



The Long Way is the Short Way

by David Franklin Farkas

It is a basic spiritual principle that, to truly understand something you must see that it is paradox of opposite but true statements. And you must be able to hold that paradox without steam coming out of your ears.

Some say the shortest way out of a predicament is through. You must go straight into the situation you fear and by going straight into it you will 'come out the other side.' And that is certainly true.

But there is another side to that truth. Let me tell you a story...

My town is about to celebrate the 250th Anniversary of it's founding. Here in America that's pretty impressive. In many parts of the world it seems we are the new kids on the block. Both are true.

In preparation for the celebration there has been a lot of construction downtown. Handicap accessible sidewalks and crosswalks have been installed with a beautiful brick border. Various areas in front of stores that were previously sloped because of the hillside have been terraced with wonderful stone retaining walls and black railings. New high tech street lights that mimic antique gas lights add the finishing touches.

Finally, the street was repaved... a three step process.

First a huge machine, that can eat and spit out the full thickness of the blacktop, cleared the street down to the underlying soil. Very symbolic of removing life's veneer of solid reality, rules and propriety to show that under it all is just... dirt.

Life is not tidy. We just cover it with a few inches of waterproof black stuff that is car friendly to make us forget that.

The street is leveled and then a thin layer of black top is put down. Every sewer grate, manhole cover and utility access must be re-cut into the street and set carefully in place.

Then a finish layer of blacktop is installed and when the steam rollers leave, new traffic lines are painted. Once again, reality looks solid and makes sense. And the noise, dust and confusion are gone.

It is amazing to watch what we accept and expect to be solid and permanent removed and recreated. But... of course, that is the true nature of reality.

During the construction going through downtown was a slow annoying ordeal. So those of us familiar with the side streets got very creative about going around the construction zone. That was faster and less aggravating.

So, in this case, the long way was the short way. And the only way out was around.

Notice the irony that the long way in distance is the short way in time.

Space and time really are one fabric and we often confuse them in our language and how we approach situations.

So the only way out is through except when the only way through is around. Sometimes the long way is shorter, because the short way is longer.

In other words... it depends. *The real power of being present in the moment is the opportunity to feel for what is right and make good choices.*

Is it time to go straight? Is it time to go around? Is it time to pull over to the side and wait? Is it time to get out and walk? Is it time for your beverage of choice and a good conversation while you wait until the time is right?

Each is the right decision for a particular moment in a particular place.

It is comforting to believe there is a right time and a right place. The truth is there is only the next step.

This year's harvest time is colored by incredible changes on our planet. As we move toward 2012, things will look more and more like the construction zone in my town.

What we believe is solid and permanent will be ground up and recycled. Things will be rebuilt in new and better ways, but it will be a mess while it is going on. And, when it is complete it will be beautiful, work better and we will learn to appreciate the new reality.

Meanwhile, in each moment, we have the precious opportunity to practice being present and just find the next step. Is it through? Is it around? Is it waiting? Is it finding good company for a special moment?

I wish all of us the joys of those moments. I wish all of us the joys of our harvests. *And I wish all of us the strength and wisdom to to ride the changes with enough presence to hear the next step and enough courage to take it... even if steam is coming out of your ears.*

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