

~~~ *The Story Of The Lost Expedition (part two)* ~~~

1) *The 1st shift in The Story Of The Lost Expedition*

- Now as you already know the Story of The Lost Expedition isn't static, it's a sentient story. And because this is so when the members of the *Expedition of '86* joined in with the story and **acted as if they believed** it was true, the story that they were now a part of evolved and grew, responding to them in an intimate way.

- During the *Expedition of '86* two of the participants experienced an unexpected shift in their consciousness as they followed the trail of The Lost Expedition. Each place they came to was oddly familiar. Each of the objects The Lost Expedition had left behind was personally strong. Each story they heard of the things that had happened was an echo of something they already knew. It felt just exactly like *deja vu*, only completely different - something else entirely. It was very strange, it was almost like being in two different places simultaneously, in two different times simultaneously too. The feeling just grew and grew until suddenly, all in a moment, they realized: all throughout the entire expedition they'd actually been following their own trail through the *Territory* without even knowing! They both had been members of The Lost Expedition themselves! It was very shocking! How could they have possibly forgotten something so essential as that!

- The entire story of The Lost Expedition had to be re-examined in light of this new development. There were many new questions and very few answers. Had all of other members of The Lost Expedition already returned to the everyday world? And if they had, had they too forgotten who they once were and what they had done? Over the next few years there was much discussion and many further expeditions to find out more. Much was learned as our relationship with the Story Of The Lost Expedition matured.

- Eventually a second version of the story became known. It wasn't that the earlier version was wrong in any way. But this newer version was far more complete and gave access to a deeper level that hadn't been available before. As it turned out, the first version of the story wasn't the beginning of the story at all. Everything had actually started a very long time before that...

2) *The 2nd (revised) version of the Story Of The Lost Expedition*

- Once upon a time a long time ago, a group of explorers discovered another landscape that existed outside of the everyday world. They called this new landscape the *Territory*

- They mounted numerous expeditions to find out more about what the *Territory* was like and to follow up on the opportunities it presented for changing their level of consciousness

- They found that the *Territory* was quite unlike anything they had experienced before. It was a much more intimate landscape with deeper levels of connection than were accessible to them in the everyday world.

- They also found that the *Territory* landscape was not separate from the everyday world. They noticed that when they were in the *Territory*, they were also aware of the landscape of the everyday world as well. They found they were able to enjoy a consciousness of both of these landscapes simultaneously. This didn't hold true the other way around. When they were in the everyday world they found it impossible to catch even a glimpse of the *Territory*.

- At first the group found it difficult to stay in the *Territory* for very long. Even worse, when they returned again to the everyday world, they sometimes forgot all about the *Territory*.

- Despite the numerous difficulties they kept going back again. But because they hadn't yet found a place where they could stay for an extended time, each expedition invariably ended with them slipping back to the everyday world.

- Luckily one day when they were on an expedition they came upon the *Territory Orphanage*. The orphans living there welcomed them in and urged them to stay for as long as they liked. So whenever they visited the *Territory* after that the *Orphanage* became their reliable base.
- For many years the group was content to stay in the *Orphanage*. But after a while they knew that they'd have to search farther afield to find a more permanent home.
- As they continued to explore the *Territory* they found it was mostly covered with water. And they realized that if they wanted to discover where their own true home might be, they'd have to sail across vast oceans and investigate many a lesser sea. So they built *Territory* boats to navigate the watery landscape.
- They sailed about for a fairly long time without much success, until one day they came upon a rather small and unassuming island far away from the mainland shore. It was not on any map they had seen, it was completely unknown and uninhabited.
- A primal forest covered the island, it grew unchecked every which way it could except for a small, well-kept clearing at the very centre. Eleven tall impressive trees were spaced around the edge of the clearing in a stately ring. There had certainly been one more originally - but the twelfth tree that once had completed the circle was no longer there. All that was left where it once had been was the charred remains of a stump.
- Behind the circle of stately trees they found a circle of nineteen large stones. Some of the stones were hard to see, they were hidden amongst the undergrowth, covered in moss and often half buried beneath the dirt and debris. Sometimes just the very top was all that could be seen, but there they were, no doubt about it - behind and beyond the circle of trees was a ring of stones like an ancient shadow a bit further on in the primal woods. And behind the stump they found a large hole where another stone had certainly been a very long time ago.
- This island was where the group decided to finally make their new home. And the clearing at the centre was where they met together as a group. They put out twelve seats to make their circle - eleven were placed in front of each tree that grew at the edge of the clearing; the twelfth was set out in front of the stump. This twelfth seat of their circle was always kept empty in much the same way that the stump made an empty space in the circle of trees.
- It took a great deal of effort for each member of the group to find and develop their own personal work. It was even harder to find what the work of the group-as-a-whole could be.
- But bit by bit they made new discoveries; little by little their confidence grew. As the work of the group began to emerge it was not derived from any one seat but only arose when members of the group combined their individual skills together.
- The group decided to call themselves *The Open Circle*, partly because of the empty seat, but also because the work of the group had an open, inclusive quality
- They discovered new skills through their interactions with other members on other seats. Old skills that they had always known were refined and extended in much the same way.
- As the skills and clarity of the group emerged, they began to notice that they weren't alone as they worked together. Their circle of seats was connected to the circle of trees at the edge of the clearing.
- Gradually they began to see that the trees that grew behind each seat were more than just trees - each of the trees had a larger whole shape that could not be seen so easily. As time went by they realized that the trees they saw were only just the smallest bits of something else that was poking through to the *Territory* from some other place entirely far away somewhere else - coming through from another landscape that was completely outside the *Territory* in much the same way that the *Territory* was outside of the everyday world. Eventually the circle of trees became known to them as *The Empty Circle*.
- The members of *The Open Circle* began to realize that *The Empty Circle* was a group of individual sentient beings that sat in a circle of twelve seats too, one of which was always empty.

- As time went by the relationship between the two circles grew. *The Open Circle* discovered that *The Empty Circle* was deeply involved in a far-reaching work. It was hard to understand just what that work was, but it was rooted in the home landscape of *The Empty Circle* and extended through to the *Territory* and into the everyday world as well.
- The members of *The Open Circle* felt a strong and compelling desire to join in and be part of that work. Soon the two circles were working together. And as they worked the members of *The Open Circle* realized that they had been called to come to this clearing by *The Empty Circle* for just this purpose. All the skills that *The Open Circle* were developing together were essential to the eventual success of the work *The Empty Circle* pursued.
- After much time and unceasing effort a critical point was finally reached. One last important element was needed to shift the shape of the work and move the entire collaborative effort to a whole new stage of development. The only thing was: the necessary element they lacked was located in the everyday world.
- *The Empty Circle* can't move between the *Territory* and the everyday world. Although they have a great deal of influence in both of these landscapes, they're not able to physically act in the everyday world on their own. So it was up to *The Open Circle* to return again to the everyday world, to find the missing element there and return with it to their circle.
- Though it wasn't easy for the members of *The Open Circle* to leave their new home in the *Territory*, the work that they were pursuing together with *The Empty Circle* was too important to be left undone. So they all agreed unanimously to willingly take on the task.
- They gathered up all their personal tools and packed them away in a secret archive so everything would be ready to use when they returned to their circle again. Then finally with a heavy heart they left the island and traveled the path that led away through the *Territory* and back to the everyday world.
- It was a long and personally arduous trip for each of the members of *The Open Circle*. They sailed across vast *Territory* seas, they walked across islands, they climbed the high hills and crossed through low valleys, they visited all the places they'd been throughout the *Territory*. They had a last meal at the Boaters Café; they stayed for a night in the Dangerous Ghost Hostel; they spent some time one afternoon with the Hungry Ghosts; and they passed through The Happy Ghost House as well. They spent the last night in the *Orphanage* before making their way to the border. When they arrived they stopped for a moment and took one final long last look at the *Territory* they were leaving behind. Then they turned and went through the border and back to the everyday world again.
- But as soon as they entered the everyday world, they forgot all about *The Empty Circle* and the work that they shared, they forgot all about their own circle of seats; they forgot that they were a group at all; they forgot all about their own personal skills; they even forgot their own true selves. Their forgetting was far more complete than any they'd ever experienced before. Perhaps this was because they'd stayed away from the everyday world for such a long time. Perhaps it was a necessary part of the task they had taken on. Whatever the reason, they all wandered off through the everyday world, alone and apart without any knowledge of themselves or their circle. And this is why they came to be called The Lost Expedition.
- But as it turned out they were not so all alone after all. The circle of seats that they'd left behind still remembered them. The circle of trees on the edge of the clearing watched as they wandered throughout the everyday world. And from time to time the trees called to them to come back again to their own true home.
- And so it is and remains so today. The members of The Lost Expedition continue to wander here and there throughout the everyday world. But one by one, from time to time, they each hear the call of *The Empty Circle* and feel a deep and compelling longing to return again to their circle of seats.
- And this is the time when The Lost Expedition begins to remember about how they sat in their circle of seats and worked with *The Empty Circle*. They all will hear the story of The Lost Expedition, and one by one they will find their way back to their own true selves and their seats in *The Open Circle*.

- So as it turns out, the 1st version of the story is not the beginning of the story but rather a continuation of the 2nd version of the story and is all about how the members of *The Lost Expedition* begin to remember themselves and find their way back to *The Open Circle* again.

3) **Remembering**

- Remembering is one of the important new things that arose from this second version of the story of *The Lost Expedition*.
- In the everyday world it's all about learning, we're usually told what we need to know by someone else. But with remembering it's not a question of learning something new. You may need to have a reminder or two, but essentially it's something you do on your own. You're recalling something you already know in much the same way as Buddhism talks about regaining the knowledge of your own true nature.
- There's an emotional component to remembering this way, a longing that sets it apart from an intellectual understanding, an urge to merge with what you yearn for.
- There are many levels to this self-remembering. For instance: on a moral/ethical level it encourages us to treat anyone we meet as if they might be a member of *The Open Circle*.
- Remembering yourself is not comfortable; you will undoubtedly find yourself resisting it. This might be because it's hard to revisit the trauma of such a complete forgetting.

4) **The Empty Circle**

- *The Empty Circle* is another circle of twelve seats (one of which is always empty) that is connected to *The Open Circle* through their mutually empty seats.
- *The Empty Circle* is not located anywhere in the landscape of the everyday world. *The Empty Circle* is not situated anywhere in the *Territory* either. Where is it then?
- *The Empty Circle* can contact and interact with *The Open Circle* (when the members of *The Open Circle* remember them and listen).
- Members of *The Open Circle* can also contact and interact with *The Empty Circle* whenever the need arises for them.
- If you **act as if you believe** in *The Empty Circle* you will see how to see them and be able to have a relationship with them
- *The Empty Circle* is not able to physically act in the everyday world themselves (though it can interact with other sentient beings who are receptive to their input)
- *The Empty Circle* is helping the members of *The Lost Expedition* remember themselves and return to their seats in *The Open Circle*. Why would they want to do this?
- *The Empty Circle* and *The Open Circle* are involved in a collaborative work together.
- *The Empty Circle* needs *The Open Circle* to remember the work they share. They need *The Open Circle* to do the part of the work that involves the everyday world.
- The members of *The Open Circle* are returning to their circle of seats with the last important element needed to carry out of the joint work the two circles share. Each returning member of *The Open Circle* is carrying one aspect of this last important element. However, they have forgotten what they are carrying with them, don't know how to access it and don't remember how to recombine the various aspects. *The Empty Circle* will be instrumental in helping them finally finish their task.

~~~~~ **End of Part Two** ~~~~~