

Daily Meditation 8-25-25

Labor Day 2025

Good morning. A happy and blessed Labor Day to all.

We are all laborers, and hopefully we are all in solidarity with those working people who are struggling today for a decent wage and decent benefits, especially with Medicaid having been slaughtered for 17 million people and all the rest.

And I really want to recommend, in all humility, looking again at my book, *The Reinvention of Work*, because this book is a major study on the spirituality of work, and part of my methodology is to go to spiritual traditions around the world. Not only the Jewish and the Christian, but also the Taoist and the Buddhist, the Hindu, the indigenous, because all cultures and all religions have something say about work, and it's really important what they have to say.

And what amazes me, and amazed me in my research for this book, writing it, is what a consensus there is among the spiritual traditions of the world. First of all, that work is really, really important.

The Buddha, over my shoulder here and here, talks about Right Livelihood...Right Livelihood. Indeed, the subtitle of my book is A New Vision of Livelihood for Our Time.

So work is such an important part of our lives. We spend so much time preparing for it — we call that practicing or education — and we spend so much time recovering from it, which we call weekends and vacations, and we spend so much, not just time, but our energies and our talents and our gifts at work.

So work is a wonderful place to encounter the...well, the kingdom and queendom of God, and to spread it in the good sense, to work for justice and work for compassion, and to undergo those four paths, which is part of the methodology of my book.

There is the via positive at work, and the via negativa, certainly the via creativa, and hopefully the via transformativa: that our work is bringing joy to others as well as to ourselves.

That's one of the great lessons I learned, that joy is the promise of the spiritual traditions around the world, or what work is about.

We ask ourselves, is this work bringing joy to me, and is it bringing joy to others? If it's not, it's not work — it's a job. And that's okay too, but know the difference: a job is making money to put a roof over your head. Work is why we're here.

And of course, some of our work we don't get paid for, such as parenting and so forth.

Now I share with you a poem that came my way this week, and I want to give credit to Rob Breznsky for this poem. I think it applies to what many of us are feeling at this time in American history, in human history.

He writes:

I am rattled. I am aghast. I am in grief about the mayhem and atrocities that the Trump administration and its allies have unleashed upon the world. MAGA is a terrorist theocratic sect. ICE is a secret police force conducting ethnic cleansing. The Project 2025-sponsored "president" is a foreign-backed fascist thug perpetrating a coup d'état. America has been invaded and occupied by a hostile oligarchic death cult.

I don't toss around these words lightly. They are not hyperbole born of a temporary bad mood. They come from watching the erosion of truth, the demonization of the vulnerable, and the ever-tightening clench of barbaric authoritarian power. Millions of lives are imperiled, the earth is brutalized, and a grotesque parody of faith poisons millions of imaginations.

In my essay, I point out, early in the essay today, that work is such an important place, it's a place both of spreading goodness and of delivering evil. And this person is certainly trying to name the evil that he thinks is happening in a political corner, and not just a corner, unfortunately, but in our political institutions at this moment in history. He goes on:

And yet, despite my horror at the runaway abominations, I am still a passionate devotee of pronoia: the hypothesis that the universe is conspiring to shower us with blessings.

....shower us with blessings.

Pronoia is not denial. It's not naïve optimism. It's not shoving daisies in gun barrels and pretending the guns aren't loaded. My pronoia is rowdy, muscular, and complicated. It recognizes the grief and the terror, the corruption and the cruelty — and still insists on seeking out the currents of benevolence flowing all around us.

When I rail against the oligarchic death cult, I do so with the conviction that we are also surrounded by multitudes of life celebrations: people and movements devoted to compassion, justice, erotic intelligence, and ecological repair.

For every ICE agent wielding cruelty, there is a grandmother planting milkweed for the monarch butterflies. For every demagogue sowing hatred, there are communities weaving resilience out of music, prayer, dance, and boisterous rituals.

Pronoia teaches me that to resist effectively, I've got to cultivate joy as fiercely as I curate my outrage. My anger fuels my sacred fight, and my glee and bliss nurture my

soulful lust for life. The fascists want us depleted, numb, and cynical. But pronoia dares me to be tender, ecstatic, and wildly imaginative even as I confront their horrors.

So I hold both truths: America has been assaulted and overrun by a hostile oligarchic death cult perpetrating its toxic rot — and yet the universe is still conspiring, through love and mystery, to shower us with blessings. My task is to live inside this paradox with brazen courage, to grieve and celebrate at once, to mourn the mayhem while magnifying the miracles.

That's my resistance. That's my pronoia.

I find this poem very powerful and 100% aligned with my own thinking and feeling, and certainly with my language of Original Blessing, that whatever humans are up to, the blessing of existence, of the universe, of this Earth and all its marvelous creatures, yes, and of our species, the blessing is still there, and it is primal.

It precedes all evil. Therefore it is original. Just like Genesis One says, it is all good, and the whole circle, even with humans in it, is very good, thus an Original Blessing.

Let us keep that in mind this Labor Day as we go about our labor, not only at workplaces, but as citizens. Let us wake up and do the work of resisting these oligarchical nightmares that rain on us daily, and let us do it with grateful and joyful hearts.

Happy Labor Day to you all. Thank you.