

Session Title Question: How do you create projects from personal and not get overrun by ego so focus is on community?

Convener: Deanna Shoss

Participants: Linda Doyle, Kenda Hallman, Joane Ricci, Carolyn Hoerdeman, Lily Yeh, and Analia Rodriguez

- Deanna – How can we change from egocentricity to community focus?
- Kendra interpreted it more as spiritual, “this is my path”
- Carolyn – Lily was willing to look at the dark side; that’s assertive but gentle. She uses her artistry to follow her path and you listen to the voice.
- Lily – it’s not a mutually exclusive “personal journey made public” it was a 20 year process. Trying to find meaning but this is everyone’s experiences. If you think back on life, there are moments that touch us. I learned painting in the most uncreative way – I learned from part of restriction.
  - “Our limitations are in our strength” (e.g. structure, tradition. Lilly had to leave China to find her path. She had a family, children, etc, but nothing was giving her life meaning. If I don’t rise to the occasion, the rest won’t amount to anything. Being a mother, daughter did not give meaning. Lily remembers looking for a sacred place, really searching, one has to have need for meaning that’s first desire. I want to make my life of consequence.”
  - In 1985, Lily can remember feeling that we all have a purpose, but to walk our path of purpose has consequences.
  - Training is important, but it’s the courage to step into our own life that is critical – when you do that nothing can stop you!
  - The fight to preserve diversity is also important.
  - Starts early – need to be happy about state of unhappiness – feel at ease and turn it onto a question.

- Painting circle in the center – be blessed when you don't know what you're doing. Be content in your womanhood, but not in relation to anything else.
- Lily is nothing unless she works in the communities. Lily works with young artists. Lily does whatever she can to empower local artists to create and design. Most deliver quality for heart mind and soul – you bring quality.

So you talk about:

- Mission is to encourage other artists to be the co owner. Ego is always there and yes it's a spiritual calling – it's a constant struggle and getting better the more you \_\_\_ it by changing “ nothing belongs to me, everything belongs to you”
  - Our society gauges success by how much art you sell – but Lily always knew that she did not want art to be defined by money – so she focused on how to create art that cannot be.
  - The more you take away the more you provide.
  - The village is made up of many little walkways, no main entrance, exploring peace and serenity in beautiful spaces. But ego is always there.
  - “Take yourself out of it” and you will be taken care of (e.g. when she left village, three years later she joined the Rwanda project)
  - Become allies with others as opposed to controlling it – organic process.
  - It is a continuous struggle between your ego and your calling. Lilly went to Rwanda, not so much to help, but to be helped.
  - You need to find space for both your ego and your calling, then there is a choice to embrace darkness.
- Carolyn – works with mythology – wanted to hide it from students but darkest need to create sacred space to explore darkness
  - Pride – We want perfection but being perfect is not human. It is human to forgive – recognize and let it go.

- We've swung against a cultural tide to not think about how other people see you. (e.g. Lilly wasn't about ego, though it might have been others interpretation)
- How do you find the strength to stand against the tide.
  - AUTHENTICITY! Can do that through deep rooted telling of your story. In a moment of embracing authenticity that's when beast is tamed.
  - When you are community based, you must be true to "family" who is there. Otherwise we lose hope.
  - Never "over there" it's always "in here", it's not about improving lives of others, it's about listening to your heart.
  - If you're being authentic, you can't be egotistical-- need for ritual, get the kids to breath deep together, or humming.
- Path/Calling
- Challenging the Darkside
- Personal ego vs. spiritual calling
- Doing it to better community vs. following personal path
- Ego (what others think of you) vs. authenticity (from within you)
- Uphill tide to be and think, follow heart and not care about what others think.
- It is a constant struggle
- How to find the strength to stand against the tide. Listen to your inner voice, you can do it through deep rooted telling of your story.
- Responsibility: must follow this vision – or best part of you will die.
- But how to curb ego – how does passion become in service to something else, then create collective identity
- Lily had to go inside self first to hear a voice that was talking to her.

NGO's – start with strong mission but end up fighting—ego, gets in the way.

Keep mission in mind, can maybe help curb ego.

Ego vs. Project

Inclusive process is important, that can help.

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