

“On the Brink of Everything” — 48-06
PAUSE TO CONSIDER: REFLECTIONS ON SESSION #6

1. You might wish to listen to the video that Frans shared with us last night in his opening which follows: (Click on the picture to get the little arrow - it will direct you to go to Youtube which means that you will have to step out of this document. — I was wondering if you know that by hovering your arrow over any of these underlined links/images/icons given, you will be taken directly to the site. As well by moving your arrow to an image and clicking, you can be directed to the site. Just wondering.) Frans’ opener:

Author Parker Palmer of “On the Brink of Everything” engages those of us who want to age reflectively, to seek new insights and life-giving ways to engage the world. “Age itself,” he says, “is no excuse to wade into the shadows. It’s a reason to dive deep and take creative risks.”

On page 2 of his book he states, “Old is just another word for nothing left to lose, a time of life to take bigger risks on behalf of the Common Good”, i.e., a general interest of the population as a whole.

Upon finishing my remarks tonight, I urge you to search in YOUTUBE for “common good meaning”. Within the search you will find a nonverbal video dated January, 2013. Of particular note it has 23 million hits and great music which is relevant to our book review.



“If you give a little love, you can get a little love of your own”

Well I know my death will not come
'Til I breathe all the air out my lungs
'Til my final tune is sung
That all is fleeting
Yeah, but all is good
And my love is my whole being
And I've shared what I could
But if you give a little love, you can get a little love of your own
Don't break his heart
Yeah if you give a little love, you can get a little love of your own
Don't break his heart

Well my heart is bigger than the earth

And though life is what gave it love first
Life is not all that it's worth
'Cause life is fleeting
Yeah, but I love you
And my love surrounds you like an ether
In everything that you do
But if you give a little love, you can get a little love of your own
Don't break his heart
Yeah if you give a little love, you can get a little love of your own
Don't break his heart
Yeah if you give a little love, you can get a little love of your own
Don't break his heart
Yeah if you give a little love, you can get a little love of your own
Don't break his heart

Well if you are (what you love)
And you do (what you love)
I will always be the sun and moon to you
And if you share (with your heart)
Yeah, you give (with your heart)
What you share with the world is what it keeps of you

2. Closing last night was with Heather McGilvary. The poem written by Palmer appears on the last slide of her presentation. Thank you, to Heather and to Frans for your input last night. Next week, Ruth will open and Karen will close.

3. An editorial in this morning's Herald written by Andrew MacDougall entitled "**Don't let dictators use our freedom against us**" refers to the confusing info to which we are exposed daily. "Not everyone who is trapped in information hell is a fool. Most of them are good people. It's time we helped them out by first cleaning our own house." He goes on to advise "... those of us who value a free press must therefore aim to keep our information in the places where people pay for it, not on the platforms where the people are the product. For these are the devil's playgrounds. And if these platforms must be used, the same level of scrutiny applied to copy or broadcast should be applied there, too." He concludes, "The enemy of our enemy isn't always our friend." Page A8, The Calgary Herald. Food for thought.

4. Housekeeping reminders: Consider your "Growing Edges." Opportunities exist at St. David's and through Calgary Alliance of the Common Good.

<https://www.calgarycommongood.org> You might like to subscribe to CACG to receive their regular newsletter. Otherwise, click on the link found on [sdac.ca/Ministries/adultspiritualdevelopment](https://www.sdac.ca/Ministries/adultspiritualdevelopment). We need volunteers!!

Lent begins with Ash Wednesday tomorrow. (Pancakes for supper tonight, right?)

5. Take a reflective look at the eleven discoveries addressed by Wayne last night. About being the first to attend university in a family, I hadn't really considered how fortunate those of us who attended university in the 60s were. As I mentioned, my \$500 scholarship, based solely on diploma Government of Saskatchewan exams in June, paid for my tuition and books in my first year of Arts and Science program. My parents, in the generation previous, both had their grade eight level of schooling after which they left school and went to work. Dad earned \$1 a day at Robin Hood Mills in Medicine Hat. He was 15 when he left home while mom went to work in the dairy at 14.

When figuring out how to pay for my first year, Dad said that either he or I could borrow the money, but my interest rate was lower. After university, my husband and I owed slightly over \$2000 with my starting salary with my teaching degree about \$6000 annually. A generation later, my girls, both with undergraduate degrees, owed a combined \$20000 with starting salaries proportionately higher. Two of our grandchildren have graduated and neither have chosen to attend university at this stage. There was absolutely no question in 1964 that we would not attend university — the degree was a ticket to upward social mobility. We can't say the same for our grads of 2019 - 2020.

Another point that Wayne shared with us regarded "Bafflement" and his story was about a friend on the early edge of senior dementia for whom bafflement is a condition that alters life daily. His go to solution is to start over, daily. Wise advise, echoed by Palmer who reminds us that we may have to start over as we forget lessons previously learned.

The metaphor that Palmer develops is that of life as writing a story — each new day brings with it a new page/chapter in that book. Wayne asked us about whether we write to impress or express and the story that came to mind when he quoted from Palmer, "Caring more about the process than the outcome" for me was of a young 11 year old recent immigrant to Canada for whom the writing process presented a major challenge, writing from right to left, using a primary school large pencil. His experiences in his short left eclipsed those of his fellow classmates but the process of writing seemed to deny that he knew so much more.

Palmer's book ***The Promise of Paradox: A Celebration of Contradictions in the Christian Life*** addresses Wayne's seventh discovery: Faith is what allows us to live in full awareness of our contradictions. A refreshing idea in society's pursuit of expertise.

In our breakout room, we pondered Wayne's 9th discovery, "To write and live in faith we must let God Be God." We seem so anxious to articulate and finalize a definition for the concept of God and, yet, we can't find the words.

Beginning again is a wise concept to consider as we continue to write our lives. Reflection is a necessity as Palmer reminds us of Socrates' phrase, "An unexamined life is a life not worth living." That's what I love about Monday Night Book Study — we cannot afford to leave our lives unexamined. And as our key theme points out "We

need to reframe aging as a passage of discovery and engagement, not decline and inaction.” Wait until you read Chapter V... No decline or inaction there!!

6. The quote from Thomas Merton’s book, *A Year with Thomas Merton*, written in 1964 when Merton was about to turn 50, was all too relevant in today’s “Invasion of the Ukraine by Russia” or as Russia describes it as “Self-defense against Ukraine aggression” or as China describes it as mere “Russian military operation,” it begs to consider every day the saying, “It is how the story is told.” Palmer addresses the issue of accurate news in Chapter V. Discussion next week should be lively. As he says in Chapter IV, “We are all dictating words with our lives... each moment of every day presents possibilities unknown and untried.” We pray that decisions made today do not destroy us or our democracy.

8. Check out OVERVIEW subpage on MINISTRIES/ADULTSPIRITUALDEVELOPMENT page if you wish to review many of our previous book studies or last night’s powerpoint.

- **Bible Study** on Thursday mornings on ZOOM at 10 a.m. is on I Corinthians. Chapter 11. Note that Wayne has included an overview of the remaining sessions in his weekly update.
- Amy’s Wednesday Morning pastoral care session at 10:00 a.m. is a very welcoming place to be Wednesday morning.
- CHAPTER Five for March 7, 2022

11. Some links you might like:

<https://couragerenewal.org/wpccr/parker/videos/>

On Being Project: <https://onbeing.org>

<https://www.newcomerpalmer.com/home>

[sduc.ca](https://www.sduc.ca)

12. Review the slides that were sent to us by Heather in her closing. She reminded us of the importance of determining our vocation which just might not be the job at which we worked for years.

Thoughtfully yours, have a great week and enjoy Chapter 5.

Note: when Dr. Palmer wrote this book, the COVID pandemic and its change to our society was totally unheard of and the 45th president of the USA was newly inaugurated.

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