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It is important to go inside ourselves to find whatever image we need that helps us recover our equilibrium - to listen out for that ‘note’ resonating in ourselves. It is so easy in the heavy weather of life right now to get knocked off course, even if it is temporary. Someone brings a ‘big’ surprise, a contract is not begun due to organisational cuts, we are let down when a friend doesn’t turn up when they say they will, or whatever trial we are facing, big or small. Going inside we can bring together the disparate, the discarded, the less easy parts of life aligned with the effortless parts. I sometimes use the analogy of finding our imaginary internal plumb line - a way to re-affirm what ‘true’ is for us. This extract from a wonderful book by Rachel Naomi Rumen called ‘My Grandfather’s Blessings’ is a collection of her patients, and her own inspiring stories about strength, refuge and belonging. I offer you this one.

“Integrity is an ongoing process, a dynamic happening over time that requires our ongoing attention. A medical colleague once said to her reclaiming his integrity reminded him of the moment before a concert when the concertmaster asks the oboist to sound an A. At first there is chaos and noise as all the parts of the orchestra try to align themselves with that note. But as each instrument moves closer and closer to it, the noise diminishes and when finally they all finally sound it together, there is a moment of rest, of homecoming. That is how it feels to me, the man said; I am always tuning my instrument. Somewhere deep inside there is sound that is mine alone and I struggle daily to hear it and tune my life to it. Sometimes there are people and situations that help me to hear my note more clearly; other times, people and situations make it harder for me to hear. A lot depends on my commitment to listening and my attention to stay coherent with this note. It is only when my life is tuned to my note that I can play life’s mysterious and holy music without tainting it with my own discordance, my own bitterness, resentment, agendas and fears”

Deep inside our integrity sings to us whether we are listening or not. It is a note that only we can hear. Eventually, when life makes us ready to listen, it will help us find our way home.

Rachel Naomi Remen, M.D. (2000) from ‘My Grandfather’s Blessing’ Riverhead Books, NY

Mid-March suggestion

- • Take some moments everyday to re-align yourself. If you have a smart phone there is a

‘meditate’ app that can be programmed to sound a Tibetan bowl, or you can simply use the alarm function on a regular phone. In either case it is about taking a pause.

- • Set yourself a time that is good for you and give yourself even a minute to close your eyes and use an exercise like this one which I have borrowed from Amanda Ridings.
- • Pull your spine up as you breathe in so you are sitting tall but not strained.
- • As you breath out loosen any tension in the front of your body and send a tap root out and down from you into earth below.
- • Picture a little more space behind you, and then a little more space to your left, and a little more space to your right, a little more space below you and finally a little more space above you. Ask yourself what would it be like if you had a little more of one particular quality you would like to see manifesting in your life. Relax your forehead, jaw, neck and shoulders. Get a sense of being balanced and centred.
- • Be still and listen and you might hear the note of this calm moment. Then return to your regular programme of activities.

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