

When distant acquaintances and strangers
When clients and customers and students
When friends and doctors
When teachers and colleagues
Speak of your memories and of past events
And of your first crush and adolescence
And of your private sorrows and journal entries
When they speak of your life and of things you have not spoken of
When they speak of intimate moments
When they speak of dreams you have not yet shared
When they speak of fears you have not uttered
When they talk of disease
Lengthy descriptions of cancerous processes and medical procedures
Mostly during meals and lunch breaks until the taste of food is altered in your mouth
When friends and colleagues say you smell like chocolate
Don't go to great lengths to explain that actually the bath foam you used a couple of hours ago is strawberry flavor
Don't hide your discomfort
Don't swallow the disgust in silence
Don't be afraid to draw a protective circle around you
Don't deny what you know
Don't dismiss the knot in your stomach
Don't ignore the sinking of your heart
Don't push down the tears in your throat
Don't brush the irritation aside
Don't turn it into festering resentment and fear and disease

Don't smile off indecent interactions

Don't always be nice and polite and accommodating

Don't give an excuse others till you drop

Don't over-rationalize

Don't sugar coat

Don't become the surface of projections

Don't constantly mistrust your heart, your gut brain, your intuition

Don't believe all your thoughts; they're not all yours anyway

Don't abandon you one more time

Just ask the damn questions: Why and How come?

When things repeat themselves

When dynamics replicate themselves

When stories remind you of previous stories

When professional confidentiality is always broken

When others intrude and insist

When photos and papers go missing

When your presentation remains ungraded

When your papers end up in other people's files

When personal items disappear

When things are grabbed from you the last minute

When people wait outside school and factory gates or trail behind you

When things seem off

Trust that maybe they are

Trust your visceral reactions and your bodily sensations

Trust your desire to say NO

Trust your humanness and your right to be here, to birth and mother

And dare to ask those damn questions: Why and How come?

Even when you are not ready and adequately healed; integrated; awakened; informed; supported

Don't worry if the answers are fragmented and somewhat vague

Don't worry if so many pieces are missing

Don't worry if the bigger picture eludes you

Don't fear the broken heartedness that awaits you

Allow for the essence of the curious child you once were to very slowly arise from beneath all those layers

Open the cage door for the child to emerge

Give her permission to come out of hiding

And just keep asking and listening

Because maybe then you might be spared some of the injustices marching towards you that you cannot see amidst the pushing of your many buttons

Meticulously sewn on you one at a time over time

You would see the bloody traces of the needlework if you only looked close enough

Because maybe then you might be spared from the debilitating urgency to lash out like a wild emaciated creature trapped in a net fighting for your life and your pets' life and all that is you and all that you care for and all that you took for granted in a democracy

Because maybe then you might dampen the over-growth of your precious amygdala and prevent the depletion of energy

Because maybe then you might be spared the unnecessary surgery procedures and the accelerated health deterioration

Because maybe then you might spare yourself the trespassing, the robbing, the accidents, the lawsuits and the wasted money, the persecution, the denigration

If only you had asked those damn questions all along: Why and How come?

But maybe it was meant to be this way so that you could reach this place and be the one writing and speaking even if you have been told that your voice does not carry

Still here –asking the damn questions: Why and How come?

Finally, gifting your answers the space to timidly emerge, to form, to transform

(Tonya Alexandri, March 8th, 2019)