

"When you sail out in a boat to the middle of the ocean where no land is sight and view the four directions, the ocean looks circular and does not look any other way.

But the ocean is neither round nor square; it's features are infinite in variety. It is like a palace. It is like a jewel. Whole worlds are there."

~ Dogen Zenji

Keep Looking

Is the universe friendly or unfriendly? This, Einstein declared, is the most important question facing humanity.

It's a question well worth considering; holding it close; turning it over and over in soft, receptive hands.

But what if, after touching each facet, after examining it from myriad angles and perspectives, it turns out that the answer is both yes and no? What if what we discover is that the universe is beyond category or definition; that the closer we look, the less obvious the answer becomes?

At the center of our life lies inscrutable paradox, the interpenetration of seeming opposites as a single, mysterious whole. Paradox is the truth that each moment of joy holds the shadow of sadness and loss; that moments of grief are shot through with tenderness and compassion; that the raucous, dynamic display of activity arises out of complete and utter stillness.

This is not theory or conjecture. It is the true display of reality when we pause long enough to really look, to really listen. When we look and listen this way, we discover that what's "out there" is cut from the very same cloth that we are; that for all our unique quirks and differences, we are fundamentally a single, fluid fabric unfolding.

I take Einstein's question as a friendly challenge-not to get the "right" answer, but to stay awake and keep looking; to allow the universe to surprise me.

My first time snorkeling was like this. Standing on the sandy shore, scanning the stretch of sea, the ocean loomed before of me as a vast shimmering plane of water. But after snapping on my mask and fins and peering below the surface, a hidden underworld revealed itself: anemonefish and angelfish, batfish and bigeyefish; schools of tiny, neon wormfish and lazy, prehistoric sea turtles paddling with their fat, webbed feet.

Einstein insists that the universe is beneficent. But the gift in his query is not the conclusion we draw, it's the opportunity to ask, to wonder.

We can't see what we don't know is there. But we can know

that we don't know. And we can let our not-knowing encourage us to keep looking; to move through each day with our eyes and ears, our hearts and hands, wide open.

With appreciation,
Pam

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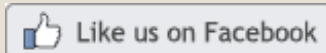
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Pamela Weiss is the founder of Appropriate Response. She is a coach, meditation teacher and recognized pioneer in integrating the principles and practices of mindfulness into leadership development and organizational transformation

awakening **Wisdom** in leadership and life.