

Tue, 19 Feb 2002

On the silencing of Voice

"The line dividing good and evil cuts through the heart of every human being. And who is willing to destroy a piece of his own heart?"

Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn

Dear Friends,

Today I noticed how far the bulbs have been growing. Such a wonderful sign of the promise of Spring! It's especially timely since the readings I've been doing at school have had to do with evil.

We've read *Night* by Elie Wiesel, *People of the Lie* by Scott Peck, *Sins of the Spirit*, *Blessings of the Flesh* by Matthew Fox, and *The Divine Right of Capital* by Marjorie Kelly. Hard reading.

I spoke on the subject as part of a panel called "The Roots of Terrorism" here in Bellingham. The heart of my talk was my theory that the roots of terrorism are fear and injustice. Fear leads to the silencing of the self, and injustice leads to the silencing of others. Silence leads to a hardening of the heart, and a lack of compassion. And it is from such hearts that great evil can be done.

So how do we keep our throats open? How do we keep from being gagged by consumerism or addiction? How do we lose our voices?

It's a major question to me these days, as I head into my doctoral dissertation/project, which has to do with empowering women to find their voices: battered women, homeless women, institutionalized women. This year will focus on that project, and I'm both excited and fearful. Please keep me in your thoughts and prayers that I may keep my own heart and throat open for the work that needs to be done.

Meanwhile, there are several events coming up that I would like you all to keep in mind.

THIS SATURDAY MORNING I'll be giving a three-hour vocal workshop at the Women of Wisdom Conference in Seattle. This is an amazing conference! I participated in the opening ritual on Friday night, and am so excited about the quality of the workshops and presenters being offered. Come and support this wonderful event! My workshop still had spaces as of Friday, but please call them right away if you are interested. Their web address is:
<http://www.womenofwisdom.org>

I'll be attending, and possibly singing at the Conference on Female Spirituality

which will feature Mary Daly on March 15, 16 and 17th in Forest Grove, Oregon. Check out their schedule. Looks great! Here's a link to their web site:
<http://mcel.pacificu.edu/fem/main.html>

Then, I'll be giving a RETREAT on Saturday and Sunday, March 23th and 24th at Blue Mountain Farm in the Nooksack Valley here in Washington State. The theme is Finding Your Own Song: A Journey to Reclaim Your Creative Voice. It will include songs, art, exercises and good conversation to help you to connect to your unique song -- your creative gift to the world. The cost is \$175.00, and registration is required by Friday, MARCH 15th. Please email me or call me at 360-734-7979 if you're interested.

In April, I head for the International Conference of the Women of the United Methodist Church in Philadelphia where I'll be singing for 10,000 women! I can't quite wrap my mind around that number. I'm very excited to be gathering with the Methodists once again -- some amazing women.

Other events include a week of teaching at Naramata Center in Canada. Registrations are filling up there, so if you're thinking about a lovely retreat week this summer (I'm there July 21 -27), you might want to check out their schedule.
<http://www.naramatacentre.net>

In October, I'll sing at the annual Women and Spirituality Conference in Mankato, MN, featuring Carol Christ.

I think that's enough for now. I do hope to see some of you at these events. And may your Spring be full of hope and promise!

Blessings and Peace -
Linda

P.S. --I'm in the process of writing a song about the Ten Commandments. Thought I'd send it along as is -- maybe you all have a suggestion for the missing line. Didn't really set out to write a song about the Ten Commandments --you just never know where the Muse may dance you! She has a great sense of humor --

The Ten Commandments copyright Linda Allen 2002
Inspired by Deuteronomy 5, The Bible
These are the ten commandments
I hope you learn them well (?)
Your life can be a blessing
(Missing line)

Let no other idols
Be put before your God
Not food or work, not drugs or sex,
Your spirit, they will rob
Words can sing of blessings
And words can cry with pain
But angry words that cut and curse
Are never in God's name

Be sure to take a Sabbath for
Your body, heart and mind
If you have a day for rest and play
Your journey will be kind (?)
Kids, respect your parents
They do the best they can
Parents, love and lead them with
A strong and patient hand

Life is far too precious
To ever take away
So when you feel like killing something
Turn and walk away
If you would be happy
With your husband or your wife
Listen, laugh and love each day
Be faithful all your life

You must not lie or steal, my friend,
No matter what the cost
For nothing you could get is worth
The good name you have lost
Don't be jealous of your neighbor
Or the things that he may own
For greed and hate accumulate
'til your heart is like a stone

AS ALWAYS, IF YOU WISH TO BE REMOVED FROM THIS LIST, PLEASE LET
ME KNOW AND I'LL REMOVE YOU RIGHT AWAY! THANKS SO MUCH!

Linda Allen
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