

Acceptance



I realize that I am defined by my relationships. I grew up as the youngest son of an Ohio engineer and father who ran his own manufacturing business and a homemaker, self-educated, and brilliant mother. They had five children, one of whom died at a very early age. My siblings and I were compelled to succeed in the world of this family business. However, all I wanted to do as a child was to be left alone to play in the deep wooded ravine behind our house.

I remember one day hovering on the landing above the kitchen, out of sight of my mother and older brother, and listening to him lecture her about how odd it was for me to



“live in the woods like an animal.” He felt I should be up-the-street at the ball field playing with other kids. Shamed, I resolved that day to “join” the others in their “play.”

Interestingly, I don’t think I have ever really perfected the “join” behavior. Though it has taken on many forms through the years, I find myself yearning for the moist earth, the running stream, and the quiet hush of the maples in the darkness of that ravine.

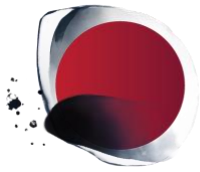
Two worlds then, in my story, perhaps illustrate the two sides of my self; the natural part that is happiest alone and close to the earth and the part that is still to this day, fashioning strategies to aid me in participating in the “world at play.”

Working with people every day has led me to a rather simple conclusion. Many of us have similar stories. **We have a life that is shadowed by a life forgotten or one that has yet to be lived.** And this separation causes a disturbance. It is the reason that so many of us lose our way. It is the source of our suffering.

My work is informed by this understanding - **when we are not whole, we suffer.** Consequently, I find myself working with people so that they can be whole in hopes that they will suffer less.

My studies of the evolution of a being into wholeness have centered around one fundamental question; *how do we become more empathically attuned to ourselves and to one another so that we can function as whole beings in whole relationships?*

On my first trip to India, I carried the remnants of this question with me. I wanted to find in the world and face within myself the things that I had difficulty accepting. I wanted to



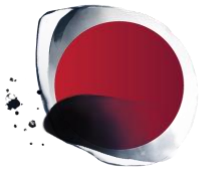
find out what kept me from being whole. Through grace I found myself in Varanasi (Benaras). It is said, if you wait long enough, all of India will pass through this town, for just to die here is a guarantee of a better incarnation.

Every day I was faced with the heat, the din of thousands of people's lives in the streets, the monkeys on the rooftops, the suffering of many, the joy and the beauty of more, and of course the dying. People come here to die and with a few coins sewn into their clothing, a modest contribution for the wood it takes to burn their bodies on the shore of the Ganges.

After three rigorous months of simply living life while undertaking a form of mindfulness practice which centers on sitting with the dead and the dying, I was ready to confront my most difficult challenge. **Before I could leave and return home there was one man I needed to face.**

He was brought in a cart every morning to the top of the stairs that led to this sacred river and left for the day. His skin a burnished ebony, he had a black well-manicured beard, a turban to protect against the sun and was naked but for a patch of cloth about his waist. He sit on a piece of burlap. His legs were amputated above the knee and his only arm was a stump of maybe six inches from which hangs a pail for collecting alms. I observe him every day sitting in this position from early morning to dusk, but only from the back. I fear looking into his eyes. **I fear his suffering.**

On this final day, I circle around to the bottom of the hundreds of steps below him and make my way to the top, lifting my head to face his suffering. As I approach the top of the stairs I look into his eyes and see the kind and gentle mirrors of compassion. Looking



into me and embracing my suffering are the eyes of a man at peace, a man who sees me and accepts my pain.

I am humbled and to this day grateful, for his gift. Despite our perceived differences, we are really one. His suffering did not prevent his receiving me into his wholeness. I hope to offer people the same gift; to provide a place and a moment where they can receive what I was given; acceptance. —Timothy P. Dukes

Image courtesy of: [Matteo Giovanardi @giova86](#)

The Tim Dukes Method provides an opportunity for self-reflective individuals to cultivate the capacity to receive into consciousness hidden aspects of the self, claiming your unique gifts – ensuring that today's brilliance successfully transitions into tomorrow's wisdom. The Tim Dukes Method is designed and implemented by Dr. Timothy Dukes for determined creatives to ensure long-term viability — as a continuing investment in the well-being of yourself, family, organizations, culture, society, and the Earth itself.