

“Manufactured Drama or Hungry Soul: What’s Stirring In You?”

Lola Wright - Sunday, June 3, 2018
Bodhi Spiritual Center

Lola Wright:

So my 20-year-old daughter sent me a video last night because tonight we have a graduation party for her brother. And I've watched it like 20 times, and I was sitting there this morning just breathing, as I had a very long list for Nathan, who is not here because he is at home checking off the list, and I had the thought, "Ah, what a great model of discontent being quite different than divine discontent." So if any of you are familiar with discontent as being a model as such, that's not what we're talking about today, but I'm very familiar with it. I said to my 20-year-old daughter, I said, "I find that video so encouraging because what it means is there are many people like me before people come over." So this is good news.

You know, this community has an incredible small group world that happens in the realm of sacred circles. People indicate an interest in creating an experience of intimacy and belonging outside of Sunday mornings, and then they gather in someone's home, no more than 10 to 12 people. Nathan and I have been in a couple's sacred circle for several years, and yesterday morning, we had our monthly gathering. I want to tell you about a couple who's in our sacred circle, who I actually took Foundations with 12 years ago, Molly and Nicole. Perhaps you know them. Perhaps you've seen them. They have this beautiful family that I would love to show to you at some point soon if it'd be okay. Okay, there we go. So that's Molly and Nicole. That's Nicole's mom, Miss Maddie, and their two dogs.

Yesterday, we were talking in our sacred circle about that which we're grateful for in our relationship, and that which we struggle with, and then we talked about the manifestations, the demonstrations that we have provoked, that we have created, in our lives as a couple. Molly said that for years, she would receive letters from her family, long letters, with Bible scriptures, pleading for her to be a different her, a request that

she walk on the planet in a way that honored the Christian values that her family espoused, and that her relationship with Nicole was not in keeping with that.

And as Molly was telling the story, I kept thinking, knowing who I am and how I am, that I would be like out of my mind. The level of grace and discipline that Molly exercised over the years in relationship with her family has been incredible, and as I listened to her share her story, I kept thinking, "That's the stirring that lives in us." There was something that was stirring, that continues to stir in Molly's soul, that's a stand for something greater than the circumstances before her. There's a stirring in Molly's soul that is the stirring of freedom, that says, "I am committed to being who I am here to be, independent of that which lies before me."

Molly and Nicole are in the process of forming a family, and Molly said that she recently got a 10-page letter from her aunt, and she could feel herself start to tense up because she was familiar with how these letters would go, and as she started to read the letter, there were many scriptures in the letter, and there was an overwhelming enthusiasm for the formation of this new family that Nicole and Molly are embarking on. I was so struck by that, because it speaks to the devotion of the practice. It speaks to a level of commitment and mastery, to devote to the soul's calling of freedom in the face of no agreement, and to keep showing up to what's true right where you are.

You know, that lives in each of us. We are each confronted many times over by who we know ourselves to be, and then who others say we are to be. What Molly said is she recently visited her granny, who's 92, and the family had not shared with her granny that she and Nicole were starting a family, and Molly shared, "We are starting a family," and her granny was so excited for her. So I just really honor each of us in our practice, because it can be a lonely road at times. It can be discouraging. It can be disheartening. It can be scary, and yet this seems to be a community of people that attracts a willingness to keep showing up in spite of the challenge.

You know, there's a brilliant spiritual philosopher that we quote here often. His name is Ernest Holmes, and he says, "There is a place within you that has never been hurt, damaged, or

endangered. It is your job to find that place." That is the distinction between discontent and divine discontent. There is a place within you that has never been hurt, harmed, or hindered, and the extent to which you can tap into that place and tend to it and avail yourself to it, it will walk with you through all kinds of stuff.

So I want to talk about what do we mean when we say divine discontent? Discontent in and of itself means dissatisfaction with one's circumstances. By a show of hands, has anyone ever experienced dissatisfaction with one's circumstances? Yes? Divine discontent is a holy dissatisfaction with one's circumstances. So our opening video is when our discontent becomes our neuroses, but that is not to diminish the nudge that's in you that's saying, "Something's not right here. I desire something greater. Something's calling me forward."

You know, I want to just distinguish for us throughout the month what we mean when we say divine discontent. For me, divine discontent looks like feelings of unrest, agitation, impatience, or fatigue that may be in service of a new way of being. That's the operative segment there, that may be in service of a new way of being. You know, I have discontent, divine discontent, around my work at Bodhi, and when I fall asleep or when I go unconscious, the solution is to leave. You know, that's my go-to. I'm out. I know myself well enough now to question that one, and really what I've come to, especially as it relates to this place and really recently for me, is in fact, it's a divine discontent, a stirring, because there's a next level of expression that's wanting to come through this place.

And so you'll start to hear us talking about ourselves as a center for consciousness under which a place called Bodhi Spiritual Center may exist with a Sunday experience, but the vision is so much vaster. Can you imagine a beacon in the heartland of America that continues to assert that there's a presence where you are that is infinitely capable, and you can communicate that in a secular way. You can communicate that in a spiritual way. You can communicate that in a psychological way. See, the Sunday experience for me is like as good as it gets. Jonas, I think we last danced on a Saturday night at Beauty Bar and we get to do it again on a Sunday morning here. That works for me. I love that. And yet, I want to make sure that the conversation that we

have available is here for a much broader audience that may never have a desire to come in on a Sunday morning, because I believe that the greatest gift of liberation comes through the human experience acknowledging and owning their power as opposed to outsourcing their power to someone or something out here over there. Yeah, that is worthy of clapping.

There's a beautiful book called *Conscious Loving* by Gay and Katie Hendricks, and in there, it says, "People have been beaten and otherwise abused for simply noticing what was going on in their families and speaking the truth about it." So we have inherited a tendency to pretend not to see and to swallow the truth. So you and I are a body of people that are in a devoted, awake practice to untangling that thing. Because if for generations we have been conditioned to stay quiet in the face of that which is not okay, we don't have a very strong muscle to honor the divine discontent that lives in us. So this is a new muscle in the consciousness of humanity, to keep speaking up and say, "Wait a second. What's true over here on Planet Lola? Hang on a second. What's going on over here, and how can I ready myself, how can I prepare myself, such that I can walk on the planet free?"

Now what that requires is that we cut the cords of the outsourcing of our approval. Okay, so then they go on to talk about that. Let's go there. "Stop centering your life on seeking approval or avoiding disapproval. Notice how you are controlling and jockeying for approval and drop these patterns, first for just a minute." Would you be willing to drop that for just a minute? Like I always notice, very subtle, it happens all the time, and last week, I'm like, "Man. They didn't get the jokes out there. Where are the laughs?" I mean, there were about a third of you here because of the holiday, but I'm like, "Damn. Those were some funny jokes." But in that moment, I was outsourcing my approval to your response of me, and when I become unconscious of that, then I start to effort.

Imagine that you and I walked on the planet and could care less what the others' response is to us. Like a next level of exploration would be to ask the question, "Yes, but there is value in asking how do I occur on the planet." There's great value in that. So this is not to say ... So many of us, it's such a big leap to ourselves permission to stop outsourcing our security,

safety, approval, and control, that if I start inviting you into a nuanced practice of mastery around how you occur on the planet, let's just handle the first thing. Now, for those of you who feel like you have a level of mastery around cutting the cords of the outsourcing of approval, safety, security, and control, then great. Start getting curious around how you occur on the planet.

They go on to say, "When you can break through your approval and control programming, there is a natural, organic, spiritual essence within you that can be consciously experienced. As long as we try to control ourselves and others, and as long as we strive to get others to like us, that spiritual essence is obscured. When we wake up and start loving ourselves, we claim our divine right." Wake up and start loving yourself. The essence of this teaching is to turn within, and to keep affirming that right where I am is the presence of all that is good. Right where I am is the presence of all that is holy, and when I experience a nudge, when I experience agitation, when I experience discord, might I inquire if that is actually a holy whisper?

You know, I have four kids, 20, 18, 9, and 6, and what I have noticed with my two older children is their senior year of high school, it gets a little crunchy. It's like ... And when I remember, "Oh, this is actually divine discontent. This is an appropriate thing that is occurring in evolution and growth so that he can actually leave with some semblance of confidence, because I annoy him so much, and I can let him leave, because he annoys me so much sometimes." That's a holy appointment. But when I forget, which often I do, I will find myself in moments of feeling victimized by the situation.

Nathan and I found ourselves at dinner on Friday night, and I was just in one of those moments where I wasn't feeling appreciated. And here's the thing, I have an empty appreciation bucket. There's nearly no amount of appreciation that will ever fill it, especially if it's coming from out there. But I had forgotten, and so there I was at dinner with Nathan, and I was just in it. Our food came out, and Nathan was like, "Could we take a breath and just be grateful for the food before us?" And I just closed my eyes, I covered my face, and I just was like ... I mean, I was about to have a full-on crying episode in the restaurant, and

I was like, "Breathe. Breathe. Breathe." But when I can remember that right where I am is the presence of all that is, and that there's nothing outside of me that will ever satiate me in the way that something within will, I can take a breath of peace, of loving kindness, and restore myself to sanity.

There's a brilliant human being by the name of Howard Thurman, who, I usually quote Jesus and the Disinherited because it's one of my favorite books on the planet. He has another beautiful book called Meditations of the Heart, and he says, "When man assumes that in matters touching his life and the life of man there is no order, only chaos or accident, then he may escape the responsibility for his own actions. We do not like responsibility. It is much simpler to live as if there were no responsibility for our conscious deeds, as if our unconscious deeds are without moral significance, but deep within us, we know we cannot escape responsibility." That is the good news, and it is not easy news, to wake up evermore. This idea of outsourcing is the way of the day. It sets you up perfectly to blame and criticize other folks for what they're not doing. But when that nudge, when that stir, when that agitation, when that frustration is in you, it's usually an invitation for you to do something.

So it's easy, at a time like now, with what is occurring on the planet, to look at all of the indicators of things that are happening out there, and I am not suggesting that there is not loads of evidence of that. And what I'm suggesting is that right where you are is divine discontent and right where you are is holy solution. So who will you be in the midst of that? Because if you don't pick up that, all you will do is manufacture drama. And let me tell you, one of the most taxing things on your central nervous system, one of the most taxing things on your immune system, is manufactured drama.

He goes on to say, "Where there is no dream, the life becomes a swamp, a dreary, dear place and deep within, a man's heart begins to rot." We have all been in a place in space, whether it be a job, whether it be a relationship, that it's getting a little funky, and that for me is an indication of it's time to move, and that may not mean it's time for you to leave. Nathan and I, in our marriage, have had to recreate ourselves so many times. That relationship is complete, now what do you want to create? You

know? It's a quick fix to just get a substitute. Very tempting. Very tempting. Quick fix to get a new job, but there's a beautiful 12-step slogan that says, "Wherever I go, there I am." Dang. If you don't do the work right where you are, you will recreate the same set of circumstances right before you, and you will be in a manufacturing plant of drama, and you will be living out a neurotic experience of discontent as opposed to listening to the stirring of your soul that is an invitation for divine discontent.

So I just ask you to bring to your mind, you can close your eyes if it's comfortable for you. You don't have to, but I do invite you to take a breath and shift in your seat a little bit. Always good to take the conceptual into the practical. What is an area of life that I experience repeat? We talked about this last week, how to beat the repeat. What is an area of my life that is occurring as discontent, that perhaps when I bring the holy to it, when I bring the sacred to it, I can sense into, I can feel the invitation? If all of life is for me, what is this an invitation into? Take a breath, and if you want, open your eyes.

In Conscious Loving, they said, "With a strong commitment to inquiring into yourself, the universe does not have to use catastrophes to wake you up." I am at a point at this stage in my life where I prefer gentle nudges. I don't enjoy the cosmic two by fours. Y'all can have that. There is a gentler way to walk through life, but it does require you showing up to yourself, to your own inquiry, to your own exploration.

So I'd just like to leave you with three inquiries that you might consider throughout this month. We will experience difficult life events. That will happen. We will experience discomfort. We will experience pain. We will experience heartbreak. We will experience loss. We will experience disappointment. The question is always, "Who will I be in the face of that?" And I find that there are three primary opportunities for you to respond through.

One is that we can begin by circling the drain, and it can really occur as if life is happening to us, and I don't encourage you to avoid that. I actually would encourage you to go all the way in, because if you don't give yourself a big, big space to really feel the mess, you run the risk of doing number two, which is spiritual bypass, where everything is light and love, rainbows and

unicorns, and you don't afford yourself the feeling experience. Now, the trick is, if you get caught in the feeling experience, it becomes an addictive cycle. You can actually create in your brain an addictive loop to your suffering. I would discourage you from doing that.

So you've got two options so far. Feel the feelings but don't hang out too long, because the circling of the drain will ultimately take you down the drain. Second option is spiritual bypass, my least favorite option. I personally have a preference for big, ugly cries and loud, vicious angers over light and love any day of the week. I actually think the spiritual bypass is quite dangerous. Quite dangerous, very insidious. Some of us who have been trained to be polite, that's your go-to. My mom tried. It didn't work. Just kidding. I love you.

And then the third option, get highly creative and imagine how we've been rightly prepared for this moment. There's a distinction between this and spiritual bypass. I can feel my feelings, and stand in an inquiry. That's what I ended up able to do by virtue of my husband's midwifery skills on Friday night, was to feel my feelings and then take a breath and go, "How is this for me? How is this for Trey?" You lose your job, get angry, get sad, then take a breath, "How is this for me? What is the gift right here?" And then a little anger comes up again, a little sadness comes up again. Take a breath. Contractions, 90 seconds.

One of the great, great gifts that the conscious leadership group community gave to me was through a brilliant woman named Diana Chapman, and I came into one of our training programs one weekend and I was in sort of a funk, and she just started laughing at me. And I was like, "Oh, no." I have some very strong words in this now moment that I will not share from this lectern right here, but she just started laughing at me. And I was like, "I'm having some feelings!" She was like, "No, you're not. You are in an addictive mood, and you're right about your feelings," and when I got the distinction between feelings and moods, it was a game changer.

What she reminded me of is feelings last 90 seconds. It's like a contraction. Allow them to come through, feel them fully, let them move, another one may come through. But a mood requires that you and I continue to tell the story of how we've

been wronged, such that we can provoke an emotive state that then re-triggers the story. That's not divine discontent. That's addiction. We have a highly addictive culture to suffering. So I ask you this month, as we explore this topic of holy dissatisfaction, use it as an invitation into what is yours to do. Who are you to be? What is yours to do?