

Hi, I'm Andrew Lardie, and I work in the McKeen Center and I wanted to share with you a passage from this book, "Becoming Wise: An Inquiry into the Mystery and Art of Living." The author is Krista Tippett. She hosts a radio show, which is also a podcast. And on the show, she interviews people from all walks of life--scientists, artists, entrepreneurs, activists, clergymen, politicians, to hear what insights there are from each discipline on the question of what it means to be human and how to make it work. In the book, she weaves a bunch of these great conversations into a sort of coherent whole.

And I really recommend, especially, the audio book, because there all the interview excerpts are in their original recorded form with the voices of her conversation partners. And one section that speaks to me is with Sister Simone Campbell. And here is a little background on Sister Simone.

She became known as a face of the Nuns on the Bus, "a road trip" in 2012 that brought all kinds of people onto the streets to welcome these sisters and listen to them and be listened to by them. If she must be categorized, she is definitely on the progressive side of the American political border, but she's an outside the box political and spiritual animal. More like the rest of us--as I want to continue to insist--than the neatly categorized all-answers-no-questions remaining voices who steal the air from our civic room. She's a Catholic sister, a lawyer, a lobbyist with a serious Zen practice. Her political passion started with the Civil Rights Movement and there's some more details.

But I want to go to this passage of Sister Simone herself speaking, and here she's explaining her own rhetoric of working for policies that benefit not the 99%, but the 100%, as she says, and there's also a little sidebar on goofing off.

Talking about Occupy Wall Street set it up for me to be able to say the 100%. We were doing business round tables and I got this chance to talk with some entrepreneur CEO-types. I got to ask them finally this question that I've been really wondering about. A report had just come out that the average CEO of a publicly traded company got \$10 million a year in salary, and they were going for \$11 million. I got to ask them, is it that you're not getting by on the \$10 million so that you need \$11 million? I don't get it. And this one guy said, just like this, "Oh no, Sister Simone. That's not it. It's not about the money," he said. "It's that we're very competitive and we want to win. And money just happens to be the current measure of winning." Then I think, "well, could we have a measure that's a little less toxic?" Because that's it. It's not that they want to hoard this money. They want to win. And if we can understand for the common good what is underlying the desire, then we could find some other measures that would free up money. Having the curiosity to see their perspective allows for finding new solutions.

Because if we just fight and resist--this is the other piece about contemplative life--if we just fight against something, it reinforces it. Now, the other piece that I haven't really talked about is joy. I goof off a lot. Joy is at the heart of this journey. Too often, progressives are really grim and it's not a very good advertisement. "Come join us. We're miserable!" The amazing wonder is that we get to live this life in relationship. We live in a hugely complex, multicultural setting, which is not shared in very many places in our world.

There are tremendous possibilities, so the giving, the finding your niche, is about life-giving and enjoying the life that is given to you and to others in the process.

And then Tippett sums it up, sort of processes the passage.

The humanizing balance that Sister Simone describes and embodies between contemplation and activity, between passion and curiosity, hard work and having fun, adds color and complexity to the notion of agape, practical love, public love. Deep listening is a virtue that anchors every kind of love relationship.

And it is the compass Sister Simone cites again and again, as a creative open-hearted anchor to her life of strong passions and advocacy. She offers these lines of self-appraisal on whether one is being true to deep listening in any situation. Am I responding in generosity? Am I responding in selfishness? Am I responding in a way that builds up people around me? That builds me up? That is respectful of who I am? Such questions are tools to start walking willingly towards the more exacting question of what would it mean, day to day, year to year, to become the beloved community and how, concretely, to begin?

Thanks for watching.

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