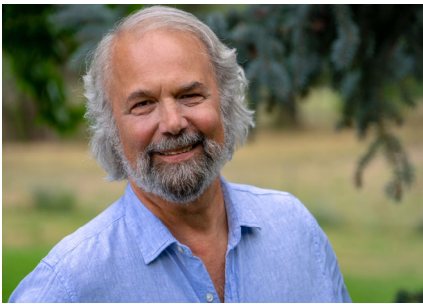


# FEELING LOST, BEING FOUND

PULSE OF SPIRIT

OCTOBER 13, 2021



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Have you ever been *really* lost?

I recall a time like that as a little boy. I was with my mother at an adult affair, a meeting of some sort at a private residence in Connecticut. I was left to play outside on my own. I wandered off down the road—I do not know where I thought I was going. But I remember reaching a point of feeling disoriented and bewildered. And then full of fear. Finally, I had wisdom enough to turn around and go back. I remember how, at the end of the experience, my mother planted me by the side of the swimming pool with my feet in the water to recover. I can still remember the relief and peace that came to my little child's heart in the comfort brought by the water and the presence of the adults around me.

I remember another time when I was cross-country skiing as an adult with my sister and my brother-in-law up in the Adirondack mountains. We were on what we thought was a four-hour ski that turned into a six-hour ski. Nightfall came.

Some nights are darker than others—this was *total blackness!*

We had to take our skis off and carry them to save ourselves from careening into a tree. There was a trail through the woods, but we couldn't see it. The only way we knew we were on track was that when we wandered off the trail and into the forest, our feet sunk through the deep, soft snow where skiers had not packed it down.

We made it out to the road, covered with frost and snow from head to toe. Family members greeted us, happy and relieved.

These are two personal experiences of being lost. I imagine you have had your own at some point in your life. I wanted to evoke visceral experiences because they parallel the experience of the culture in which we live.

It may sound cliché to say that we are lost. But in so many ways, we are. In so many ways, we, as a culture, have lost our story—where we come from. And if you have lost your story, it is hard

to know where you are or where you are going. And isn't there great apprehension about our collective future?

For some American's, today is Columbus Day. For other American's, today is Indigenous People's Day, celebrating the Native American peoples. Both are federal holidays in the United States of America. Like many Americans, I have profound grief about the history of America's treatment of Native American peoples. And even more so about the history of Black Africans in America.

Those two historical realities alone can blot out an awareness of the core of the American story, of which Native and Black Americans are a vital part, along with Europeans, Asians, and many others. Within the story, there is the powerful urge of humankind, inspired by the promise of human destiny. That doesn't excuse or condone any of the atrocities of our past. But those atrocities don't deny the urge of destiny that is our human story.

And so it is with all the threads of Western Culture and the urge within them, compelling us forward to become all of what is possible to us as a race. Without an ability to see past limitations of human consciousness at every step along the way, we do not see the glorious, life-giving power of the urge itself and how that urge is behind all that has happened. We don't see how it is present up to this very moment, urging us forward if we are open to it.

Our shame about our lineage drives it into shadow—into unseen, unacknowledged, and inaccessible regions of the human psyche. The

power and vision of our story become hidden, and so, as a culture, we become disempowered and bewildered—lost—to the extent that this cultural shame rules.

I have addressed America's cultural shame, but we haven't cornered the market on it. Canada is in the process of facing its treatment of First Nations children in their residential schools. Australia is addressing its treatment of the indigenous people of their land. White South Africans are still coming to terms with the history of their relationship with Black Africans and people of mixed race. Having visited all three countries frequently, I can report that many people there feel grief and shame over what has transpired and bewilderment as to how to reconcile with their past.

But of course, that's not all. At every step of the way in our history, there was both the urge to progress and evolve and the unevolved state of consciousness and culture at the time. Politically, religiously, economically, it shows itself, again and again. So often, the shame about how the urge manifested puts the story in shadow. The glories of empires past can be forgotten or disgraced. The vision of enlightened souls can be diminished and discarded because of the ignorance, dogma, and political ambition of those who came after them.

The result is that the hope and promise that has driven the human story goes to the shadow regions of the human psyche, with modern science and humanism attempting to supplant it. No wonder our culture feels lost. Science and

humanism are part of our story. But they are no replacement for it.

Sometimes, Westerners attempt to adopt someone else's story—the story of an indigenous people or a culture far away. Yet, no matter how true and beautiful another person's story might be, it can never adequately substitute for your own.

If our past is in shadow, our story is in shadow. There is plenty to be shameful about in America. But there is also the evolutionary urge of humanity that rose up through American culture and brought us to today. And so is it with all of Western culture. At the very root of it is the urge for the fulfillment of humankind on the planet in prosperity, joy, and blessing for all people. As it was declared in the Christmas story, *Peace on earth, goodwill toward men*. Not just males and not Christian men. *All people*.

As it was said to Abraham in the story of the patriarch of three of Western Culture's great faiths, *In thee shall all families of the earth be blessed*.

We become lost when we lose awareness of the path we are treading and where it is going. We are here now, where our past ends and our future begins, at the crossover point between legacy and destiny.

Have you ever wandered in the woods, having lost your path? It is a relief to find it once more.

Here in this present moment, we are not only the crossover point between past and future. We are at the crossover point between heaven and earth. In the *Pulse of Spirit* last week, I wrote about how

sailors have found their way at sea. They use a sextant to orient to the sun or the North Star.

But we are not just sailors. We are humankind who feels lost on its way. A sextant won't help us now. We need the instrument of spiritual perception, which is innate within the human heart. And the North Star we are looking for is not a star in the night sky but the source of love and wisdom within us. But here is our problem: our innate ability to find the North Star is also in shadow, hidden deep within the human psyche. Recalling that instrument of spiritual perception in the human heart out of shadow, we find our North Star. And we let it find us.

Here at this crossover point between past and future, we open to the invisible source of inspiration that activates us and guides us on our way; that empowers us. We allow ourselves to be found by it, and we are no longer lost.

The most popular Christian hymn of all time is "Amazing Grace." It was written by a slave-trading sea captain, John Newton. During a terrible storm off the coast of Ireland, he called upon God's mercy to save him. After surviving the storm, he gave up slave trading, became an Abolitionist, and was ordained in the Church of England.

Whether or not you consider yourself a Christian, it is hard not to feel the great pathos of the line of the hymn that goes like this:

*I once was lost, but now am found.*

And why has this line struck such a chord in the hearts of people around the world? I believe it is because we know that the remedy for being lost

is not only finding something. It is being found. It is letting the source of love and wisdom within you—even the inner reality of who you are—find you, the human soul, who, in essence, says:

*Here I am. It is me. You are welcome here. Come to me.*

This experience of finding and being found transpires in relationship to what is within us, and when it does, it can also happen between us. Having found ourselves, we can allow ourselves to be found by another person. And then perhaps even make ourselves available to be found by anyone who is looking for us.

*I am here. It is me. You are welcome. Come to me.*

Are you ready to let yourself be found by the people in your life?

Perhaps we will even be the one who finds lost souls in our world. Again, that phrase might

sound cliché. But maybe it has taken on greater meaning after reading this *Pulse of Spirit*. A lost soul is simply someone who has lost their story or the knowing of the source of their being.

This is how we overcome feeling lost, and this is how we let ourselves be found. This is how we find ourselves and find other people. We find our story, and we let our story find us. It comes up to greet us in this present moment. We are here for our ancestors. And we find our North Star—the source of our being. And we let it find us.

*I once was lost, but now am found.*

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Sunday Service at Sunrise Ranch

October 11, 2021



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