A  
RESOURCE  
FOR  
SPIRITUAL  
DIRECTORS &  
COMPANIONS

OCTOBER 2022 VOLUME 16 ISSUE 4

## RADICAL COMPANIONS

by Rev. SeiFu Anil Singh-Molares

Regardless of whether we describe ourselves as Spiritual Directors, Companions, Guides, or some other designation, all authentic practitioners of our calling share common elements, some of which we previously discussed here: <https://www.sdicompanions.org/docs/media/listen/14-2/14-2-listen-2020-04.pdf>

In this context we often say things like: “spiritual direction is not going to a bar with some friends, and discussing God over a few drinks.” By which we mean that it is not an

occasional trifle, but a serious, determined commitment and undertaking. Given the intention we place on it, this invites further reflection on what characterizes the relationship we have with our directees, companions, or those we guide, or walk alongside.

In some sense, our relationships are ones of “radical companioning,” that is even beyond the type of intimacy that one finds between lovers, or a mother and her child, or other sorts of more recognizable “intimacy,” no matter how profound these can be.

*continued on next page*

“Our relationship is truly ‘radical’ because our communion will stop at nothing until we remember that we are spiritually authentic only beyond ourselves.”

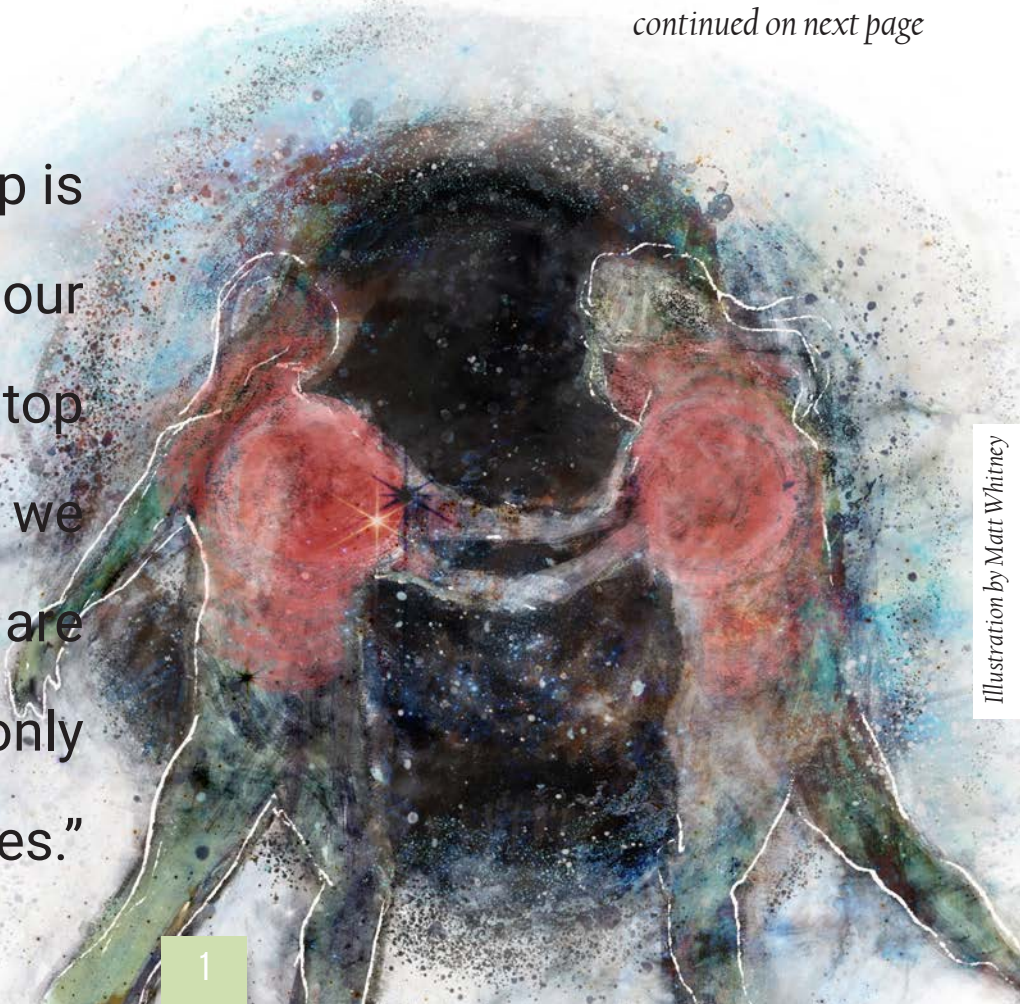


Illustration by Matt Whitney



We are not “co-”  
or “inter-” anything,  
but rather so tightly bound  
as to be inseparable. There is no  
“me” and “thee” here, there is no “other.” And  
we have no choice in the matter, regardless of  
what we may choose to think or believe.

Radical companionship is primordial and eternal, in that it recognizes that we are never separate from one another, but forever bound, and inextricably entwined. It is even beyond such catchy concepts as “interdependent,” and reflects a closeness with God and the Universe beyond simple transactions and interactions. So much so that we are not “co-” or “inter-” anything, but rather so tightly bound as to be inseparable. There is no “me” and “thee” here, there is no “other.” And we have no choice in the matter, regardless of what we may choose to think or believe.

We can't help being one. We just are.

So, the challenge is the recognition, or more precisely the “remembering” of true radical intimacy. An intimacy even beyond itself. Which reveals a companionship beyond our ability to describe it with these blunt instruments we call words. And while we can certainly intellectualize it, as I am doing right now, it really is remembered only through experience and faith. And reborn of profound, contemplative ungrounding.

When companion and companioned look into each other, we recognize mirror images, and those images snap back together, as Matt

Whitney's beautifully evocative illustration invokes.

Our relationship is truly “radical” because our communion will stop at nothing until we remember that we are spiritually authentic only beyond ourselves. As we literally disappear and manifest into the essence of God and the Universe. An essence that does not dissipate, that does not waver, and that does not break or fragment, but always remains incorruptible, beyond life and death itself.

In it, perspective, insight and wisdom reside, and not the stuff of fairytales, but the transcendent impermanent, and the unbound wholeness of the Eternal.

Then, in a flash, divine intimacy. The mystic journey. Our lives flash before our eyes in an instant, and not just ours, but everyone's. So that we can truly swallow stars, and imbibe the entire Universe.



That is true commitment. That is radical. And that is what spiritual companionship really entails.

Rev. SeiFu



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# HOW DOES ONE CAPTURE

How does one capture  
the moment  
when light begins to fade  
deep in the canyon  
while high overhead  
the sky still speaks of sunlight?  
...when the sweet tang of tamarack  
becomes the headiest perfume  
you'll ever know?  
...when river song calls  
to a yearning deep inside you  
to follow an unknown road?  
...when grace falls like rain  
out of a clear blue sky?  
The sublime impossibility  
steeps me  
in this one  
breathless  
moment.

Sue Magrath is a spiritual director, writer, poet, and retreat leader. She is the author of *Healing the Ravaged Soul: Tending the Spiritual Wounds of Child Sexual Abuse*. Sue lives and works in north central Washington state.



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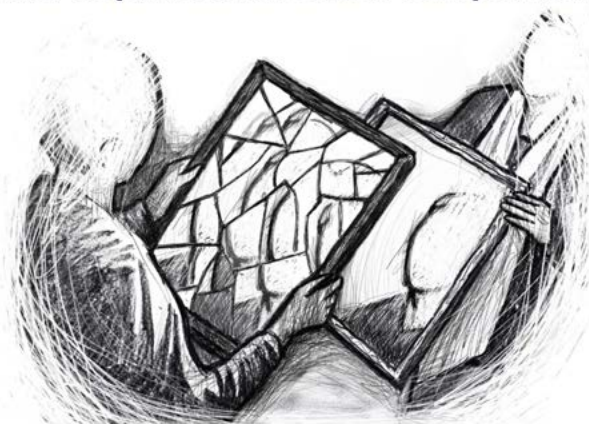
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# CARAVAGGIO

Chiaroscuro  
Caravaggio  
Michelangelo

When you see  
You know.

In Malta I saw  
The Beheading of the Baptist  
Leaned in so far  
I got a warning -  
Electronic barrier  
Yellow card

Bathed in light  
A brutal darkness is enacted  
John in life  
In death

I have never tried  
To paint

What I can do  
is words

To be spoken aloud

I will paint with words  
Bring out the light and dark-  
Chiaroscuro



*Der hl. Matthäus schreibt sein Evangelium mit Hilfe eines Engels*  
Caravaggio, 1602  
Bode-Museum, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin  
Berlin, Germany

Brian Fahy is a former priest and a former mediator for separating parents in child related issues. He writes poetry every day.



# Listen

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LAO TZU





## Tao Te Ching - Lao Tzu - chapter 50

Between birth and death,

Three in ten are following life,

Three in ten are following death,

And people just passing from birth to death also  
number three in ten.

Why is this so?

Because they live their lives on the gross level.

They who know how to live can walk abroad

Without fear of rhinoceros or tiger.

They will not be wounded in battle.

For in them rhinoceroses can find no place to thrust  
their horn,

Tigers can find no place to use their claws,

And weapons no place to pierce.

Why is this so? Because they have no place for death  
to enter.

(translation by Gia-fu Feng, Jane English.  
Adapted by Rev. SeiFu)





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