

I read a blog this week that spoke to me: PEOPLE WHO HOLD SPACE WILL HEAL THE CHURCH
By KAITLIN CURTICE

<https://kaitlincurtice.com/2017/06/11/people-who-hold-space-will-heal-the-church/>

Several things about this blog spoke to me

Kaitlin tells the story of getting married to someone with very different experiential background

She makes this comment as they are working on the early days of figuring out who they are
*When he married me, he loved who I was, but also saw who I could one day become, and he held that vision steady. And it wasn't a vision for what he thought I was supposed to be, but **a vision still unknown to him, held by the mystery of God.***

He sees something—yet he doesn't know what it is

Whatever this vision is—it is being held by the mystery of God

Like seeing potential or possibilities or that of God

But not having to define it and allowing it to be held by the mystery of God

He takes her to his favorite spot—Lincoln Lake, a climbing spot in Arkansas

She only saw a brown lake and lots of bugs

Nine years later they return to the same place

With large ants crawling on her feet and high humidity she says, “It’s beautiful here”

With tears in her eyes, she admits she didn't appreciate it the first time

Which he knew all along

She reflects that...

There seems to be a difference between being with someone to change them and being with someone as you hold space for them to change.

She then names how he's held space for her to grow up and mature, become a mother,

...ask questions of faith, and accept her Native culture without fear, etc.

In holding space, he loved her and continues to hold space for who she will be next year

She then suggests that this is work the church must do

That in holding space for people, we will bring healing to the church

They are the ones who bring justice and shalom, because they are patient people who hold onto a long-off vision. We need them in our churches, because they will not force change. They will not sit in pews and bear judgment over the people around them, but they will sit with those people and wait for God to show them the way.

The church has too often tried to manage people, thereby often wounding them

Dallas Willard reminds us it is not our job to “manage sin”—we are to love!

We need to hold space for people—to see *what is good in each other,*

*to hold onto the longer vision that God holds for each of us, and we need to **wait***

Ultimately she talks about climbing up the rocks with her husband—a rock climber

She felt drawn into this new world, his world—drawn by not knowing how to climb

Drawn by not knowing exactly where to put her hands and feet as she climbed

Not knowing gave her the energy to try—trusting this thing calling her back to God

As she got to the top and looked around at the view, she felt incredibly alive

If we hold space for each other, we learn how to truly be alive with one another, as we cast off judgment and wait for the grace of God to journey with us into unknown and sacred places. And my friends, it's absolutely worth the wait.

This reminds me of climbing on rocks at the Oregon coast with my Grandpa Frazier
The tide came in and cut off our return so we had to climb down a rock face
I was afraid but Grandpa put each foot in the crevice of the rock so I could get down
Trusting God is often that way—I can't see, but I can feel God's Leadings

How do we hold space for people?

By seeing that of God in others—noticing it
Being present to the life points in another's life—
and giving Divine inattention to the broken places

A lack of judgment towards others
Being patient with the process
Knowing God loves me even when I don't Listen—I extend that same grace to others
The holding prayer—simply holding others in God's hands without using words

But I got to thinking about that blog and how after 9 years he took her back to the lake
How did he know it was time to return? Or did he?
Sometimes we don't hold enough space and we go back too soon—before people are ready
But is it also possible to wait too long?—to hold space until it becomes empty and void?
I wondered—Can space be held so long that it loses the invitation to the next piece?

Then I read another blog: HOLDING SPACE FOR PERSONAL TRANSFORMATION & CHANGE by Jennifer
<https://womenfreebirth.wordpress.com/2010/09/06/holding-space-for-transformation/>
This woman is a doula and a midwife and speaks to the process out of that experience

She talks about being with a group conversation and noticing an underlying conflict
They couldn't move forward with their current work because of this unspoken conflict
She names the fact and is able to "hold space for the conflict to find resolution"
It is like the resolution was present but it had no space to be seen
I also noticed that she uses passive tense—with space, the conflict finds resolution
She then ponders what it was that she offered and why it changed things
She likens it to what she does at a birth—being a midwife to transformation
In a very real sense, she "does nothing"
She says, "When I attend a birth, I... allow myself to be present as the birth unfolds as it is meant to. My role as a birth 'guardian' is to stay grounded, present, still, aware, always trusting, never wavering, knowing intimately the realms that women traverse in labor, and being prepared to tend to the mother if needed."
She emphasizes that it involves "total trust"
She said thinking too much distracts her from noticing how the labor is going
It tempts her to want to make the labor go as she thinks it should

In human transformation, deep Listening and trust are key components to holding space
All the while, bearing witness to another person's journey
Holding space for others allows them to do the personal journey
To enter into the process of discovering for themselves how to move forward
To find way through the chaos into becoming
Being present in this way empowers others to do the hard work
We must resist the temptation to take over and "manage" the transformation work

I noted that in all of this TRUST is an important piece—trusting that movement is possible
Trusting that God will be present with us all on this journey
Trusting that there is way forward and letting it emerge

I also note that we often do need others to hold space for us
This transformation process needs accompaniment
Truth is that we find it difficult to do all this work without being with others
Yet we often resist having others present
Maybe because they too often take over or judge us as unable
Maybe we are afraid to trust others with our intimate journey
Maybe we are afraid that transformation is not possible for me
Somehow holding space of others allows us to come to the place of trust
As we trust others do simply be with us, we become ready for the next steps

Back to the initial blog and her statement that holding space will heal the church
She is right—holding space is important work and the church will not heal without it
When space is held for me/us—How do we enter into the transformation process?
Must we do something? Or does it just happen naturally?
I think we often struggle with answering others—When do we answer? When do we hold space?
It seems to me that there must be balance here
Can we do both? How?
What does it mean to answer others?
—I think that is another message—maybe next week

The church at large needs healing
Northwest Yearly Meeting needs healing
We need healing
How can we hold space for one another so that God can complete the healing work among us?