Art is so, so personal to me. These classes have brought it out in me and given me the confidence to share. Vicki broke me…and I can’t go back. Her classes provided both permission and containment to examine my cracks and scars, so that I could come to appreciate them as a part of a whole, as part of the beauty. They too are part of my journey, my mettissage. As I walk along my medicine walk, I connect to others along the way and our journeys run parallel or intersect. So when I say she broke me, this is a good thing. Leonard Cohen (1992, track 5) wrote “There is a crack in everything….. That’s how the light gets in.” But I also think the crack lets the light out.

Charles’ enthusiasm and vigor have encouraged me to continue on this path of art making. When words are embryos, painting nurtures and nourishes them, until they are ready to birth. In his class I feel he truly believes in me/us and what I/we can do. I love that he revels in risk taking and the unconventional. His enthusiasm and belief in me, in us, is so contagious. He is the epitome of unconditional positive regard. Isn’t that what makes a good teacher?

So, as I stood at the front of the class, in front of everyone, it struck me how far I have come along my medicine walk. I no longer tremble as I speak. I am able to share my most personal thoughts and contemplative process. I am able to admit I feel vulnerable to your response and judgment but welcome it anyway. Indeed I invite it and relish it. So that I can stand by my view with conviction and the statement “Why not?”.

There is beauty in letting my light out and your light in. They mingle and bounce off one another. One by one your words gently descend upon me like a warm blanket or a gentle breeze. I glow. I gather your words like fireflies in the jar of my memory. For a short time while I contemplate, I rattle the jar and hear the sounds they make. I repeat the sounds over and over. I look at the words from every angle. I feel anticipation and excitement as I unscrew the jar lid and dip my brush in. In that moment, I gather the words in my breath then exhale as I smear them across the canvas. Now, in review, I am struck by the alchemy of it all.

Contemplation is Yellow is Dialogue is Alchemy.

Helen Kennett-Bacon

References

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