

****What is Ours To Do? ****

Welcome aboard! Today, we embark on a most unusual journey—a bus tour through a labyrinth of imaginative experiences, where every turn leads to deeper understanding, every stop invites reflection, and the very road beneath us weaves together the mysteries of emotional and spiritual development. So, fasten your seatbelts, open your hearts, and let's get started.

****First Stop: The Mirror of Relationships****

Look to your left, and you will see the great reflecting pools of relationships. Whether friendships, family ties, or romantic partnerships, these shimmering waters reflect our joys and wounds. Every encounter, whether fleeting or lasting, becomes a teacher. Who have you been in the lives of others? What parts of yourself have been shaped by love, by conflict, by the hands of time? Take a moment to gaze into the water and see beyond the surface. What is yours to do in this landscape of connection?

Our relationships also include the landscapes of the natural world and its plants and animals. We start out by doing a little sightseeing, and the scene is so beautiful. Look at the trees. They seem to be interacting with each other. Are they talking to each other? Now, they are facing us. Let's take a closer look. The bus glides right into the trees, the brush, and ferns. Do you feel the vibration? They are talking with each other. This is amazing. Look up

into these beautiful trees. This friendship with the natural world can grow as we learn and pay attention.

There is a chipmunk right there on the tree. Listen to it; it's chirping. I wonder who it is talking to. Something just moved at the foot of the tree, right under the fronds of the bright green ferns. Take a look, It is a fawn; no, there are two fawns. They must be newborns. They are so adorable.

Our path is full of curves, turning back alongside where we just traveled. See the river; there is an eagle flying right over the water and then up in the sky to the top of the tree. Turning back again, we move deeper into the labyrinth. We are in the Legacy Forest along the Elwha River. The dam came out of the river years ago, hoping to restore the salmon. The people ask to leave the Forest near the river to grow uninterrupted. It protects the river and allows the salmon to come back. The salmon feed the orcas so they can continue as well.

We turn again. We have reached the reflecting pools that allow us to see the many relationships that have been part of our experience. What have you taken away from these experiences that serve your awareness? Rev. Lynn Osborne said, "In this lifetime, we all have an assignment of "what is ours to do," But if there is healing work left undone, it can hold us back until we address it." The process of cleaning up those things enables us to grasp the cohesive idea of what is ours to do."

As we grow more aware, we can choose who influences us and whom we trust our feelings with. John O'Donohue shares

that we can find our true Anam Cara, our Soul Friend, who is there to listen and hold this friendship sacred. He writes, "The Celtic mind was not burdened by dualism. It did not separate what belongs together. The Celtic imagination articulates the inner friendship that embraces Nature, divinity, underworld, and human world as one."

– **John O'Donohue, Anam Cara: A Book of Celtic Wisdom**

One other relationship we must fully encourage is the relationship with the self. "Sometimes, it is easy to be generous outward, to give and give and give and yet remain ungenerous to yourself. You lose the balance of your soul if you do not learn to take care of yourself. You need to be generous to yourself in order to receive the love that surrounds you." Says **John O'Donohue, Anam Cara: A Book of Celtic Wisdom**

****Next Stop: The Neighborhood of Community Building****

As we roll forward, we take another turn to arrive at a vibrant crossroads—the heart of community. Notice the homes, the gathering spaces, the murals of shared dreams painted across city walls. Community is the architecture of belonging, built brick by brick through acts of kindness, trust, and shared vision.

Here, you may ask yourself: Where do I belong? What role do I play in the intricate weaving of togetherness? If our hands build the world we wish to see, what is yours to do in this shared tapestry?

Peter Block's book, *Community: The Structure of Belonging*, gives an Overall Premise: "Build the social

fabric and transform the isolation within our communities into connectedness and caring from the whole. Shift our conversations from the problems of community to the possibility of community.”

The book’s Operating Guidelines: Social fabric is created one room at a time, and that room is the one we are in the moment. It is formed by asking, “What is the new conversation that we want to have? And with whom do we want to have this conversation?” “The key to a new future is to focus on gifts, on brainstorming together, and on the insight that all transformation occurs through language.”

****Third Stop: The Hall of Teachers****

Now, we enter a vast and wondrous hall lined with doors of wisdom. Teachers take many forms: elders and mentors, books and life experiences, and even the trials that refine us. The question is not whether we have teachers but whether we recognize them. Have you listened closely to the lessons whispered through joy and hardship? Have you passed on what you have learned? Who is waiting to receive your wisdom? Teaching and learning are threads in the same fabric—what is yours to do in this grand exchange?

Yogananda tells a story that brings a glimpse of truth to our awareness. “A man is sleeping, and dreams that he is a soldier. He goes into battle, fights bravely then is fatally wounded. Sadly, he dreams of his approaching death, perhaps thinking of the dear ones he must leave behind.

"Suddenly, he wakes up. In joyful relief, he cries, 'Ah! I am not a soldier, and I am not dying! It was only a dream. And he laughs to find himself alive and well.

"But what of the soldier who actually fights in this earth-life and is wounded and killed? Suddenly, in the astral world, he wakes up to find that it was all just a dream; that in that other world, he has no physical body, no flesh to be wounded, no bones to be broken.

"Don't you see, asks Paramhansa Yogananda, "All the experiences of this world are like that. They are nothing but dream experiences." (Yogananda)

Our teacher and founder, Ernest Holmes, says, "We should also erase the thoughts of yesterday that would rob us of today's happiness. "There is nothing arising out of the past that can disturb me. The past, the present, and the future are one unbroken stream of Good. I loose all thoughts that in the past have caused anxiety. (SOM 245).

The Spirit knows no past and is not affected by the belief in any. The past is swallowed up in the victory of a perfect present, which is filled with love and protection." (SOM 246). Equally, we must not have fear for the future. "I see that the future is bright with promise. It beckons me forward into a complete realization of my own worth and my rightful place in the Universe.

In *Conscious Loving: The Journey to Co-Commitment*, Gay and Kathlyn Hendricks teach a way of awakening to the truth in relationships. They write, "For most of us, relationships are a struggle. We each have a strong inner urge toward conscious loving: toward love relationships

that are free of mistrust, disharmony, and unspoken words. We want our relationships to be springboards to higher consciousness and enhanced creative expression. Yet within us also lives an urge toward unconscious loving: we are encumbered by the burdens of results of our exploration of relationship issues over the past."

"Love is a powerful force. If we do not know how to handle its power, we slip very quickly into its powerfully painful distortions, such as conflict and co-dependence. But it is resistance to love that causes the problems. There is nothing wrong with love. Love is a force that focuses its light on the deepest shadowy parts of ourselves. It brings to the surface the parts of ourselves that we most desperately try to keep hidden." We can find our way back by feeling all of our feelings, telling the 'microscopic truth,' and keeping our agreements.

Relationships can become conscious and truly loving. I have been involved with teaching this class for the Center for Spiritual Living in Kenya and hope to offer it here at our center very soon.

Now, as we continue to turn and travel each part of this journey, we find another teacher who has spent her life at this work. Jean Houston summed up her teaching by saying, "I am part of the great wholeness." We and the universe are really a single entity. There are all kinds of exercises to get into that oneness where we drop the great divide; we drop the separation, and, suddenly, we are part of it all."

She shares that as a young child, she saw Albert Einstein and Helen Keller. When Jean was 7 years old, Einstein told her class, "Everybody thinks I'm so smart. I'm not so smart. I have a great imagination." Houston said hearing those words from Einstein became her calling card for what she would do with the rest of her life, and she has spent her life delving into the realms of human potential and sharing her findings.

The richness of imagination is always unfolding. "It is the universe in us, prompting us," says Jean Houston. Albert Einstein and Helen Keller both told her class to read more fairy tales.

****Fourth Stop: The Mountain of Truth**** Now we arrive at the center of the labyrinth, where we pause. In our minds we ascend now, climbing higher into the misty peaks where Truth dwells. Truth is not always comfortable, nor does it always arrive gently, but it is the compass that points us home. Some seek it in solitude, others in sacred conversations.

Have you dared to ask the questions that burn within? Have you embraced the truth of who you are and who you were meant to be? In this moment, the mountain asks you—what is yours to do with the truth you have found?

This is a good time to remind you of the beautifully articulated words that you have no doubt heard before. "Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. It is our light, not our darkness that most frightens us.

We ask ourselves, "Who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented, fabulous?" Actually, who are you not to be? Your playing small does not serve the world. There is nothing enlightened about shrinking so that other people won't feel insecure around you. We are all meant to shine, as children do... And as we let our own light shine, we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same.

As we are liberated from our own fear, our presence automatically liberates others." From the book A Return to Love by Marianne Williamson
Let these words flow through your mind, your heart, and your spirit. If you'd like, you can close your eyes on the way. Winding around, making each turn, we follow the path back from the center of this labyrinth. As you contemplate your own depth of understanding and remember your life experiences, Ask yourself, "What is mine to do?"

****Final Stop: Returning Home****

And now, dear travelers, we find ourselves back where we started, though we have no doubt made some changes along the way. The journey through relationships, community, wisdom, and truth was never about reaching a final destination - but about seeing with new eyes, feeling with an open heart, and stepping forward with intention. As you step off this bus and back into your daily life, the final question remains: What is yours to do now?

Yogananda said, "We are sent into the world to live to the full everything that awakens within us and everything that comes toward us."

May your path be illuminated, your hands be steady, and your heart be bold. The road is yours to walk – go forth and do what is yours to do.