

You are only as Sick as Your Secrets

By Adrian Scott

You are only as sick as your secrets! This is a one-line saying from the twelve-step movement. Another comes from Jesus when he says “the truth will set you free” (John 8:32). ἀλήθεια, the Greek word for truth, can also be translated as *reality*. Reality has the power to free us from the sickness of our secrets.

I have recently been witness to a number of Christian organizations that have sacrificed the truth to protect their reputation or present a superficial facade of harmony. Both of these are a form of secrecy. This is predominantly a failure of leadership: the self-preservation instinct kicks in and reality is sidelined for a more manageable explanation. The suffering this creates is untold (literally) and I have worked with many of the victims.

How can we find the courage to face our own reality and become the advocates of truth? I heard Richard Rohr tell a story once of a lone protester outside a nuclear facility; he stood with his placard, day in, day out. Someone asked him what change he was effecting. He replied that he was not trying, primarily, to change the plant, but rather ensure that the presence of the plant did not change him.

We are surrounded by false images of what we ought to be. If we learn self-compassion and let the silence teach us about the reality of who we are, then we become a different presence in the world—truth-tellers and not secret-keepers.

This is All the Life You Have

This is all the life you have,
each day's crests and furrows
promising that who you are
embodies all you will ever need.

So what, so often, convinces
you that you are inadequate,
is it others or more likely
your unbefriended failures?

Sit quietly in the morning
before one screen or another
can invade your day with
the software of deficiency.

Let the silence teach you that
solitude is not an illness,
it is the soil of breath taking
in which self-acceptance grows.

Believe in the bird's song,
and the way the sun rises, slowly,
the steady beat of your pulse,
at that pace you can love it all.

At that pace, unforced providence
offers each part of your life
to you and you can name it as
Eve and Adam named it all.

What you can name as loved
will bring freedom to your day
will uncover your fullness and
will finally take your breath away.

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