

GLIMPSE

Surprises and Interruptions

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I love slight distinctions and shades of difference. A surprise is quite different from an interruption. It takes humility to be surprised and an agenda to be interrupted. My family, five years ago arranged for my giving a retreat back in my home-town of Milwaukee. So I planned it for the group of lay-volunteers who were making the weekend together. I arrived, was picked up and headed for the retreat center, but my sister had to make a quick stop in her house to feed the dog. She asked me to carry something into her house, which I did most generously of course. In the living room of her house were all my family members and many others surprising me for my birthday which was the next weekend. That was a surprise and it took lots of humility to admit I had been fooled and to receive such love. All that preparation wasn't needed after all!

Our agendas are important and their being fulfilled can make us seem likewise important. Surprises make us feel surpriseable which does take a good and accurate picture of who we are. In a way it is the difference between driving a speed boat and trusting the winds when on a sailboat. It is a matter of control, and how and what gets us along.

Humility has to do much with receptivity and when there is no wind, when we are sailing his little "bar-of-soap", my brother moves the tiller back and forth and I blow on the sail, just to extend the illusion that we are in charge of getting along. I have a bicycle for two and I enjoy riders who get on the back seat and how they find out that the back handle bars don't turn the bike. Are they surprised! Are they humbled! It is hard not to make the world go around.

I know when I am spiritually balanced when I surprise myself by being surprised with life's going around. It means to me that I have let go of the handle bars of managing and just hold on and to, for dear, very dear life. So how does fear diminish surprise? Fears are real of course and have a proper power in our lives. When fears prevent us from getting into the sailboat or sitting on the rear seat of the bikes of life, then we are surprised how little life there is when surrounded by the numbing of security.

Agendas are helpful, but when they become dominating managers of our lives we lose our personalities and gratitude becomes less important and success becomes our breath and blood. Our value is only what we have accomplished. I know I am out of balance when how you know me, what you know about me hangs on what you have seen me achieve. You then are giving me my importance, but my fears continue that I will disappoint you next time. So it comes to this, are we what we achieve or receive. I think receiving is a form of believing and our being open to surprises is how faith is more than dogma and compliance. I am grateful for the little interruptions while I have been writing and I have been surprised I didn't get upset. It is only a glimpse and I hope it surprised you.