



David Orr's wisdom is a go-to reset button. "The plain fact is that the planet

does not need more successful people. But it does desperately need more peacemakers, healers, restorers, storytellers, and lovers of every kind. It needs people who live well in their places. It needs people of moral courage willing to join the fight to make the world habitable and humane."

And sometimes we need stories more than food to stay alive. Stories to remind us about what really matters, and allow us to see and give with our heart.

The movie, *The Rider*, did my heart good. Once a rising star of the rodeo circuit, Brady Jandreau is warned that his competition days are over after a tragic riding accident. Now Brady finds himself wondering what he has to live for when he can no longer do what gives him a sense of purpose: to ride and compete.

His life forever changed.

Brady undertakes a search for new identity / passion and tries to redefine his idea of what it means to be a man in the heartland of America. What is left after macho is gone?

We watch his daily routines, his attempts to fit into "normal" society, his late-night hangouts with his friends and his frustrations at having to figure out his second act. (Notice that "normal" is always code for what life "should" be.)

As Brady is transformed, we watch the power of his relationship with Lane, a rodeo friend and "big brother" who was left incapacitated after a rodeo accident. And the grounding that flourishes from Brady's empathetic side. As it turns out, even tough

guys can be healers.

Of course, we assume life proceeds better when we're in control. And then life happens. Go figure. And you get hurt. "You just don't think you'll get hurt like that," Brady says.

These are moments that reset emotional and spiritual gravity. Everything we believe is up in the air. Because many of our beliefs are about things working smoothly, or in a particular way. And we wonder, is this who I want to be? Am I at the mercy of the way others see me?

But here's the deal. We need these encounters. Necessary periods of catharsis and soul searching. Okay, maybe not to the extent of great pain. However, such moments do invite us to ask questions about things that truly matter.

Giving up our dreams is never easy.

But what if our dreams are not the only way to make the world a better place?

Somewhere along the way, every one of us has wrestled with death (mental and emotional darkness) and disillusionment or defeat (only exacerbated by a disappointment in ourselves).

And we wonder, if there is hope.

We wonder if resurrection (rebirth) is even possible.

This I know: I love stories about "resurrection".

When any demeaning narrative wins, we live confined and resigned.

You know. Like a tomb. After all, that is the end of the New Testament story, right?

Oh, wait. Is it possible that death is not the final word? That the stone is rolled away?

Here's the deal: the power of Easter is the paradigm shift. Resurrection has the final word.

"At last we can meaningfully live with hope," Richard Rohr writes. "It is no longer an

absurd or tragic universe. Our hurts now become the home for our greatest hopes.” But it is easy to lose track, isn’t it? Parker Palmer’s reminder that “our strongest gifts are usually the ones we’re barely aware of possessing.”

Yes. And here’s the good news, “Our hearts are more capacious than we could have imagined.” (Thank you Rabbi Sharon Brous) Capacious, spacious or roomy. That’s very good to know when life feels too heavy. Because if reality is determined only by confining circumstance, then we forget that we have agency (and the strongest gifts), the capacity to make choices about what matters. In other words, we get to say how the story ends.

Finding your way in life is not so much about uncovering the voice of the soul, the call that is already imprinted inside you, and then finding the courage to face down your fears and let your true voice be heard. One of my favorite verses from the Song of Songs is when the lover calls out, ‘let me hear your voice, for your voice is sweet.’ The ancient rabbis insisted it was God who was speaking those words to each one of us, ‘Let me hear your voice, for your voice is sweet.’”

As long as success is measured only by keeping score, or by being in control, it’s easy to lose track of that voice, and of most everything that makes us human and therefore, glad to be alive...

- ...small gestures of kindness
- ...acts of inclusion or community to someone left out, or someone on the fringes
- ...extending a hand of healing or acceptance to someone who hurts
- ...reveling in the gifts of the senses and being present
- ...resting in a moment of gratitude

...sharing laughter, a smile, camaraderie; and dancing for joy

When one younger friend told me about life’s conundrums, I asked (the question Brady Jandreau asked, the question we ask), "So what's next?"

She replied, "I'm just waiting for God to show me what he wants from me."

Okay. But in the meantime, you know, until you have this life and self figured out (and straightened out), I have a suggestion: Live this day, with this self, without holding back. Today; savor, doubt, embrace, question, wrestle, give, risk, love, fall down, get up, accept your incomplete and fractured self, know that anything worth doing is worth doing badly, speak from your whole heart, and whenever you can, lavish excessive compassion and mercy and healing and hope and second chances and grace and restoration and kindness on anyone who crosses your path. Who knows, we may love one another into existence. I'm sure God won't mind.

A hope Holy Week was good. Savor your moments. And even in the dark moments, let the light shine in. I’ve actually watched some of March Madness because Oakland University was playing and March Gladness offered by another denomination on line offered lively music and great speakers to enrich my understanding of others.

Quote for your week...

I do dimly perceive that whilst everything around me is ever changing, ever-dying, there is underlying all that change a Living Power that is changeless, that holds all together, that creates, dissolves, and re-creates. -Mahatma Gandhi