

LEAVING FOR DEPTH PROFESSIONALLY

Letter from Eunice to staff and board of Life/Work Direction March 26, 2007

I am announcing to staff and board that I plan to apply for the Shalem Institute Program in Spiritual Guidance for Spiritual Directors. If accepted, I will be in the 2009 graduating group. It requires two ten-day residencies in Maryland - the first in January 2008, the second in March 2009. I am excited about this. It feels like a "fourth career" for me, and so right. I had resisted this for a long time. I have never liked the term spiritual director. But I find I am doing what spiritual directors/guides/companions do, and am more and more drawn to it. I need to be in touch with kindred spirits who are thinking about similar issues and who have traveled the road a ways.

And how good it will be to continue this work within the context of LWD, which will be my "work home" for the foreseeable future, unless God sends me elsewhere.

But there is more: this decision is the trigger for me to indicate in a more clear way to Scott and Louise my intention to let go of over-all responsibility here at Life/Work. The results of this decision may take a little time to become obvious to anyone outside, as I plan to continue to be part of Life/Work as a staff counselor here doing the kind of work with individuals that is giving me such pleasure.

We are already currently working on our job descriptions, which will now be the occasion to clarify exactly who will be responsible for what a bit differently than I might have done a week ago. Also Scott and I have already planned to meet weekly (we had lapsed on that in the past year), so these weekly meetings will help provide a smooth handover of things he will be doing in the future that I have taken care of in the past.

I plan to continue to help in many practical ways, as I always have. The difference will be that I will be doing them at Scott's behest. I sense that the time has come for this kind of shift. Up until now, I have been working on the assumption that I need to help the organization persist but I see now that I really wanted it to be done in "my way," for things to essentially stay the same. It was only this weekend that I suddenly saw that this does not give the Walker's the true freedom they deserve and need to shape it in their direction and I suddenly became willing to move forward – for me, this meant entering into a new phase of my own vocational life, for which the Shalem program became impetus.

I remember the exact moment in Chicago when I "let go" of my control of the Urban Life Center. Here I am again, and the time feels right.

Scott and Louise already know that I am applying to the Shalem program, and today I talked to them about finding a way to hand over the workings of the organization,

because I have not previously been willing to do it. I always claimed I was willing, and that I expected that LWD would eventually take a different shape. When I did not see them moving forward to shape it - at least not forcefully - I assumed they either did not want to, or know how to. Now I think differently, that I was hanging on too tightly, and they out of respect and deference to my age and experience, simply did not push forward on their own agendas.

I think the board meeting in May/June will be a good time and place to look at Life/Work in a new light.

You can imagine that these simple paragraphs represent an earth-shift within me, and also that I feel immeasurably lighter in heart and spirit. I would say that we needed these two years to feel our way together, and that as we start Year Three in June, this decision of mine will also give new impetus to Scott and Louise.

In God's grace,
Eunice