

clear pathway. Boulders ten times my size obliterate my capacity to see. I wander through the landscape seeking clarity of where I am to go. I stumble and my hand reaches out. I discover a smooth metal wall. I follow its contours until I begin to see sunlight peeking through the dust by a pile of rubble ahead of me. When I clamber up the rubble, I can see an end to the steel wall. Just beyond it, amidst the dust-filled air, I see a stronger light coming from the far side of the wall.

I begin to scramble up the pile of rubble. When I am part way there I hear the leader telling us to return our attention to the room.

During the week of prayer, with the guidance of my spiritual director, I return to the place of the war-torn landscape within me where I'm not thrilled to go. My director encourages me to go back to the edge of the steel wall. I climb further up the rock pile to the end of the steel wall. I discover that on the other side of the wall there is a meadow that is filled with glorious flowers. There is a river that sparkles in the sunlight and a rich lush forest that stands at the edge of the meadow. It is beautiful. The beauty that has always been here welcomes me.

When I enter the meadow it feels like a safe place. I move to the centre of the meadow. I remember this place that is filled with light. It is like the primordial garden filled with lush possibilities.

Here, I can face the realities of my life that have created the war-torn landscape deep within me. I sit down and lean against the trunk of an old, sturdy tree. I centre into the stillness and the energy of this place. I tap into the well of tears and allow them to rise.

The sound of a wail that echoes with lament emerges from deep within me. As it erupts it is carried away on the gentle breeze. It feels like it is releasing me from a cauldron of turmoil and angst that I have silently and unknowingly carried within me.

I release these feelings of struggle and torment that have created my inner war-torn landscape. I reaffirm a power within me that is clear and strong and filled with love.

My spiritual director helps me understand what I am experiencing. She shares an image, an idea that gives me a symbol to express my experience. It reflects the wisdom of the ages about the spiritual aspects of who we are.

On a scrap piece of paper she draws a diagram of three concentric circles, a small one in the centre surrounded by a medium-size circle, which is in turn surrounded by a larger circle. She labels each circle.

The smallest circle, or the inner circle, represents who we are as a beloved child of God. The medium-size circle represents our life experiences including the external expectations that we accumulate through our lifetime. The largest circle represents the stuff of life that swirls around us.

My spiritual director observes that most people live their lives in the circle of external expectations. She observes that this circle often covers over the inner circle where we connect to God and to who we truly are. As a result of living our lives in the circle of external expectations, we live our lives disconnected from the power of God's love and disconnected from our true essence, from our authentic self, from, in her words, who we are as a beloved child of God.

She goes on to explain that the goal of the spiritual journey is to move from the circle of external expectations into the inner circle where we remember who we are, where we remember our authentic self and our call in life, and are empowered to increase the creativity and love on this planet through our presence.

SHARING YOUR REFLECTIONS

To add your thoughts to this conversation post them on the *Course* page under each session of *Creating Space for Wholeness* on www.AuthenticConnectionCulture.com or www.TheMendedMirror.com or on Facebook. Or simply be intentional about holding prayerful space knowing we connect heart to heart across the miles and time, and that together we are empowering and strengthening the things to which we give our attention.