

Pathwork in Texas

From Australia to Austin

An essay on following guidance by Jan Rigsby

8 years ago, I boarded a Qantas transpacific flight to Melbourne from LAX with a 4-year work visa and 2 suitcases and a lot of optimism. I clearly remember my thoughts as I crossed the airbridge into the cabin section: 'Did my guides say Australia or Austria?' I didn't even have a hotel room booked. I was just hoping I'd gotten the syllables right.

This is not a linear story about starting a new practice. The Australian part was a downhill freefall where I landed on my feet, and so I looked good. Today, I am in the process of another freefall, but I'm not yet sure which way is up yet so the Austin part doesn't look so good -- yet. I would have preferred to write its story later, when it might all make sense. Yet by then, I might look like I knew what I was doing. What value would that be to those of you who are in midair from having taken such a leap, or peering over the cliff wondering whether to jump or not?

Guidance, like Eros, isn't at all concerned about looking good or making sense. It answers to a higher authority and leads us onto a more complex and esoteric storyline.

The Australian story started like this. I answered the calls of several individuals and groups, visiting Sydney, Melbourne, Perth and Brisbane (which represent 12 million of Australia's 20 million population) over a 5-week holiday. I discovered an unexpected synergy between me and the Australians. I went home, where all of my possessions were already in escrow (based upon guidance I had already been acting upon) and started the complex process of applying for an Australian independent business visa. 9 weeks later, I landed in Melbourne to start my adventure.

I didn't start working with guidance at this level, saying Yes without actually understanding the question, without even caring what the question was. 2 ½ years previous, I'd turned my face upwards and asked for the process, asked out loud to receive guidance – in English, with a noun and a verb and punctuation, because I get lost wading through innuendo and subtlety and abstract concepts. I wanted to believe that there was a place for people like me in the divine plan, and I wanted to do the work consciously. The answer was 'Sell the House'. Period.

I carried out that guidance. Over the following 2 ½ years it felt as if I was undergoing a training, some kind of boot camp, where my readiness for greater tasks was being determined by how well I accomplished whatever I was given to do. I admit that I hid behind logic and rationalization because it was hard for me to believe what I was doing, much less that I was doing it under conscious guidance. Yet each time, it felt like what is going on in Austin now. I had no idea what I was doing, no idea how to do it, and no honest plan other than doing whatever was put in front of me moment by moment.

The details around building a Pathwork community in Australia may be irrelevant now, because they were specific to the situations and because some of the most powerful lessons taught me what NOT to do. The dynamics also

seemed unique. A Core Classmate referred an entire class to me, feeling that she had taken them as far into the lectures as she could. A remarkable self-led study group, which had been meeting fortnightly for over 8 years, had asked for help. The remaining students and workers seemed to burst forward, as if they also had been waiting. This collective request for a deepening of personal process was a calling. I didn't so much build Pathwork in Australia as harvest what was already ripe and ready to move forward. A crucial element was that I had a passive US income which supported me until all of this manifested into sessions, classes and programs.

Following such a call in Texas is quite a contrast. My time in Australia had sensitized me, and I did not want to return to the fast pace and high vibration levels of southern California. I fell in love with Austin while traveling across the country looking for a new home. Once again, I put my trust in Eros and bought an apartment to start the transition back home. Again, I was honored by the support of a previous Pathwork classmate who had been offering workshops in Austin with her husband for several years. Their long-distance connection to Austin was dissolving, and they both encouraged me in the new venture.

Yet interest in Pathwork teachings in this central US region manifests in a much more conservative and languid pace. People find it much easier to travel or telephone within their own country and culture, so those who most desired a Pathwork community may already have connected or moved to one of the existing Pathwork regions. Mounting the Lectures onto the Internet in 2000 dramatically changed the level of need for 'first contact'; now only those who wish to participate more actively call or email. And the amount of spiritually-based literature, courses, and channelings has exploded exponentially worldwide since 2000. Those seeking a strong community experience have lots of choices. It's hard to start from scratch in such a climate.

There are also regional cultural constraints at play. When I fell in love with Austin, I wasn't making a linear decision. It never occurred to me that Austin might be an 'island of liberalism in a conservative sea', or that the city's motto (Keep Austin Weird) might indicate that the state capitol has significantly different attitudes than the rest of Texas. Austin sits within the triangle of Dallas / Fort Worth, Houston and San Antonio, and the 4 metropolitan areas represent almost 1/2 of the 24 million citizens of Texas – each only an afternoon's drive from Austin. Yet it can feel like there are more differences than similarities between them, and all of this takes time to figure out. There have been a number of other surprises. Except for visits home to relatives in Arkansas, I have not had significant contact with southerners and conservative Christians. I sometimes feel like a city slicker in a small town, lacking common life experiences which might help connect with those I wish to serve. I was also surprised by the magnitude of youthful energy in Austin, sparked by mushrooming university populations and a massive influx of young hi-tech professionals which have quadrupled Austin's population over the past 20 years. I am feeling old and stodgy! Constant satire and parody wear me out, and neighbors who party until 5am are giving me plenty of emotionally reactive material to process.

The most painful adjustment has been starting over again socially. Setting up a single-person therapeutic practice in a city without friends or family leaves me vulnerable to loneliness, and I don't have enough work to keep me busy all

the time - yet. Despite a strong personal preference for solitude, I became overwhelmed last year. While they emotionally supported my 7 year adventure overseas, my family was surprised – and delighted – when I made almost monthly visits to LA, NYC and El Paso last year. I was especially grateful to my brother and his wife in El Paso, who coach me on Texan norms. And all of them love me just the way I am, which nourishes and supports my work here. When Pathwork in Texas blooms, these generous souls will have played a large part.

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