Chapter Twenty-Six

The Path

*Be the demonstration of how you want the world
to behave. Live the path without needing others to
live it. Live the integrated forces of trust, awareness,
creative will, and compassion.*

 I embrace The Medicine Of One as a *path* woven into the fabric of my life. All of my actions are infused with it. This doesn’t mean I am faultless or perfect. It means I have compassion for my faults and imperfections, rather than ceaseless judgment and self-criticism. I learn from my mistakes without suffering beneath the label of failure. There is no *idea* of perfection, success or failure. There is no image of something I am trying to show the world. There is only living and walking the path. Everyday is different. Everyday I am different. It’s a commitment to *be* the circle and live at the center of the circle; harmless, compassionate and free of history.

 The impulse to live this path is from within. It’s a choice to live as something greater than your stories; as a compassion that begins with yourself, a compassion that sees through what obstructs your vision and prevents you from knowing *home* has always been right where you stand in this world, right where you are now, in this moment, as you read these words. This allows you to move toward the center of that Circle of who you are; your deepest, truest, most absolute self, so that you can extend that compassion effortlessly into the world. This becomes your gift to the world in all its uniqueness filtered through the balance and harmony of your human form. Walking the path frees the flow of the spine of your life.

 No matter what your spine of life is, it invokes *deep compassionate listening*: the essence of your presence. There is no other way. That’s how you live in the flow; and allow it to flow through you and through the spine of your life. The path allows you to remain aligned with this spine. They are inseparable. Your spine is part of the path. That is why the phrase that embodies the spine of your life usually begins with the words “to be.” Living the spine of life is the path of presence: your full, complete *here-ness in the world.* You are serving something greater than the spins in your circle. This service is done through you, not by you. That’s why its not tied to your *identity*, because its very power transcends your personal *Identity*. The spine of your life is the simplest expression of your path. It demands your compassionate presence no matter what it is. The Medicine of One is the path of the circle.

 To Be The Circle of compassion is how you move to the center. *Living at the center* is a great commitment to the greater good of all without having an idea, or concept, or mission. In each moment you keep choosing to live from compassion and harmlessness; whether you are in a hurry driving through traffic, or standing in line at the grocery store behind someone cashing in dozens of coupons and taking an eternity to check out.

 You walk the path by learning what the true action of self-love is. Reading this book is not walking it. Your analytical mind can give you understanding. But you must use your mind as a deep compassionate *listening* to walk it. You start with the small Circle of the ***I,*** and you give your compassionate attention to this and all the spins of that little dot of your *personality* that creates separation through its endless stories and thinking. You begin to taste and feel that this attentive, witnessing awareness without judgment, is closer to whom you really are than that little ***i****.* And you keep cultivating that sense of this greater *you* as if moving into larger and larger Circles with less and less definition.

This path has been a living thing that has grown over a half of a century of my life and twenty years of helping others live in their truth. In the last two decades, I can say with clear honesty it has allowed me to have peace and to continue to enjoy my *love of being,* while continuing to keep rooting myself each day in something greater that can only be described as the great mystery. It is in this honoring I share what has allowed me to give into the *flow* of this mysteryand to never give up even in my darkest days, weeks, months, and years.

There was period where everything that had previously worked, failed. I had sought help in every direction available. Physically everything was collapsing and pressuring my brain stem, sending intense distress into my autonomic nervous system. After a routine of sauna to warm my body, Qigong to open my head and neck, and yoga to balance everything, my plan would be to then go sit in the circle and be quiet. But often I would have to lay back down by noon. Work seemed impossible; but I let my *warrior* push me out of bed and go through the motions lest I give in to the *victim*. I tried to walk a path of balance between the two, neither pushing too hard, nor giving in to hopeless thoughts. Everything was disappearing; my work and livelihood, the places and stillness I loved, exercise. I lived in a constant state of exhaustion barely able to climb out of bed. There were days on end of constant vertigo, exhaustion ... and a feeling of absence. My mind was gone ... it seemed. So I lay in bed one morning wondering. *How can I walk this path without the clear attention of my mind, without moving about and living it?* There was only one answer: to be compassionate to this frailty lying in that bed unable to think, unable to move and almost unable, it seemed, to be *compassionate* *presence*. How could I walk a path of neither pushing nor sinking into worry, both of which invoke tension.. Tension is the opposite of this compassion. How could I not react with a survivalist’s tension when the world was tumbling down around me? It was death, and death was now my teacher. I could fight it, or I could lovingly hold it in my arms and invoke freedom through my compassion.

Even though I felt absent, and without the power and focus of my mind, something was aware of this within me. Something was present as the circle in which it all was happening. So now this path demanded that I abide in it, that I align with it, and in that aligning serve the spine of my life, which is *to be Peace.* I chose once again to serve my spine as my path, which is *The Medicine of One*. What will you do?

 It is a life path that never ends. But as long as you are walking it … living it … this is all that counts. With your desire to align with the Truth of Self coupled with the determination to leap out of the groove, your arrival at the center becomes inevitable: an inevitability that must be allowed to happen without trying to control the time-table. This is why treating this walk to the center and living your spine of life as *a path* is important, because it helps free you of time.

 Live this path and the balance and harmony return. Awareness is cultivated to outweigh ignorance. Trust is allowed as you free yourself from the stories that seem to steal it from you. Trust brings the analytical mind of control into service to the Circle as a force that can serve the center, rather than the greed for your own survival only, which we do from ignorance. Fear drives the imbalance. The path is meeting your fear as compassionate presence. Be the demonstration of how you want the world
to behave. Live the path without needing others to live it. Live the integrated forces of trust, awareness, creative will, and compassion.

 As long as we live, we are in movement. Perhaps upon arrival at this center we have learned the skill of how to stay in balance and harmony in an ever-changing world. Walking the path is its own homecoming and reclamation of your power and energetic being, which senses the wind like a ready sail, and aligns its power to the wind of the great mystery. It is a *knowing* and a trust that guides you with a kind of instinct. And so as long as we are here, moving and inhabiting this home of flesh and bones, the journey continues … energized from within by your *path*.