

The way It Is

*There's a thread you follow. It goes among
things that change. But it doesn't change.
People wonder about what you are pursuing.
You have to explain about the thread.
But it is hard for others to see.
While you hold it you can't get lost.
Tragedies happen; people get hurt
or die and you suffer and get old.
Nothing can stop time's unfolding.
You don't ever let go of the thread.*

William Stafford

We are victims of mistaken identity. The person I normally think I am- the "little" self, pre-occupied with busyness and anxieties, goals and issues – is only remotely a small part of who I really am. Too often I seek fulfilment at this level, which means I miss out on what life can really offer me. No wonder Jesus said that the one who tries to keep her life (her "little" life) loses it, but the one who is willing to lose it will find the life that is life indeed (Matthew 16:25). The paradox is that this thread, the truth and the reality of who I really am, means that **"While you hold it you can't get lost"**.

Hidden beneath the noise of this "little" self, with all its demands is this deeper and more authentic self. This is the treasure all of us live with every day, though we are too often too blind to acknowledge it. This is the **"thread you follow"** which **"doesn't change"**.

We have "double vision". Rowan Williams says that "There are two abiding facts; unreconciled pain and unexhausted compassion".

And Michael Leunig says: "There are only two feelings: love and fear".

Julian of Norwich, in the 14th Century said there are two truths: a lower truth and a higher truth.

The lower truth- the "little" self I know only too well – is that "We are not always in peace and love".

And the higher truth, the absolute truth, is that "Peace and love are always in us".

Julian would say: never deny the lower truth, but NEVER deny the higher truth. AFFIRM it: and LIVE it.

"You don't ever let go of the thread".

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To live fruitfully we must quieten the mind – the mind of our “little”, pre-occupied self - and accept what is, accept the way things are in our lives and in our world. Of course, there are things we can do, or change, to make a difference, and we need to do those things if that is at all possible. **“Tragedies happen; people get hurt and die”** and **“Nothing can stop time’s unfolding”**. But we need to have our hearts awakened, for our hearts speak to us of our God-given gift of both availability and openness. Here, as “heart speaks to heart” we waken to our inner truth, and discover who we really are: that Jesus is the truth of our existence: that Love is not only Jesus’ meaning, but Love is our meaning as well.