

Ken Neilson

A Pilgrim's Journey

...inthestillness



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Preface

We are on a Journey, a pilgrimage. We are coming from somewhere and we are going somewhere. A pilgrimage is a journey to a holy or sacred place. It can also be a course of life on earth that we find and follow.

This Pilgrim's Journey Retreat, is a point along the road of your life. Our wish is that it becomes a meaningful time of experiencing and knowing. May you find a place of quiet and hear again the whisper of God saying; 'I love you.'

Introduction

Along our journey, experiences and events have formed us. The accumulation of things we have learned, thoughts we formed to give meaning, emotions felt to express deep realities, things we did and things we did not do, our memories and our anticipations, all contribute to this point on our Journey.

I wonder, where you are going? I wonder, what road you are traveling? I wonder, what the journey will be like for you? I wonder, what you will leave and what you will keep as you travel on? We hope, with the help of this booklet taking you on a journey of seven days to specific places of meaning, you will find a measure of peace, calm, and clarity. We are glad you are here.

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Preparation for your Journey

As you plan for your journey today, take a minute and be quiet and still. What do you hope for today? What is stopping you from experiencing what you hope? Ask God to give you eyes to see and ears to hear. Watch and listen today.

Day 1: A trip to Brown's Beach

Directions: From the cottage go down the driveway to the bottom of Kenmore Trail. Turn right on Craig Lane, then right on West Quaco Road. Follow the road until you arrive at Giffin Pond Road. Turn left and walk to the end where you will find a footpath down to Browns beach. It is tricky so be careful. (A good walking stick would be helpful)

**Be sure to check the tides.*

You have about 2 hours either side of low tide when you can access and explore the beach. Outside of that the tides are too high.

Reflection

Walk the beach and enjoy. Consider:

- What does the ocean mean to me?
- Do the tides help me to realize that sometimes things can come in and out of my life and that is all part of my life cycle?
- What do you think about in the quiet and stillness of this place?

Contemplation is a way of being present to what is really inside our own experience.¹

Write your thoughts in your journal page.

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Day 2: A Hike to Giffin Pond

Directions: From the cottage go down the driveway and turn right on Craig Lane. Proceed to West Quaco Road and turn right following the road until you arrive at Giffin Pond Road. Turn right and walk for another 45 minutes. You will see a fresh water lake on your right and the ocean on your left with a great stone pile beach between the two.

Reflection

- How has the walk been for you? Difficult or easy?
 - Does this remind you of things you are facing in your life at this time?
 - What areas of concern do you see as a challenge?
 - What other areas do you rather enjoy and delight in?
- Both are part of our journey and both contribute to the wholeness of our life.
- What does the ocean and pond remind you of today? Notice how the waves move the stones to make a rather unique sound. Be quiet and listen.

Scripture says; "if they (we) keep quiet the stones will cry out."²

Is there anything that you need to say or write that has been in your mind and on your tongue for sometime but has not been said? Is there a word of gratitude? A word of reconciliation? A word of forgiveness? A word of instruction? A word of boundary setting?

Write these thoughts in your journal page.

Preparation for your Journey

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Day 3:

Visit the 2 cemeteries of West Quaco

Directions: Follow the driveway and Kenmore Trail to Craig Lane. Turn right and proceed to West Quaco Road. Turn right following the road. Shortly you will see a cemetery on your left down in a field near an old burnt out house. Walk down the laneway and turn left and you will see the cemetery. Later return to West Quaco Road and turn right. Walk past both Craig lane & Lighthouse road and shortly on your right you will see an entry to another cemetery. Walk the lane.

Reflection

Cemeteries give us a chance to remember the lives of those that have gone before. Some many, many, years ago. Take some time and wonder what life would have been like for them. How would the loss have effected the families left behind? What losses do you carry today? Is there anything that you need to remember, grieve, and leave in this place? Is there someone you need to talk to about it?

Write about it in your journal page.

Preparation for your Journey

As you plan for your journey today, take a minute and be quiet and still. What do you hope for today? What is stopping you from experiencing what you hope for? Ask God to give you eyes to see and ears to hear. Watch and listen today.

Day 4: A stroll to the Lighthouse

Directions: From the cottage go down the driveway and turn right on Craig Lane. Proceed to West Quaco Road and turn left following the road until you come to Lighthouse Road on your right. Walk down Lighthouse Road until you come to the lighthouse. Be careful of the cliff edge and stay well back.

Reflection

Lighthouses are instrumental in the safety for all vessels traveling on the Bay.

- Sit and consider the light that keeps you safe.
- Where do you go and what do you think about that calms you?
- As you look out over the Bay, what do you see on the horizon?
- What do you see on *your* horizon?
- Do you see this as an opportunity or a concern?
- Rest knowing that there is a light that will guide you.

Jesus spoke to the people once more and said, "I am the light of the world. If you follow me, you won't have to walk in darkness, because you will have the light that leads to life." 3

Write about this in your journal page.

Preparation for your Journey

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Day 5: A Respite in St. Kevin's Oratory and the Outdoor Chapel

Directions: Here... in the stillness, there is a private place of worship - St. Kevin's Oratory. Today your journey is to rest and be quiet as you read, pray & sit in silence and reflection. Bring a book or take one from the bookcase that interests you. Spend some time being, without having to go anywhere today. After you have done some reading go to the outdoor chapel and look out over the Beach and Bay.

Reflection

- As you reflect on your quiet time today, what ideas and thoughts have been most present?
- Are there themes that you need to write down and action?
- Or are there things you need to let go?
- Ask your self; do I need to Avoid, Alter, or Accept something?
How can you apply these three words to your thoughts?

Write down next steps in your Journal page if any of these seem to stir a response.

Preparation for your Journey

As you plan for your journey today, take a minute and be quiet and still. What do you hope for today? What is stopping you from experiencing what you hope? Ask God to give you eyes to see and ears to hear. Watch and listen today.

Day 6: A Trip to St. Martins Sea Caves

Directions: Drive or cycle to the sea caves at low tide. Follow Kenmore Trail then Craig Lane to West Quaco Rd. and turn left. Follow West Quaco Rd until it meets Route 111. Turn right and go about one km. Turn right on Main Street and follow it for about three km until you come to the harbour (you can stop here for a visit if you wish). Proceed across the covered bridge and just before you go up a steep hill turn right into a parking lot where you will see the caves. At low tide you can walk the ocean floor and explore the caves.

Reflection

Year after year the power of the waves and the tidal action have created indentations in the sand stone rock forming these sea caves.

- What are the repeated forces in your life, the pressures, that you can identify?
- Have any of these pressures, particular events or environments over time, been part of what formed you?
- Has the hand of the Creator been part of your formation?

*"You created every part of me; you put me together in my mother's womb."*⁴

What thoughts and questions come to mind?

Write about this in your journal page.

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As you plan for your journey today, take a minute and be quiet and still. What do you hope for today? What is stopping you from experiencing what you hope? Ask God to give you eyes to see and ears to hear. Watch and listen today.

Day 7: Sunrise at the Lighthouse

Directions: Follow the driveway, Kenmore Trail and Craig Lane to West Quaco Road. Turn left following the road until you come to Lighthouse Road on your right. Walk down Lighthouse Road until you come to the lighthouse. Be careful of the cliff edge and stay well back.

Reflection

The sunrise at the lighthouse is a beautiful experience. It is a great way to wrap up your stay. As you sit and anticipate the rising sun, experience a calm that happens when you watch and listen in silence.

- What are your anticipations as you wait for the sun to rise?
- How does this mirror the anticipation of your returning to the routines of your life?
- Do you hope for something to be different?
- What do you wish to take away from this week of pilgrimage?

Write about this in your journal page.

The Journey Continues

As you head home to the routines and practices that sustain you, can you articulate something from this week that you can put into practice?

- Is there something to remember?
- Is there something to put behind you and forget?
- Is there something to talk to someone about?
- Is there a new practice or routine you would like to implement?
- Is there a regular time of walking and solitude you can establish?

Change is interesting. It can come quickly or it can take much time. For me, change happens somewhere in the middle. What I do know is, if I have an impression that something is important and helpful to sustain a sense of wholeness, I need to make it a priority. Change only happens if I really want to change.

Our prayer is that you have found and will continue to find, on your 'pilgrims journey,' peace of heart and mind.

“I am leaving you with a gift—peace of mind and heart. And the peace I give is a gift the world cannot give. So don’t be troubled or afraid...”⁵

A promise to remember as you Journey

Lord, you have promised to meet those who seek your face. Come now and reveal your presence to me as I make myself present to you. In the name of Jesus Christ my Lord. Amen.⁶

End Notes:

1. Ronald Rolheiser. *Prayer our deepest Longing*, pg. 44
2. Luke 19:40 NIV
3. John 8:12 NLT
4. Psalm 139:13 NRSV
5. John 14:27ff NLT
6. Rueben P. Job, Norman Shawchuck. *A Guide to Prayer*, pg.154

Bibliography

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Rolheiser, Ronald. Prayer our deepest Longing. Franciscan Media, Cincinnati, OH. 2013.

Shawchuck, Norman., Job, Rueben P. A Guide to Prayer for Ministers and Other Servants. The Upper Room, Nashville, Tennessee. 1983.

Ken Neilson, and his wife Fay invite people to their small retreat where they offer a place of quiet and prayer, and through this booklet, a chance to experience day pilgrimages - to walk and reflect in this very special place.

Rev. Dr. Neilson, a retired counsellor and teacher, assists in prayer retreats and enjoys meaning conversation with those that come for retreat. He and his wife Fay own and operate Inthestillness Retreat, where they encourage people to “come away to a quiet place” and rekindle their friendship with God.

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