

## **Speaking of Quest**

**1/16//06**

I'm not sure why someone thought I might make a good speaker on irreverence, but I can tell you that at the "council of all beings," I chose to be a bacteria. Needless to say, I won in the end.

Like others, Quest has been a struggle for me. I thought seriously about quitting, several times. There were moments when I wanted to run out of the room screaming – especially when UUs begin telling Native American stories. It really makes it hard for me to breathe, since I'm mostly German. But I have hung in there, and now have my daily spiritual practice up to a solid twice a week.

I used to expect to someday meet someone who would become my spiritual guide. He would not wear a robe and have a long white beard, but would drive a Rolls Royce, care nothing for material goods, but keep the car washed and waxed. Fortunately, that person, who would touch me and wake the Buddha, never came. I've come to realize now that that waking that slumbering part of me, that Buddha nature, is my job, no one else's. That's what that teacher, would have told me. That is what quest has taught me.

I hated giving up so many evenings and weekends with my family. I loved spending time with really open, committed, amazing people. I have shared my most private inner life with these people, and they have listened, unjudging, and shared with me. My fellow travelers, my integration group, Claire Box my integration group leader, the staff of Quest, have been my

teachers. We have shared our humanness, meditated together, walked the labyrinth, spent hours in silence. That for me has been the heart of quest. Men, please note questers are 90-plus percent women. You are clearly missing the boat here.

Time for a story. Since this is vaguely Native Americanish, feel free to run out of the room at this point. We'll pause here for you. Anyone?

It seems these woods we are in, and it can be really any woods, like a stretch of highway, or the bathroom, or a Monday at work, are inhabited by a very wily presence, one which is watching us, ready to trip us and make us fall on our butts and then laugh laugh laugh. She is actually a coyote sometimes, but can shape shift, so sometimes this personage is a traffic officer, or your son, or a tree root. Anyway this trickster, who is really not bad, just good and funny in a perverse way, knows when we are not present. She knows the minute we think about the ball game last week, or how we wished we could fly, or any of those ordinary things, when we should be paying attention to the woods and where we are putting our feet. And that's when the trickster, wily old dog, puts a big old size 10 root right there, smirks, and Whammo. You're back to the present moment. He's been following me, tripping me up daily. If we look, we'll begin to notice and once in a while, avoid his jokes and stay on the path.

In closing, I'd like to share a bit of my meditation session from this morning. So if you will please assume a comfortable position, both feet flat on the floor, presuming they reach, and close your eyes.

Breathing in...

breathing out...

breathing in...

breathing out...

I know other people think different things when they meditate, but I can never remember them.

Thick Gnat Han, doe a ll that stuff about the universe doesn't he?

Breathing out...

How do you spell his name that way, anyway?

Breathing in...

Damn, my foot itches. No, it doesn't.

breathing out.

I'm going to hyperventilate. Really, I'm, I'm

Breathing in

Stop the world, I want to get off.

breathing out,

5 minutes down, 40 to go.

Watch out for tree roots.

Thank you very much.