

## On Vision

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*We believe that every human individual is unique, one of a kind, and that each of us is born with a genius that will manifest in wonderfully unique ways... But none of these capacities can be realized without practice.*  
– George Leonard and Michael Murphy, *The Life We Are Given*

To what extent are you living in harmony with your own deepest imperatives? And if the answer is some version of “not completely,” how do you hold that? Are you willing to change? What are you willing to do, internally and externally? What are you *going* to do?

How do we find that genius we are born with, hold it, and nurture its flowering in the world? Sometimes vision—and the clues to our deeper identity that come with it—slaps us in the face. Other times the journey may require much internal searching and dark nights of the soul.



*Photo by Robert Stewart*

An example of the former in my life was seeing a short video clip of John Coltrane’s classic quartet with Elvin Jones on drums when I was about 15 years old. I was mesmerized, and confounded. I didn’t understand it but I wanted to, and my passion for improvisation was born...or perhaps it was just consciously discovered. So many other things in my life grew out of that, including my spiritual, or integral, quest.

I have reflected on the moment of seeing that clip many times over the years. What is so astounding to me is the degree to which it spoke to so much in me that I wasn’t even aware of at the time. I didn’t yet have the level of self-awareness to even understand what I was responding to. Through taking action on this quest I found a deeper home inside myself. There is an emotional fuel that the passion of vision can provide, and living in harmony with it makes life feel like an expression of the divine. That to which we are authentically drawn is a potential portal into the fuller expression of our being.

Other times I’ve slogged through life, either disconnected from an authentic vision for that stage of my life, or utterly unsure of how (or unable) to move forward. Paradoxically, the connection, or reconnection, to vision is, on one hand, an utterly personal matter. We must have the personal honesty and courage to look deeply within ourselves for what is authentic and true, even if the message is that we can no longer cling to our old paradigms and ways of life. And yet, on the other hand, I have been helped immeasurably in these times by community, other people, who share a practice and a philosophy, who are able to see in me what I cannot yet find in myself, witness my path, and provide accountability when necessary.

I realize as I write that this is a love letter to all my friends in ITP who support me in becoming more fully who I am, hold me to living my path, and have the integrity to walk their own.