

“Discovery”

Dundee, Scotland
July 2007



July 15, 2007

Dear Friends,

This is a picture of the *RSS Discovery* that I took last week on a trip to Scotland. She has an amazing presence, resting now in the harbor in Dundee where I was visiting. *The Discovery* was the last three-masted wooden ship built in the British Isles. She was launched from Dundee, Scotland on March 21, 1901 for the National Antarctic Expedition led by Robert Scott and Frances Shakleton. The men set sail for Antarctica on August 6, 1901 reaching their destination on January 8, 1902. Their remarkable, and courageous voyage was successful as they were the first to establish Antarctica as a continent and map the coastline. They identified the magnetic South Pole and eventually returned to Scotland on September 10, 1904 after spending a full two years of their journey completely trapped in ice, unable to move. The U.S. *Space Shuttle Discovery* was named after the

ship, as was the fictional spacecraft, *Discovery One*, from the movie *2001: A Space Odyssey*.

As I enjoyed the pleasant evening sunshine and clear skies of that cool Scottish evening you see reflected in the picture, I thought about this process of discovery we engage in together through our inquiry practice. We don't often embark on such perilous external voyages, but we do take on and respond to an urge to "discover" who and what we truly are. The men of the *Discovery* risked their lives to explore something that called to them. What do we risk in our desire to explore and discover who we are?

I have been surprised at the power of this traveling practice I've been engaged in these past two weeks. Jet lag is certainly a challenge, but the ongoing adaptation of every habit being overturned, every ordinary pattern being disrupted, and every familiar relationship being left behind is much more powerful and disorienting. Along with these losses and changes come the gifts of new experiences, the blessings unfolding in new relationships, and the surprise of the unknown. I am reminded that discovery is best initiated as the simplicity of Beginner's Mind. The entry to discovery is "not knowing" and having the willingness to see what moves in this space of the unknown. Discovery is the commitment to remain intimate with whatever arises in this field of inquiry.

In the training I am currently leading in England the participants are practicing their capacity to assist each other in loosening their attachments to the trance of conditioning. In doing so, I am witnessing the encouragement and freedom of life moving on its own, without manipulation. This is the very same discovery we share in our inquiry groups at home - the great gift of unencumbered vitality dancing freely as the conditional self falls away.

My trip to Scotland was actually in response to my friend Teresa's suggestion that I meet Andi Lothian, the founder and creative energy behind Insights®, a "global learning and development company" located in Dundee. The fact that this meeting took place at all was the result of one of those shared intuitive hunches. She knew I was traveling to the UK and immediately said, "You have to meet Andi!" Knowing both of us, she felt like it would somehow be important that we connect. Trusting her, I made the initial contact and Andi responded with an invitation. We really didn't know very much about each other and had no agenda, yet we were called to act. I found myself willing to travel to another country having never met this person and having barely communicated through email. Yet, discovery was possible. What would this mean?

The first evening of our visit, as we stood in Andi's back yard on a hill high above Dundee overlooking the Firth of Tay, my colleague and great

friend Donna Martin, who was with me on the trip, voiced the question: “I am really curious what this is really about?” Here was “not knowing” and “faith” mixed with “willingness” moving without our having to know what it meant. Could we discover what it meant to spend this time together? Were we willing to take the time and enter into the intimacy required to know what life was asking of us? What could emerge from this, if anything? Is the discovery of meaning actually the real question, or is the willingness to accord with life’s movement closer to the real message?

That evening I read the following by Toni Packer in her book The Wonder of Presence and the Way of Meditative Inquiry: “So why do we need a special practice? Isn’t there enough going on every instant, ready to be discovered anew in spacious looking and listening? Do we need to focus concentration on anything special? Isn’t being here in a new spacious way all that is needed? And if it feels anything but spacious right now, can we feel the *tightness* of wanting something other than what’s here right now?” (p. 9).

Of course we do have practices. The beautiful and very precise assessment tools of Insights®, which Andi introduced us to in Dundee, were developed out of Jungian psychology. They are skillful means of understanding ones self and others in organizations. The skills of Hakomi therapy Donna and I are teaching this week are delicate and yet powerful practices of mindfulness equally useful in self-discovery, healing communication, and the transformation of suffering. The meditation practices of Buddhism offer deep openings for our hearts and minds so we may discover the unbound freedom of our True Nature. And yet, through all of these practices, which set the stage for discovery, we ultimately return to this very moment – this life, this time, this body, these relationships, and these circumstances. This is what we work with. As Toni Packer says above, “Isn’t there enough going on every instant, ready to be discovered anew in spacious looking and listening?”

I look forward to my return and our time together - face to face, mind-to-mind, and heart to heart – as we discover who and what we are.

Blessings,

Flint