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Anam Cara Making sense of life

By Tony Cuckson

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In Corroogue this Anam Cara or Soul Friend is coming to his senses.

This morning it is a wet and windy Sunday morning. Each Sunday morning is an extended morning of rest. It is a morning of practice. I practice slowly coming to my senses. It is a morning in which I practice deep caring for the body and the soul. This is a practice of awareness of the sensationalism of life moment to moment.

We are beings of the senses.

We make sense of our world via the senses. The senses are gateways. They keep us locked into a certain reality but they can be the medium of freedom from the limitation we call "our life." For too long religion has labelled the senses as something "not quite nice." For too long we have separated our senses as being something "not spiritual." Many of our religions have done the same with the sensational experience we call sex.

As an Aman Cara I teach spirituality of the senses. I teach what Van Morrison calls "A sense of wonder." An Anam Cara teaches you to honour the sensuality and grace of the body. They teach you to honour this grace by letting go "disgrace that is inherent in our social conditioning. Our nature is the nature of grace and not the illusion of disgrace. Our nature is the nature of beauty.

Coming to our senses is what I call, "The feeling way."

Being attentive to the senses allows life to be felt as sensational. We tend to see that which is sensational as being outside ourselves. We gather more and more sensational images in our newspapers, on our televisions and from other media forms. We ourselves do not enter the sensational. Thus we lock ourselves out of heaven. This heaven is this wonder called "life" in the eternal now.

We do not enter the sensational realisation that we are the "flow of life."

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We have become non-sensible people. We have become cerebral people. We try to "make sense." We do not attune ourselves to being "able to sense." This is not surprising. As children we felt sensational. We knew in ways we have forgotten.

We knew what we liked and did not like. We just did not have the words to explain. This was until we were told that trusting our senses was "not nice." It could mean that you told the truth and God help us someone might then be offended. You might have known that Joe Bloggs was not safe to be around but you overrode this fact by being told that you were not "being nice."

Thus your sensational body and its wondrous intelligence were swapped for the experience of "niceness in all things." You took the first steps away from trusting your "inner telling sense." For most

of us the experience of trusting ourselves was downhill from there on in.

An Anam Cara encourages you to return to the wisdom of the body and the senses. This is the whole body and not just from the neck up. The Anam Cara values your sensitivity. They value trust in your sensitivity. The senses take you into a deeper appreciation of beauty than any cerebral description. The senses take you into the place of the now. This is the only time you have to be alive. This is the only place where you can have the time of your life.

Developing sensitivity means trusting the wisdom of the senses.

It means trusting the wisdom of the body. It means trusting your inner knowing. This is your intuition and your inner teaching. It requires the ability to feel the feelings that flow in, or are blocked in, the body. These are all feelings. Thus you begin to perceive life in the body and not life in the head. Your body becomes a vehicle for seeing the real life beyond "thinking about" your life.

Coming to your senses makes you more sensible.

This is not sensible in a cerebral sense. This is the less used bodily wisdom we call the "ability to sense." When you are more able to allow your body to sense you make clearer decisions. You are not so threatened. You have no need to constantly rationalise your choices.

When you begin to come to your senses you may in many ways appear rude. This is only at the beginning. You are changing the vibrational rate of your body. You are becoming more refined. You are becoming more holistic and holy. You are becoming an individual with your own sense of who you are.

As you come to your senses you begin to drop what is no longer needed.

You may drop toxic relationships. You will begin to avoid toxic people even if to do so may make you appear not "a nice person." Let me tell you that you will survive such a judgement. Just stay with this. Coming to your senses gives you a sense of your own authority.

When you begin coming to your senses you allow others the opportunity to come to their senses. They

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are toxic because they are separate from love. Coming to your senses allows them to sense the perfume of wisdom. This is the sense of knowing who they are and knowing that they belong here as a Divine being. Is this not a gift worth spending time to discover and sharing with others?

Coming to your senses means you learn to avoid senseless action.

Much of the action we engage with is designed to make us senseless. We turn up switch off and switch on the television. We zone out and we call this re-creation and renewal. Over a period we shut down our senses and we need greater sensationalism in order to get the same fix. More powerful images of violence and unhappiness are required to penetrate our defences. We become people of the part and people apart. We become what my teacher Osho calls "logic choppers. We rationalize our lives. We forget who we are and do not wake up to this miraculous gift of life.

Thus we miss beauty.

Beauty is sensational. Our inner beauty is sensational. It has been covered in the dust of judgment and

unacceptability ever since we were small children. Beauty is expressed from the inner to the outer. While outer beauty is a delight it will diminish in time. Inner beauty is the essence of love that lives within the timeless. Learning to know and be this can be one of our greatest gifts in growing older.

We have to start now.

We are becoming more deeply separate from what is elemental. We are becoming more separate from our essentialness. It is time to return to the wisdom of the body. It is time to return to the senses and the sensational inner awareness of "what is." Then you may glimpse what it is to go beyond the senses to the timeless wonder of now.

This winter do not fight tiredness in the body.

Take more rest. Go to bed earlier. We often think we should go to sleep at set times. We forget we are embodiments of energy subject to the rhythms of the seasons. Most of the life force on this Northern hemisphere is now deeply asleep. This energy will begin to awaken in its own time. All life will begin to open to the coming of the light.

This week I wish you a sensational, sensible and sensuous experience of being in your body now.

Remember to breathe in and breathe out. Remember too that the blessing is already here. You are it. All you have to do is become sensitive to your own sense of wonder. For a time this week give up "logic" for the "illogical" and the sensational. After adequate rest in the body wake up and expect the miraculous.

Love and blessings to you all.

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Anamchara – 7 ways to Soul Friendship

By Tony Cuckson

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This article shares with you the seven Blessings of the Celtic idea of Anamchara meaning "Soul Friend."

In Corroogue it is frosty.

The ramp into our "acre of diamonds" is now firm underfoot where before it was a sea of mud. Murphy our dog runs excitedly by my side. We are on our way to release the chickens from the coop. They are to be fed porridge oats in milk.

Murphy has become an honorary chicken. He has been self-appointed. He now eats with the hens and cockerels as I give them their long awaited breakfast. They are now together, dog and birds, loving this life that is secure and satisfying for them.

I am becoming clearer. I am becoming more integrated and more know of the flow of this life. I am become a soul friend. I am becoming what is known in the Celtic tradition an Anam Cara. This translates as Anam meaning "soul" and Cara meaning "friend."

Like our beautiful dog Murphy I am busy rounding up different aspects of my less integrated self. These are pieces that are like different chickens within a roost. I gently bring them together in love and acceptance. I imagine myself sitting atop a chicken coop with my chicken friends and we would debate various life questions.

We might ask "What does it mean to be a seeker after soul." We would squawk about our inner life. We would peck at the question "is the unexamined life worth living?" We would joke about what happened when the chicken crossed the road. More seriously we would scratch in the earth to query that existential question, "What came first – the chicken or the egg?"

One of our favourite hens (and I have to acknowledge I do have favourites) is Boddica. She is fearless. She would be the hen to ask fierce questions. She is the hen equivalent of a soul friend. She probes your knowing and understanding of who you really are. She might ask, "What does an Anam Cara do?"

In answer to Bodica's question I would humbly reply thus.

An Anam Cara loves your essence.

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They see you beyond your mask. This is the mask of persona. This is what you call personality. They see beyond the fear. They see the absence of love. This is love you withdraw from others and yourself. This is the love that is your real power. This does not mean they have to like YOU. You are the one that gets in the way of soul. Your soul is the light of love and it needs light. It needs the lightness of being. An Anam Cara will remind you simply "to be."

An Anam Cara lives close to the land.

They might be found roosting with chickens. They love the elements of fire, water, earth and air. They are elemental beings although they are more down to earth than mental. Some might consider they exhibit opposite traits. They love sensuality and sexuality. They love the play of Eros. This takes them on the wing. An Anam Cara will remind you to come to your senses and be sensational.

An Anam Cara guides you to the presence you are.

They are people of the silence. They listen. They do not debate. They do not fill you up with knowledge. They transmit the knowing of love. They touch you with beauty. This is not their beauty but the beauty of the Beloved. They move in the world as nobodies of import. They do not puff up your ego. They may build your ego up. They do so in order that you can disappear. This is in order that you can fly the coop. This is so you can enter the joy of leaving the prison house of never being enough.

An Anam Cara reminds you of what is important.

They guide you to knowing who you are. They take you into what are called in Ireland "thin places." They take you to the edge. They coax you to the edge. When you are trusting enough they push you. They know this is the only way for you to learn to fly. They know you are an eagle that was brought up in a society of chickens. The Anam Cara will take you soaring. The very air that will take you higher is learning trust and faith in your essential goodness.

An Anam Cara takes you to the source. You will be taken beyond time and space to the very source of your being. This will be done using different techniques depending on which Anam Cara you talk with. There will be techniques to take you out of the constant chatter of the coop into the light heartedness of life beyond the chicken wire.

These techniques take you into ease and allow you to give up dis-ease.

An Anam Cara will affirm YOU.

You will be told that YOU are forever enough. This is because the Anam Cara knows that you are forever enough. They have seen beyond the limitation of the ego. They know the prison house of the little self. They know you hold the key to liberation. Only they might tell you that the door is always open. It was and never will be shut to you. They have trust that "all is well and all manner of things shall be well."

An Anam Cara does really care.

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They know you are always held in the hand of the Beloved. They are not here to do anything for or to you. They are only there to facilitate your discovery that you are always enough. They know that what you need is not more of anything but a great big helping of "no thing." This gives your soul true rest. This is where you give up trying to live life and become life abundant. You become the flow of the essential. Nothing matters because it all matters. Ultimately they take you to love of soul.

So this is how I would answer my Anam Cara soul hen.

Would she be satisfied? I am not sure. I know she would think I have avoided the real question. "What comes first? - the chicken or the egg." I compensate by tenderly gathering her up in my arms. I stroke

her beautiful chicken head. I tell her, "I love you." I tell her, "You are a forever enough hen." She goes off and lays another golden egg.

I leave the coop. I leave this Chicken Coop for the Soul and return up the ramp to our cottage. I am gathered in. I leave Murphy to debate the rudiments of flying. He is on the edge. He is excited. One day soon he too hopes to fly. The question is, "Which soul hen will do the pushing."

Blessings upon you and those you love and do not love.

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