



Form for a Contemplative Journey

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I remember the first time I saw an ammonite fossil. Its spiral ridges immediately captivated me. Hunting for fossils in the rock piles where I grew up was a favorite pastime. At some point, I progressed from seeking fossilized shells to wandering beaches looking for more recent versions with spiral shapes. Each one I found unique, yet similar in its graceful curves.

The spiral is utterly elegant and simple at the same time. It has always drawn me in as though there is an inner resonance to which I cannot help but respond. In its simplicity there seems to be a complexity at the same time; a dichotomy worth exploring. The spiral can be found throughout nature; unfurling ferns, vine tendrils reaching, bowing grass blades, flower buds opening, twisting cedar branches, arching constellations and our own inner ear. We humans imitate nature bringing this pleasing shape to bear in buildings, pathways and gardens. The mathematical proportions of the golden spiral are expressed architecture and find their way into our daily living. The spiral drawn based on the Fibonacci sequence is the most recognized visual of this golden spiral.

The beauty of this simple shape stuns me. I take my finger and follow the outline. As the line expands so does the space between and I ponder the relationship; so simple a form, so much space within - expanding spaciousness. As my eye follows my tracing I feel this expansiveness. It wells up inside of me; a joyful surge in response to the elegance I witness. This spaciousness has openness, yet depth and form at the same time. What in this simple shape elicits these feelings and ponderings? What is this deep at

traction and resonance? Why does nature rampantly flaunt and dance in this design – from tiny seashells to galaxies?

My life seems to imitate this pattern, unfolding from a central point outward. Over and over again, I seem to pass a similar point, looking at it from a different dimension with a different perspective. I continually come back to the same point seeing a deeper truth within. Seemingly my life will move on this way endlessly until I am gone. Each turn of the spiral takes me somewhere different, new and yet perhaps old; as old as the fossilized shell that captured my imagination. Again the dichotomy – at the same point once again, yet it is different.

Some would say this is a spiritual path, this ever-increasing spiral of awareness. Awareness of true self, of an inner life, an inner experience and connection. Perhaps with luck and fortitude, this journey follows with an outer expression of the inner attentiveness. The outward express becoming a mirror of inward awareness. This simple shape symbolically draws me forward, keeps me opening, growing, experiencing. At the same time it keeps me anchored; solid in a place deep inside myself - a dichotomy of anchored openness.

For me, a simple spiral elegantly offers form for a contemplative journey; a journey that will take me a lifetime to unfold. €