

Sunday Service Notes



Service Date: October 27, 2019

Speaker: Allison Bishop

Speaker Notes

Hello everyone, my name is Allison Bishop, pianist here at BUUF.

My journey toward truth and meaning, like that of many, has had many ups and downs. While I've had my share of ups - usually moments of intense clarity and brilliant, all-encompassing light that feel more like a giant universal hug than anything else - the downs have been down. Terrifying, even. Tibetan Buddhist meditation master, scholar and author Chogyam Trungpa says in his book *The Sacred Path of the Warrior* that we are afraid of ourselves and the seeming threat that the world presents. This fear manifests itself in many ways - anxiety, depression, avoidant distraction, even violence, among others - and I have experienced many of these negative energies at one point or another. My life is a process of uncovering the nature of Truth bit by bit, and as I make progress in some areas there are still times when I find myself even more lost than I ever thought possible. There are phases to this journey up the mountain, and

knowing this truth - that even in the darkest of times, light is not far off - I am motivated to stay strong and calm during the storms of life.

It has often been that light and clarity show through exactly during these times of darkness, funnily enough, and I am grateful for these victories. The truth of life that I have discovered as of today is that appreciating the very ability of ours to appreciate something -is- the miracle. Austrian psychiatrist and Holocaust survivor Viktor Frankl has said: "Everything can be taken from a man but one thing: the last of the human freedoms - to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one's own way." He says that "it does not really matter what we expect from life, but rather what life expects from us. We need to stop asking about the meaning of life, and instead think of ourselves as those who are being questioned by life - daily and hourly." Humans are not completely self-sustaining beings because we are intrinsically interconnected, with each other and with the fabric of the universe. I believe that our thoughts can shape our world. Being honest with ourselves and with others matches up our realities with those of our friends, and our hearts become aligned.

What I call Truth others may call God, Divine Power, Nature with a capital N, the Universe, the One with a capital O, and many other names. I consider Truth to be all that we are and all that is outside of us, for all time, all at once. I think we can all agree that this Truth, this One-ness of reality, is something which requires reverence - the kind of reverence one might feel when honoring the grave of a loved one, when happening upon a scene in wildlife where survival and nurturing are taking place, when standing at a Blue Ridge Parkway overlook and surveying the seemingly endless blue haze. I am in awe of all that surrounds, contains, and creates with me.

I revere Truth because I know that it is the fabric of all I can comprehend, as well as all that I am doing this comprehending with. As I continue on in this life, I dare myself to ever improve and survive better, with less needless suffering and more internal freedom and space to feel compassion and therefore love.

I leave you with one more Chogyam Trungpa quote:

"We cannot change the way the world is, but by opening ourselves to the world -as it is-, we may find that gentleness, decency and bravery are available - not only to us, but to all beings."

Thank you.