

## Daily Meditation 11/28/2022

### On Grief Work, Youth Work, & Adam Bucko's Latest Book

Today we're meditating on what I call grief work, youth work, and Adam Bucko's latest book.

Adam Bucko has worked a lot with young people, pays attention in his new book, which is called *Let Your Heartbreak Be Your Guide: Lessons in Engaged Contemplation*.

In this book, in the introduction, he goes through his own story briefly. But it's a very rich story of growing up in Poland under the Soviet occupation and having friends and even his parish priest, being one of those-- two of them, actually--murdered by the Soviet thugs. And how he yearned for something better. And he used to pretend to be a priest, saying mass in his attic.

How he came to America at 16 without knowing any English, hung out in the subways of New York City, and eventually went to India hoping to become some kind of hermit on the top of a mountain, something monastic like that.

That calling, if you will, was immediately interrupted when he met a young homeless girl who put her hand into his hand one day on the streets of New Delhi. And to make long story short, he linked up with a group that was serving the poor, and were themselves very poor. And he saw tremendous suffering but also tremendous grace happening.

And he says on page four of his book that "God was calling me by name when, on a busy Indian street, after I went to India thinking, like many others, that I would be able to get close to God in the silence of some remote Himalayan monastery, God showed up on the street. She grabbed me by the hand, and asked me to accompany her on her journey of healing and hope.

"This time God had the face of a 13-year-old homeless child, her face burned with cigarettes, her body bought and sold many times, and her conscience nearly killed by the heartlessness and abuse of countless men. It is that child that brought me to the community that I just referred to. I went there convinced that I was going to make a difference and help find those who are lost. But instead it was I who was served; it is I who was found; it is I who was given new life."

He compares his journey to that of a lost sheep. And he cites Henri Nouwen, "Fruitfulness comes out of brokenness."

So I think there are lessons there for all of us about the values and the decisions that are calling us today. To be with the heartbreak, our own and that of others and those who share their stories with us.

And of course, with today's technology and all, there are many stories swirling around the globe. There's a Ukraine story, and a Russian story, and of course there is the story of Mother Earth and what that means for future generations and for all of us living on the planet today. And especially for the young, the very young.

So, there's much to ponder in this small but rich book by Adam Bucko. And we'll give it some more attention in tomorrow's daily meditation.

But wisely, he tells us to pay attention to the Via Negativa, to heartbreak. Let your heartbreak be your guide.

Thank you. We'll see you tomorrow.