

The Human Experience

Mark Porteous

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When I was a young boy, my father was an evangelical minister. After my parents divorced, he lost his position with the church. He spent the next several years searching for something in which to believe. He is five years older than my mother. She was sixteen when they married, and she was twenty-eight when they divorced. At the time, she had three children, a strong faith in God, and very little faith in herself. The split left my mom feeling unappreciated and my father in spiritual doubt. These circumstances set the stage for my own personal search. I wanted the appreciation my mother felt she was lacking. I also began my own quest for spiritual truth. I questioned Christianity. It was the only religion I knew until my teens. I had many questions and doubts. When I was twenty-one, I was introduced to Beverly, owner of The Spiral Circle bookstore in Orlando, Florida. Her presence was peaceful and calming. I felt strangely at home. I knew I was in a good place where people wanted to help others on their own spiritual journey. It was the first time I remember hearing the term metaphysics, meaning "beyond the physical." Beverly handed me a book—The Vision by Tom Brown Jr. She said she felt that I should read it. I explained that I was just looking. It was my girlfriend who was looking to buy. I was too embarrassed to tell her I did not have money to buy the book. She asked me to take it. If I liked it, I could pay her later. If not, I could bring it back. I was shocked. This was a bookstore, not a library. She did not even know me. How could she afford to take such a risk? Perhaps she saw something in me that I had not yet seen myself. I had a burning desire for spiritual awakening. She ignited a fire that had been smoldering within me. Not only did I go back to pay for the book, but I purchased The Quest, another book by Tom Brown Jr. What I was reading rang true in my core. Ideas I had never been exposed to felt like what I already knew in my heart. Although I had never really enjoyed reading before, I began to read more and more. Book after book revealed answers to the questions I had been asking since childhood. After meeting Beverly, I began to notice I met just the right people at just the right time to guide me along my chosen path. Now I realize I have something to offer every person who crosses my path, just as they have something to offer me.

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