



What's Mine to Be

A beautiful moment of alignment happened while thinking about what to write for the newsletter this month. I was attending a workshop for The Dignity Index (check it out at www.dignity.us) and at its conclusion we reflected on our self-awareness, when I suddenly knew what to write about. I've been ruminating about it since and finally looked at this month's theme to make sure I could spin it to fit - *The Practice of Becoming*. Ha!! Judge the connection and spin for yourself

The year 2020 was a very challenging year on many levels, but it was also a turning point for me. I learned that I liked a slower-paced life and have lived life that way in the years since. I found that the lack of distraction from "normal" life meant that I couldn't help but pay attention to the happenings in the world around me. I became deeply conscious FINALLY to the social injustice that was all around me. That awareness stimulated perspective about the truth of the world, of our collective history, and personal focus on hearing, seeing and BELIEVING the stories of people's lives. My own, as well as those of friends, loved ones, and strangers, particularly those who have different stories than my own. I engaged in several online classes to educate myself in an expanded way. (My favorite one was entitled *Embodied Antiracism*. So powerful and life changing.)

During 2020 I also applied to play a part in CSLSG's Core Council. During the initial transition, in addition to being forced online because of the pandemic shutdown, we also found ourselves with an empty pulpit. In the midst of beginning the new minister search (again, I might add) and creating a virtual presence for our community, I stepped into the role of council president and navigated how to be a collaborative leader - all with my new world awareness filtered into the mix.

Core Council engaged several speakers - ministers and practitioners - from across the country to share their messages with us and our now invisible (so to speak) community. After each service we engaged in a Zoom call to connect, share our stories, and discuss each week's message. During one of those Zoom conversations, following the always-meaningful message of our Pennsylvania Practitioner friend, Eugene Holden, I was sharing my story of burgeoning consciousness regarding social justice and my desire to engage in a meaningful way toward changing the system and making a contribution in my own community.

I had heard the line about finding 'what is yours to do', perhaps coined by CSL's beloved Reverend Tracy Brown. (If she didn't coin it, I do know I remember her as my source for first hearing it in her TED Talk o YouTube.) So during my storytelling on Zoom I said that I was looking for and striving to discover what was mine to do. Dearest Eugene asked me, "And Marina, what is yours to BE??" That stopped me dead in my tracks. He went on to talk about the fact that we are human BEINGS and not human DOINGS. (I'll bet most or all of you have heard that one.) "What is mine to be?" became the focus of my continued reflection, awareness, and directive for growth.

In my final comments at the recent workshop, I had an epiphany as this story popped into my mind. I shared with this beautiful group of humans that I can now see that my process of discovering, unveiling, and beginning to live that which "is mine to BE" has attracted "that which is mine to DO", seemingly effortlessly revealing my practice of becoming. Being compassionate and empathetic, not just in word but in how I interact with friends and strangers alike. Being vocal about observed injustice in a way that people can hear me. Being one who can hold sacred space to meet people where they are in the moment and discover their own curiosity, awareness, growth, and healing. Being one who strives to connect in deep and meaningful ways. Being one who can have and give compassion and be accountable in the same space. Being one who walks in the world with a new and greater spirit of inclusivity and connectivity. All created in a perfectly imperfect way, of course. I have discovered meaningful opportunities to volunteer and create intimate valuable relationship - to BE and practice... and truly BE.

And so. I revel in continuing to discover what is mine to BE in each moment, in each day, for the rest of my human existence... and beyond. I sincerely extend blessings for your journey toward what is YOURS to be.

In Joy and Gratitude,

Marina Anderson

Core Council President