

## MAKING SPACE

<sup>23</sup>Then he said to them all: “If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. <sup>24</sup>For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will save it. <sup>25</sup>What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, and yet lose or forfeit his very self? **Luke 9:23-25**

My mind through the power of the truth was in a good degree weaned from the outward desire of outward greatness, and I was learning to be content with real conveniences that were not costly, so that a way of life free from much entanglement appeared best for me, though the income was small. I had several offers of business that appeared profitable, but I did not see my way clear to accept them, believing the business proposed would be attended with more outward care and cumber than was required of me to engage in. I saw that the humble man with the blessing of the Lord might live on a little, and that where the heart was set on greatness, success in business did not satisfy the craving, but that in common with an increase of wealth the desire of wealth increased. There was a care on my mind to so pass my time as to things outward that nothing might hinder me from the most steady attention to the voice of the True shepherd. *John Woolman Excerpts from his Journal 1720-1772*

<sup>25</sup>Jesus called them together and said, “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. <sup>26</sup>Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, <sup>27</sup>and whoever wants to be first must be your slave—<sup>28</sup>just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.” **Matthew 20:25-28 (NIV)**

Looking at hospitality as the creation of a free space where we can reach out to strangers and invite them to become our friends, it is clear that this can take place at many levels and in many relationships. Although the word stranger suggests someone who belongs to another world than ours, speaks another language and has different customs, it is important, first of all, to recognize the stranger in our own familiar circle. When we are able to be good hosts for the strangers in our midst we may find also ways to expand our hospitality to broader horizons.

*Henri Nouwen Reaching Out*

<sup>2</sup>He told them, “The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field. Go! I am sending you out like lambs among wolves. <sup>4</sup>Do not take a purse or bag or sandals; and do not greet anyone on the road. <sup>5</sup>“When you enter a house, first say, ‘Peace to this house.’ <sup>6</sup>If a man of peace is there, your peace will rest on him; if not, it will return to you. <sup>7</sup>Stay in that house, eating and drinking whatever they give you, for the worker deserves his wages. Do not move around from house to house. <sup>8</sup>“When you enter a town and are welcomed, eat what is set before you. <sup>9</sup>Heal the sick who are there and tell them, ‘The kingdom of God is near you.’ **Luke 10:2-9**

As healers we have to receive the story of our fellow human beings with a compassionate heart, a heart that does not judge or condemn but recognizes how the strangers’ story connects with our own. We have to offer safe boundaries within which the often painful past can be revealed and the search for a new life can find a start.

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Our most important question as healers is not, “What to say or to do?” but, “How to develop enough inner space where the story can be received?” Healing is the humble but also very demanding task of creating and offering a friendly empty space where strangers can reflect on their own pain and suffering without fear, and find the confidence that makes them look for new ways right in the center of their confusion.

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