

Daily Meditation 11-20-23

On Thanksgiving & Finding Joy in Spite of Bad News

Good morning.

Today, we're going to do meditation introducing my new book that just came off the presses, called "In The Beginning There Was Joy."

It's a new version of a poem that I wrote some time ago. When I was a kid, I was very drawn to the poetry of Dr. Seuss. And clearly this has a Seuss-like feel to it. So I thought I'd just read you the opening of the book. Here it goes.

*Once upon a time, time, time time,
a long, long, long, long, long, long time ago,
before there was time, or times,
or lines or dimes or even rhymes,
and before there was space, space, space space,
before there were trees, or leaves,
or Barbaras, or Steves,
before rocks or socks, or violinists, or jocks,
there was No Thing.*

*There was only darkness among us.
Full, deep and dark, black darkness,
no space, no place, only darkness.*

*But what came before the darkness?
Before the darkness, there was fun on the run, and play all day.*

*Who was having so much fun?
Why, it was Joy, and his wife, Wisdom.
Mr. and Mrs. Joy, to be exact.*

*They played on the nothing, before there was something,
and played with No Thing.
They played with song and sound and round and silence,
and balance and up and in and out and down,*

*and inside and outside and downside and upside
and upside downside.*

*One day Mrs. Joy sat down with Mr. Joy and said,
"Let's make a girl and a boy," said Mrs. Joy.
"What a great idea," said Mr. Joy:
"A Girl Joy and a Boy Joy to share our joy."*

*But Mr. Joy said, "How shall we do this?
How shall we teach Boy Joy and Girl Joy to play?"*

*"There must be some Day," said Mrs. Joy.
"For without the light, they will have no sight.
They will miss all the beauty that so delights you and me.
So let's begin with light."*

*And so the Universe began with light.
Some called it a fireball, and others a Big Bang,
and others, the start of Creation.*

*But the truth is, it was not any of this.
It was silent. It was dark.
It was so small, you could hardly see it at all.
It was a mysterious fellow that grew and grew,
until one day, *chooo* but it blew and blew and blew,
it blew into a deep silent everywhere yellow.*

So that's how the poem begins. That's how Creation begins. And I acknowledge many sources for this book, including Genesis 1 and 2, the book of Proverbs chapter 8, Thomas Aquinas' "sheer joy is God's, and this demands companionship," and Julian of Norwich, "we are born into a birthright of never ending joy," and the new Creation story from scientists like Brian Swimme and Thomas Berry and many others.

So this is an effort to bring Sheer Joy, that Aquinas says is what birthed the Universe. Bring it around, and see if it can't inspire not only the young among us, but parents and grandparents who read these stories and tell these stories to the young.

Thank you. We'll see you next week.