

Closing - Session 3 - Deb sharing Mike's thoughts

This started with some commentary I wrote up about page 40's contents and just gathered steam like a freight train. For me, though, I believe it's critical that I---and maybe all of us---get onto this track as early as possible in the book. So here goes.

My comment on page 40 was to ask how each of us is looking to define "divinity". Because I will tell you something I do believe. I believe that it is an intensely personal exercise. In interacting, in experiencing divinity, what is it that we seek as an outcome? I will put aside an argument that there doesn't have to be an outcome - that divinity just "is". In this context, I am not prepared, at least not yet, to buy into that. Since I've established the personal nature of this for me, let's keep going. I seek something that will give me a sense of wonder, hope, courage/encouragement, inspiration, admiration and determination...to be better.

I think we have to be prepared to ask, what does divine mean to each of us? Does it mean something different to someone we care about? Does that person's interpretation affect our own? Is it different from the community's sense of meaning---if that is achievable? Can it change over time? Can it change depending on the subject matter? Can it change depending on the circumstances in which you encounter it? What if it doesn't attach to a person/people at all but instead is some sort of mix of people, places and events? How will you know it when it happens?

With all this, setting up any sort of a ruleset for divinity...isn't it a circular and dangerously exclusive exercise at a minimum? I'm trying to be nice here.

I talked in my notes about Christie Macumber, a choir member and respected member of this congregation. I know her only through what Deb has told me about her. I know enough to understand how remarkable she is in terms of facing all the health related challenges she has. She has defeated all medical forecasts with respect to her predicted lifespan. I have two good friends of mine here in Toronto. They have been to hell---to the darkest part of it---and back. And they can still welcome friends and find hope in their lives and in the world. In what has happened to them, in how they expressed the joy amidst tremendous agony and sorrow? They became during that time divine to me. And they have become much closer to me as a result. All of the above begs the question - is there a divine purpose in all of our lives? And what sort of job to we do today in terms of recognizing that divine presence in others?

So I will say that divinity is the cake that comes out of *your* oven after you have put *your* ingredients in. What I refer to in my notes as "participative divinity." Let me be the first down the rabbit hole....

MIKE'S DIVINITY RECIPE

- 2 tablespoons awesome
- 1 tablespoon amazement/wonder
- Pinch of sadness
- Half a teaspoon yearning
- 1 tablespoon powerful
- ½ cup meaning
- ¼ cup admiration
- ¾ cup inspiring
- 1 cup love
- 3 tablespoons transcendent/painful grace
- ¼ cup happiness
- 2 tablespoons pleasure/beauty
- Pinch of self-growth
- ½ cup attempted emulation

Stir, bake for a while and remove. Serves many. **Don't forget the hot fudge sauce and whipping cream!**

So, then.... None of these are “thinking” words. They all have to do with the emotional side of us and the spiritual part of us that taps into that. I won't quote the Celestine Prophecy as if it were the bible, but there are a few concepts that have always stuck with me. And one of those is taking ownership of your awareness of the beauty around and within you. Of using it to create a space within yourself for positive energy...and perhaps divinity...to live. And I'll add this gloss. That a prerequisite for me to view something as divine is that I must be (a) driven to care for and about it very deeply and (b) want to be a better person because of its existence. Thus, perhaps as an example....the concept of “friendship” and “companionship” has at least aspects of the divine for me.

I not only think most people have the *capacity* to be divine. I dare this group to contradict me----that each and every member of the book study has, at some point in

their lives, evinced divinity to someone---be it themselves or someone else. You may not have thought about it before---and it's unseemly to do too much thinking about it---but think about it now. Think about all this as we make our way through the rest of the book and let's see what we end up with.