

Soul-work

**This is the first, wildest, and wisest thing
I know, that the soul exists, and that it is
built entirely out of attention.**

Mary Oliver

Attending to soul is about noticing and appreciating what is, as opposed to approaching reality with pre-conceived ideas or illusions. It is about openness, awareness, and the savouring of reality. It will mean waking up to mystery, awe, surprise and wonder.

We are not the measure of all things. We are dependent creatures. God wants to interiorly teach us, to be open and humble towards things as they are - to be filled with awe and wonder, not so much at *how* things are but *that* things are.

**Can I learn to look and listen to my world, my inner world –
and appreciate it for what it is, savouring it,
letting go of any illusory thoughts that I can understand it,
or control it, or fix it?**

**Can I bear the pain of being disillusioned –
of letting go of some of the illusions I hang on to –
and begin to face the truth, *my* truth?**

The soul need space, and room to breathe, to be itself, to declare itself, and to hear the invitation into fullness of life.

For all of us there are things we try to repress or ignore. Spend some time imagining Jesus is with you – immediately and present towards you-available – open – receptive - wanting-and encouraging. This is precisely how he is with so many people in the gospels: it is as if, in his presence, people entered into “the force-field of his beloved-ness”.

Imagine him giving **you** the time and the room or the space to be absolutely yourself. What’s it like to have someone so understanding of you - who feels for you and with you - as to give you all the space you need to be fully yourself. Can you let whatever “small shy truth” emerge and let Jesus teach you, meet you, heal you, free you?

Philip Carter is a retired Anglican Priest. He was the inaugural president of the Australian Ecumenical Council for Spiritual Direction (AECSD). He ran the Julian Centre in Adelaide, an independent and ecumenical centre for spirituality, from 1997-2009.

Contact: juliancentre@gmail.com

“Circumstances are the voice of God” (C.S,Lewis) - not that God has arranged the circumstances to teach us a lesson but rather, if we are willing to listen and to attend, we hear God speak to us in and through every circumstance that happens to us.

**“I have learned the secret of being content in
any and every situation”**
Philippians 4: 12

Soul is not a thing, but a quality or dimension of experiencing life and ourselves. It connects and unifies. It embraces everything that is and knows that the path forward is the life-long and patient working with the raw materials of our existence.