

Resistance: A Many-Colored Coat

Affiliate Member Brown Bag Lunch - February 2017

Heard a lot these days: **RESIST!** Resistance -- whether personal or social, conscious or unconscious -- can be a movement of Spirit or an expression of ego. Or both. A spiritual formation principle is to notice the origin and fruits of such impulses, whether our own or another's. It takes time and reflective distance to do so.

PLEASE REFLECT:

To get started, invite memories of your own resistance to arise as well as what happens in you when you are met by the resistance of others whether individuals or structures.

- What helps you get the reflective distance needed to choose a response rather than to react?
- As you tend your own soul and that of others, what indicators suggest you're in the province of ego? Of invitation by the Spirit?

FOOD FOR THOUGHT:

Resistance in and of itself is neither good nor bad. It is an *unconscious* process of blocking or retarding the process of transformation. No group or individual can withstand unimpeded change. Resistance serves the purpose of allowing an organism to consolidate its gains as it internalizes changes it has undergone... Unaddressed resistance furiously tries to withhold and contain the emergence of the new and unknown... What may not be readily apparent is that resistance intensifies as transformation becomes more inevitable...

Unconscious resistance serves as an apparent protection for any person or group faced with rule-fracturing change... anxiety typically serves as an overarching indication of resistance at work... all resistances are directed toward making one feel safer and more protected.

Donna Markham, *Spiritlinking Leadership:
Working Through Resistance to Organization Change*

³⁸ “You have heard that it was said, ‘An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.’ ³⁹ But I say to you, Do not resist an evildoer. But if anyone strikes you on the right cheek, turn the other also; ⁴⁰ and if anyone wants to sue you and take your coat, give your cloak as well; ⁴¹ and if anyone forces you to go one mile, go also the second mile.

Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5: 38-41

Commentary by Walter Wink in ***Engaging the Powers***: “... *artistenai* means more than simply to stand against or “resist.” It means to not resist violently, to revolt or rebel, to engage in insurrection. on the one hand do not continue to be supine and complicit in your oppression; but on the other hand do not react to it violently either... find a third way that is neither submission nor assault...”

“Resistance is the dragon guarding the treasure.” (Used in training spiritual directors)