

## Birthing A Greater Reality

Some of you may know we have been doing a series on Divine Paradox, two truths that seem contradictory and yet both are true. I thought I was done with the series and this week I'd begin something new. I thought I'd just pull from this book that we are using for our Lent bookstudy, Birthing A Greater Reality. So how does it begin? With the divine paradox of the two opposing drives within us: The drive to maintain our existing identity and the drive to grow, evolve, become more than we believe ourselves to be. Apparently NEXT week and NEXT month we will move away from divine paradox. But for now, let's begin with the drive to maintain our existing identity.

Where are we and how did we get here? We can begin with the lyrics to the theme song for the new comedy, Big Bang Theory:

*Our whole universe was in a hot dense state,  
Then nearly fourteen billion years ago expansion started. Wait...  
The Earth began to cool,  
The autotrophs began to drool,  
Neanderthals developed tools,  
We built a wall (we built the pyramids),  
Math, science, history, unraveling the mysteries,  
That all started with the big bang!*

So here we are, homo sapiens, walking upright, using our opposable thumbs and thinking our way forward. Because we don't have much hair and we don't have strong claws or terribly sharp teeth. Our survival has depended on our ability to think; our adaptations have been our ability to shape our environment.

Thinking has become our survival strategy. If it is too hot, we find a way to cool it. If it is too cold, we find a way to heat it. If we want something, we make it or we take it from the earth. If we don't want something, we destroy or kill it. Thoughts have brought us amazing advances in science and technology but perhaps, without the ethical and moral framework in which to use what we have created. In 1903 the first plane flew 10 feet in the air. 66 years later, we landed on the moon. Yet we put a man on the moon before we guaranteed the right of children with disabilities access to education in this country. We have harnessed atomic power to generate energy yet in the past

century 100 million people have died in war and genocide. And in the last 10 years of that century, 100 million children died of starvation or malnutrition. We can transplant organs from one person to another and sustain life with machines. We can clone beings and generate test tube babies. But a boy in Maryland can die because he had an abscessed tooth that spread infection to his brain when he lacked access to an \$85 tooth extraction.

In a drive to survive and even what we consider thrive, we have over-developed knowledge and under-developed wisdom and compassion. We have become adept at manipulating the outer world while ignoring our inner world.

Thinking beings are who we are! It is our identity and there is this drive to maintain our existing identity. The funny thing is that for some reason there has been this issue in the back of my mind all week: the thought that this summer I will be 58. For some reason that sounds much different than being 55 and it sounds dangerously close to being 60. Even before I knew the lesson, it was working on me. I think my identity is somewhere around 35. I was 29 when I graduated from law school, had kids, found Unity and bought a house. I matured a bit after that and then I was done; at least with anything that might seem like getting older. This tension with identity shifting happens whenever we make major changes in our lives. We marry, we divorce, we have children; we change careers or retire or lose a job; we make major changes in our behavior or habits; we choose a different faith path or acknowledge some part of us we have kept hidden; or our body or health changes due to age or accident or illness. Suddenly we are uncertain what this new identity feels like and a part of us wants to revert back to the old identity.

I have been observing this process in our church. We have an identity about who we are demographically and what we do and the activities we support and the building we occupy. There is uncertainty about who we might become and what Spirit has for us to do. In the face of uncertainty we want to go back and recreate the identity we knew in the past. But we create the equivalent of an “organizational comb-over” when we are not being who we are growing into. The tension grows as the drive to grow and evolve moves us beyond the current identity we are trying to maintain.

We are reaching a crisis. Of course, the Chinese letters for crisis are Danger and Opportunity. The danger is that the identity we seek to maintain can no

longer serve us. The opportunity is to birth a greater reality to evolve beyond our past.

The evolutionary impulse occurs through us. Rev Brumet says that “Evolution is requiring itself to become conscious; it now requires our consent and active involvement. Evolution is calling us to awaken but we have identified with our survival strategies and remain asleep.”

He goes on to say, “The One is awakening within the world of form. She is gradually awakening from the dream. But the primary tool that we have evolved in order to physically survive is being used to keep us asleep. Human thought has done an amazing job of helping us to survive but it cannot wake us up. It cannot go beyond itself. Yet we don’t know what else to use and we are afraid to abandon it because it has been our lifeline for hundreds of millennia.”

We already know we don’t know. We are anxious watching the news because it is evidence that the tools we use aren’t working. So instead of working on new tools, we stop watching the news. We believe we can **think** of a new answer if we just repress our anxiety enough.

We’ll explore this whole process more in depth in our book study throughout Lent but for today, I want to give you a couple ideas on how we can move forward.

First, we have to become willing to wake up. Willing is the step before we actually do anything. Willing means that we are open to things being different. For some of us, we aren’t willing yet. For us, the news is just the news. Our reality isn’t that bad and we’ll wait for the crisis to get a little closer to home before we become willing. The challenge I’ve found is that often, whatever I am waiting for, whatever I think has to happen before I am willing to have things be different usually happens. Because I’m **thinking** about it. Let’s just be willing to wake up.

Next, we become more aware of what we think, what we say and do and what we are creating. Watch the news and observe where your thoughts go. Do they go to separation? Well, that is happening over there, to someone else. Sad but not my problem and certainly not something I created. Watch your relationships, your finances and how you interact at church. Is there

someone else who needs to change? Does the economy need to turn around so you can experience prosperity? Do people not behave the way you'd like them to? Is your response to withdraw or to make them change? Or is there a way to stay in the present moment, breathing through our discomfort and knowing that we have the resources within us to transform our experience and our world? Staying present in our discomfort is difficult. Staying present is how we begin to claim the power to change and release the judgment that creates the discomfort. Byron Katie says our pain is just from wanting things to be different than they are. I would add, RIGHT NOW. I want things to be different right now. Once I am aware of that thought I can release it. I can move deeper into that place of spiritual power where I can create something different. I can release what gets in my own way of experiencing peace.

Finally, I invite you to see our personal transformation merge into the global evolution. We have to stop being so self-centered for the sake of ourselves. I don't mean that you stop praying and meditating or stop whatever you do to support your spiritual health and growing understanding. I just invite you to consider that it is imperative not just for your well being but for the world. All the little ways I fail to be my best self not only impact me and those immediately around me, it impacts the progress of global evolution. I'm not trying to keep you up at night. But I invite us to see ULV as a part of something greater and with a transformational power beyond our walls, our people, our valley. This is the power and the urgency for people to participate in our World Café. We want everyone to contribute because we rely on the gifts and consciousness and prayers of each and every person to move in the direction Spirit leads us.

The crisis of evolution is upon us. We created the vision to "co-create an awakened world of peace, harmony and abundance". That is the vision pulling us. We created our mission, our contribution to be "to provide a positive environment where all people can discover and express their spiritual nature". Now is the time we have to step forward and commit to being a spiritual community of transformation. Each of us has to wake up, stay aware and contribute. There is no other way.