

SEEING FOR THE FIRST TIME, OVER AND OVER, AGAIN

AGREEING TO SIT

Twenty one years ago, an acquaintance in her final year of art school asked if I'd be willing to sit for her...four days a week, for three hours at a time, so she might paint an oil portrait of me for her final assignment in class. At the end of the year, there would be an art exhibit with each student's oil painting displayed. Those who were sitting for the portraits would be invited to attend, and I would later be given the portrait, in exchange for my time sitting. I agreed. It would be a new experience for me.

THE VALUE OF LISTENING AND OBSERVING

For more than three months, I sat regularly, wearing the same black top with small white stitching, staring at the same small nail on the wall. It was a meditation practice, of sorts. I focused on my breath, on relaxing, and on noticing what showed up in my mind and body, continually returning to my breath, to relaxing, to allowing myself to be seen. I was visited by many thoughts and feelings, none of which would find expression there, or so I thought!

The occasional dialogue between the artist and her instructor as he passed through to critique and offer guidance to his student intrigued me. Consistently, his every word regarding her art somehow fit mysteriously and perfectly for whatever it was I was facing within my Self in that exact moment. I drank his words of medicine into my Being, and offered my thanks, in silence. He would never know that he was also instructing me!

LOOKING INTO THE INVISIBLE MIRROR

When I arrived at the exhibit with my husband, I saw the painting of me for the first time. I was looking into a mirror, a mirror that suddenly revealed something previously invisible to me. Fear! My eyes were frozen in fear in this painting, like the eyes of a young deer staring into bright car headlights on a dark night. I have no doubt my eyes were also frozen in fear as I stared into the painting...as I stared into me.

SEEING FOR THE FIRST TIME

Months later, one week prior to my four-year wedding anniversary and the plans my husband and I had made to redo our wedding vows, my marriage ended abruptly as I listened to my husband inform me that he was not able to go forward with these plans and would, instead, be leaving that night, and filing for a divorce. The fear living inside me that had been so invisible to me months earlier, and had mysteriously introduced itself through the eyes of the painting, was now *blaringly obvious* to me. All those thoughts and feelings traveling through my being as I sat for the artist hour after hour, day after day, found expression after all, in the mirror of the painting, and in the mirror of my life, **offering me the gift of awareness.**

Sitting brings awareness; with awareness comes choice; with choice comes empowerment; with empowerment comes a willingness to let go; and with letting go comes new life.

SEEING FOR THE FIRST TIME...OVER AND OVER, AGAIN

It's a true and utter Mystery to me...these various levels of awareness that we each live with from day-to-day. Some part of our Being knows, while another part remains unaware. What does it look like and feel like to build a bridge between these worlds? What might we offer our Self in doing so? And most importantly, **how do we repeatedly travel from one end of this bridge to the other, and back, seeing for the first time, over and over, again?**

**MAY WE EACH BE WILLING TO SEE FOR THE FIRST TIME, OVER AND OVER AGAIN,
WHILE WE LOVINGLY EMBRACE ALL THAT WE SEE IN THE MIRROR OF OUR SELF.**

Written by Jane Ellen on 5-1-07