

Meditation:

If you are of a certain age....you probably remember this song...

Play a bit of the song....

This version was made popular by the Byrds in 1965 but

**but did you know that this song was actually written by Pete Seeger in the late 1950's...
originally recorded by the Limelighters in 1962...**

Well...that's actually not quite true either

**The lyrics of this song were written by Qoheleth 2-300 years before Jesus was born
and can be found in the book of Ecclesiastes, chapter 3.**

**But this song holds the distinction in the United States as the
#1 hit with the oldest lyrics...**

You know, you never know what you might learn in the Wayside Chapel!

**But for all the good trivia, this song and the reading of Ecclesiastes holds
a time honored and time tested truth:**

**“For Everything there is a season,
and a time for every matter under heaven...”**

It is essential to notice that Qoheleth doesn't use either/or language....

He creates a list of apparent opposites and holds them together....

He knew, way back then, something of the strange paradox of life...

**This ancient reading is an example of what we would call today:
non dual thinking.**

**Non dual thinkers are able to see both sides of a situation...
they can see that the difficult side of a situation may actually be necessary....
Non dual thinkers do not eliminate what is difficult for them,
what disappoints them,
what they flat out don't like about life,
because at some deep level, they know it is ALL necessary:
the good times and the bad
the easy times and the hard
the gains and the losses...
Many wise ones say that non-dual thinking is a higher level of consciousness...**

**Now I don't know how popular Qoheleth's wisdom was back then or how many non-dual
thinkers there were in his time but I sure know this:
There doesn't seem to be a lot of non-dual thinkers around even these days...
You are either a Republican or a Democrat...
You are either for us, or against us...
you in or you are out...
you are right or you are wrong...**

**For the many who can not or will not admit to the paradoxical nature of life
everything is black or white and
never is there any gray in between...**

**Allowing for the opposites of life has never been popular....
I get that...
I would much rather have life be all sweet and upbeat...
but we all know, Life is not like that...
and yet, most of us mightily resist the hard times of life.**

But it is important to note that no one wants life's hard times...

non-dual thinkers don't say 'yeah! here comes trouble!'

The difference between non-dual thinkers and the rest of us,

is that they are more patient with the hard times...

and they hold the tough times with less judgment...

The wisdom of all that, of having non-dual consciousness

of holding life's paradoxical nature gently is at least threefold:

First: Stuff happens.

No matter how well we are prepared, how 'right' we do things,

much of what happens to us is beyond our control.

It seems as if I'm saying the obvious...

but a lot of us, a lot of the time forget or deny that basic truth.

IF we get all worked up about the losses and the disappointments,

we will find ourselves in a pretty sorry state of mind much of the time...

but IF we hold our difficult times more lightly and understand that they are a part of life,

we can ride them out more easily until the good times come back around.

Secondly....there are many gifts in the difficult times of life.

Our growth has the opportunity to blossom more quickly during the hard times.

Very often I have spoken with people who have been through extra-ordinarily difficult times and they say to me:

"Sure, I never would have chosen x, y or z...but if I hadn't...

then a, b, or c would have never happened....

Abigail Adams puts it this way in a letter she wrote to her husband

John Quincy Adams on January 19, 1780:

"These are times in which a genius would wish to live. It is not in the still calm of life,

or in the repose of a pacific station that great characters are formed.....Great necessities call out great virtues." written by

and third....by being willing to admit, see, live the whole of life...

we live all of our lives.

When we exclude the parts of our lives that we don't like, we are only half alive....

ok, you might say: so what's so wrong with that, when we are excluding the difficult times?

The problem with that is that we can't.

We can't exclude any part of life, really....

we only think we can.

When we try to exclude the tough times what we are actually doing is pushing the tough times back into the shadows...

and we all know that sooner or later "it" is going to emerge...

and then, often times, with even a worse vengeance.

The path of Non-duality allows us to live our lives with less worry and stress...

we don't get as upset as often,

our stress hormones don't rise as often or as sharply,

we don't get as many ulcers or have as many heart attacks

The path of Non-duality,

knowing that For Everything there is a season,

and a time for every matter under heaven...

admits a greater wisdom than our own...

it acknowledges the basic goodness and beauty of life...

The path of Non-duality,

Qoheleth wrote about it,

the Byrds sang about it...

and we are invited to do our best to live it

what do you think?..... amen.