

Ron Vargason's Spiritual Journey – 10/23/05

In reflecting on doing an Affirmation, I decided that what was most important to affirm was 'the journey'. I do not think I could explain who I am currently without reflecting on where I have been and points along the way that represent turning points. Like any journey of life, it can only end when I cease to think. So, this affirmation is a work in progress.

To begin, I think it is important to put this journey in the context of something Ruppert once said to me. To paraphrase, some think that UU's can believe anything that they want to believe. That is not true. We believe what we must believe. That I believe what I must believe seems to be a guiding principle that has shaped my journey from the beginning.

Having grown up in my families' Methodist church, it was quite natural that I found myself enrolled in a membership class as a teenager. At the end of this class the students were supposed to say we believe in what must have been the apostle's creed and then join the church. My thoughts as I remember them were 'but I do not know if that is true and if I just went along I would be a hypocrite'. Thus I parted company with Christianity and began my journey. Why was it important to think rationally and be honest? I am not sure I understand completely where these values came from but they clearly shape my spiritual journey.

In my mid 20's, a friend from work precipitated another turning point. One day following a lengthy discussion he explained, Ron, you belong at the Unitarian church. I had never heard of it but looked into the local one, 'All Souls' in Indianapolis, and immediately felt at home. I remember the great feeling of relief at knowing that there were others like me that questioned conventional beliefs and affirmed that this was ok. This certainly helped to counter thoughts I might have had about by mother's fear that I was going to hell. I still remember Dr. McKinnon's sermons on the good feeling of having kicked the habit and the 10 most popular definitions of god. I could easily go along with 2 or 3 of his 'god definitions'. But mostly, this period of my journey was focused on the negative. It was much easier to reject what I did not believe than to understand what I did believe. Besides, as I said before, it felt great to have kicked the habit and know I was not alone.

It took several years to get past what I think of as my negative time and to focus on the positive or joy of life's journey. Along the way, experiences have gotten integrated into the picture: experiences of feeling at one and at peace in and with nature, experiences of sensing a link with others through some field of energy that connects us all, and concluding as Ken Wilber explains so eloquently, that evolution alone can not fully explain the great varieties and complexities of life. There must be a force or spirit within all matter that moves life to higher and higher levels of complexity. Finally for help along the journey, I gained a guru, namely my wife Barbara.

While my journey keeps adding bits and pieces, most of the time I feel comfortable to just let the mystery be.