

**ANOTHER
NAME
FOR EVERY
THING**

with

RICHARD ROHR

Season 5, Episode 4
The Story of The Cosmic Egg

Brie Stoner: So, on this episode of Another Name for Every Thing, here we are, Season 5, rounding toward the end, the farewell. We had a conversation about the third and final rung of this cosmic egg that Richard likes to teach. Today we talked about The Story, but Paul, one of the things that I found so precious, tender, and moving is that you and I both had experiences this week that left us in this very tenderhearted, vulnerable place. And maybe because of that, we were able to have a conversation about The Story that was through the lens of love; it wasn't up here in the mind. We weren't talking at it like a map maker. We were talking about it from the heart, and it was so special to be able to be in that space together.

Paul Swanson: Amen. It almost feels like there's potential that listeners could hear our beating hearts through this episode because we were both holding kind of our own spaces of tenderness and allowing that to be a place that we can sit with and also do this kind of work from a place of tenderness and vulnerability.

Brie Stoner: Mm-hmm (affirmative). And even Richard was dropping into that heart-centered space with us. And you said something beautiful. What was it that you just said? You said it was like the way he was teaching.

Paul Swanson: Yeah, I was thinking it's like he was speaking from this place of his mystical heart, and it was like the right posture was allowing the point through of right teaching. And I think that that really resonates as we dive into the depths of what we've been calling The Story or the patterns that we see happening everywhere. You know, we talked about Black Elk, and Einstein, and art, and creativity, and becoming, and process theology. Like, I can't even wrap my head around all the areas that Richard touched on, that we covered as these very inspirational points of what does it mean to unfold? What does it mean to become in this human life?

Brie Stoner: Yeah. And the radical humility that these different perspectives can offer us if we are all becoming, if the story isn't finished, if the My is nested in a healthy Our, that's nested in something greater that keeps it all in check. Then it's like, man, this adventure of becoming is no longer something we need to brace against with fear, and frustration, and reactivity, but rather something we can surrender into with creativity, with hope, with love, and awe, and wonder, you know? I mean that's some good news.

Paul Swanson: Yeah. And to put those words together, too, it just really enlivens me. Like, we're surrendering to the adventure of our life...

Brie Stoner: Yeah.

Paul Swanson: ...and like that just, you know, sign me up. And I know it takes courage and there are edges that I'll meet in harshness, but this is the juice. This is the life of full participation in God.

Brie Stoner: [music] Yeah. I cannot think of a better way to wrap up the cosmic egg than with this message of the adventure of our becoming. So, with that, we hope that you'll enjoy and sink in deeply to this episode of Another Name for Every Thing.

Paul Swanson: So, welcome back everyone to Another Name for Every Thing. It's been a great journey so far as we've gone through the overview of what the cosmic egg of meaning is. We dove into My Story and Our Story. And here we are with the outer layer of the nested egg of The Story.

And, Richard, I was thinking as a way to begin that we could, you know, My Story and Our Story are so personal. I wonder if it would be helpful to depersonalize The Story? You know, I think about how My Story and Our Story are such personal and cultural perspectives. They can create a very, very tight container. Well, The Story being something that are the patterns that are always true. Its essence is palpable but more effusive like an ecosystem to me. How can one embrace this cosmic egg while not claiming personal authority over its contents?

Richard Rohr: Wow. That shows real working with the material. Yeah. I think a person who has not done at least the beginnings of significant ego work to decenter themselves will have no understanding, or no patience, or no searching for The Story because they can't imagine it. Every story starts with them and really ends with them or at least with their group. And yet, I'm going to speak on the opposite side now quoting Teilhard. Teilhard says the most personal is the most universal. So, if you go all the way through, which I don't think a large percentage do, you know, it's personality but not true-self person and so they get trapped on the level of personality. But if you go all the way through to true self, you start hitting upon the universal, The Story. And that's why [St.] Augustine and [St.] Teresa both say, you know, the soul, the human soul is the perfect container for God, which is quite an amazing statement.

And why I say that is because a large percentage of religious people have still localized the agency in an external way with no inner concomitant or participant. They haven't achieved unitive consciousness between the soul and the universal truth. It both decenters my personality, and its wounds, and it's whatever, and absolutely centers it. And I know that sounds like gobbledygook, but it does. I know my own dignity. I own my own power, know my own power, but I know it doesn't matter at all. Can I say both of those?

Brie Stoner: Yeah. It's such a helpful way to think because, you know, I resonate deeply with your distinction between personality and personhood. And I've heard Cynthia say personhood is one through whom the whole resounds. And so there, I think, okay, now I can kind of make sense out of what the healthy mind is. You know, so long as the whole is resounding through the instrument of my life and My Story, so that I'm not centering my experience as The Experience, but rather I'm allowing the bigger cosmic meaning, this bigger participatory, unfolding story to manifest in my unfolding story. There there's humility, there's courage, there's participation, but it's not egocentric.

Richard Rohr: Excellent. You understand well, and I have to praise it because most don't. They still think it's about their personality being right, or best, or powerful, and you have to get beyond that. It doesn't matter.

Paul Swanson: Yeah. I love that. Part of what's helpful for me about thinking of The Story as an ecosystem, where it's the patterns that are always present, but I also can't love the entire planet if I don't love a place, you know? Like there has to be a particular place that I have to love, which is that gateway to see the connective tissue to the whole as the persona that was just shared. But, yeah, I think the playfulness of metaphors for me is really helpful to try it on in different containers like that.

Richard Rohr: And I know you both know that's a very Trinitarian way of understanding persona: the flowing through of the larger life, just the way one life flows through the three persons of the

Trinity. I know that seems high level to a lot of people, but it becomes the ultimate template that keeps clarifying personhood and keeps clarifying unity and diversity. So, thank you for understanding.

Brie Stoner: Well, we've talked as well on this podcast so much about the importance of seeing this story as unfolding and unfinished. And, you know, we use words like ontology to talk about that, like what, you know, the philosophy of what we're naming is the nature of being, and you know, you started this podcast by talking about Teilhard. And so within that frame, there's a tremendous amount of freedom, and we find ourselves almost uncomfortable with this idea of, you know, process evolution. And, you know, we have these notions of God being unchanging and in control.

And so, I was having a discussion with a friend of mine, Tim Burnett, who knows a lot more about process theology than I do. And I was asking him, I was like, "Okay, so, if everything is unfolding, if we are in this process of becoming together, how do we think of God?" And he said, "You know, Albert Whitehead has this definition of God that's so beautiful. He says, 'God is the harmony of every harmony.'" And as he was talking, Tim said to me, "You know, every event in reality is both unique and part of the larger web of relationships. So, God is one way to talk about the cosmic story of all of the smaller stories." So, Whitehead describes the big story is the adventure of the universe, which means we're all only ever becoming. It's kind of a never-ending story. And I just thought that frame was so helpful for me because, and we talked about this at the beginning of this season, there's a natural and maybe healthy allergy, a little bit, to any kind of declarative "This is The Story." And there's something good about that because we need to remain humble. And at least for me, I found that process thinking about change, thinking about evolution, thinking about The Story as the harmony of every harmony, that felt really good to me.

Richard Rohr: I've never heard that phrase before, but I like it. You know, I remember when I studied modern philosophy, we believers, so-called, dismissed Whitehead as an atheist because he didn't too quickly use the word God, if he ever used it, I'm not sure. I don't suppose he did, but we didn't realize we ran there before we

Richard Rohr: knew what we were talking about. And maybe that's all he was saying when he's talking about the harmony of every harmony, that's a rather good description of God or The Story as you put it. So, thank you for introducing that. We could almost give that the name of this episode. Excellent. Was there a question in there that I should respond to?

Brie Stoner: No, Richard, I was just blabbering on about my own trying to reframe and think about, you know, how I can work with this, because I think in some ways, you know, framing My Story, Our Story, and The Story as unfolding, as becoming, allows us to have humility and compassion, not just toward ourselves, but to where we get it wrong, to where we miss the mark, to where, you know, as human beings, we don't do everything perfectly. In fact, often we don't. So, there's something about the frame of thinking about the harmony of every harmony. So, it's like, okay, we're still working this out. We're still figuring it out together. The story isn't over; it's unfolding; it's unfinished. And that allows me to feel a sense of agency but also compassion.

Richard Rohr: Good. Very good.

Paul Swanson: I love that image of the harmony of harmonies. And also, if I were to flip that on the underbelly of other frameworks, I think about how much of the Christianity that I was raised in God was in complete, absolute control. We were just kind of characters in a story just kind of saying our lines, playing our parts. And I wonder if it's helpful to just point out or to hear from you, Richard, what you think about what I see as a kind of a fallacy of this kind of absolute control and how it, from my purview, it seems to dilute the humility of God in this harmony of God that we're talking about. How do you see that phrase God is in control?

Richard Rohr: Wonderful statement of the issue that has not really been dealt with, although, and I'm going to sound like a super Christian in saying this: I believe it was dealt with on the cross where the image of God is one of absolute vulnerability. How could we have missed the point? That's why the Medievals said *Crux pro Omnia*, the cross proves everything. And again, it proves to be true that here we've had no trouble for two thousand years, beginning most of our liturgical prayers with "Almighty God," and many ministers still do, but that's only half of the truth. And we have to balance that out with all vulnerable God. But let me try to explain it. Once God commits himself/herself to relationality as his very being, the being of God is relationship, then there have to be at least two elements to relationship.

And so, the one element is not totally in charge, in control as you just put it. There has to be a giver and a receiver, one who tosses the ball, one who receives the ball. Now, once you're in that, you have a dynamic notion of God that is constantly changed by love, by relationship. And you can't have a static notion of God anymore. It's a God who is growing with us, whom covenant love of the Bible says, he has entered into an eternal love affair with what he has created; she has created. This is so good. And it only takes a couple steps to get clarified before that becomes clear, but it was just easier to speak of "Almighty

Richard Rohr: God." I don't know why we prefer that when it created so many problems, the biggest of all being the problem of evil. Well, if you're almighty, how come the Holocaust? How come children die? How come people starve to death? But once God is in the suffering, in the vulnerable, we have a way through, and dare I say, even we have a way out of this tight box that can't be sufficient for the questions of our heart.

If you need to make me try to unpackage that more, I'll try.

Brie Stoner: No, that that's so helpful because I think, you know, you've said, Richard, that both progressive thinking and traditional thinking can be a way of avoiding that great surrender to God. And it strikes me that, you know, we're so uncomfortable with vulnerability being the same thing as leadership, that you can have vulnerable leadership, that you can have vulnerable strengths, vulnerable power that, you know, I'm aware of the ways in which we've used The Story as a tool for domination of wanting to subdue what we don't know or the mystery of what's unfolding. So, I wonder if, as a continuation of where you're at, you know, this unpacking of The Story, what are the ways that we've used The Story collectively in religion as a weapon

for oppression, silence, violence, out of that fear of trusting that vulnerable strength?

Richard Rohr: I like where you're going. Thank you. The first, most obvious thing, maybe I said it last session but it bears repeating, is most of history, and I don't think I'm exaggerating, confused Our Story for The Story. That's it in a nutshell. And once we took, you know, German culture, our medieval culture, Catholic culture as the same as The Story, we got in major trouble. And it explains the immense pushback we have today against there even being The Story. It's been so misused in most of history. So, you can understand. It's very unfortunate but why people—you know the line—there are no metanarratives. I refuse to enter into the conversation. There is no story that is always true.

Now insofar as that diminished, or lessened, or relativized our absolutizing of Our Story, it's good. But once it led us into nihilism—nihil is the word in Latin for nothingness—we got into the trouble that we're in today. There is no basis for truth. In fact, you may not use the word truth. And I can be elected president while denying evident, obvious truth. I don't know how you build civilization, because what happens at that point is everybody is thrown back on their own individualism. If there are no metanarratives, things like the hero's journey, things like the paschal mystery, things that say, "You know, I can trust that anywhere all the time. It's true," I don't know how you create conversations with the Arab States or the African indigenous peoples. I don't know how you show respect for them until you recognize those elements of universality that they all have and kneel before them.

Richard Rohr: St. Francis told us, now this is in the thirteenth century, which wasn't very common to talk this way, if at all, he said, "If you find even a single piece of paper with a word of the Koran written on it, kiss it and place it on the altar." Thirteenth century in the middle of the Crusades he was willing to honor universal truth.

But that shows the highest level of Spiral Dynamics, which we'd call the yellow and turquoise levels, which most don't get there. The most that the secular, sophisticated, educated, academic West is getting is to the green level. And it's creating a lot of problems when the green level thinks it's the turquoise level. And yeah. I just discovered a whole bunch of YouTubes on that yesterday, when I discovered there is a YouTube channel. [laughter] So if you don't know what I'm talking about with Spiral Dynamics it's on YouTube.

Brie Stoner: I thought you were going to say, Richard, "If you don't know what I'm talking about, when I'm referencing YouTube, there is a thing called YouTube." [laughter]

Richard Rohr: I'm no one, [inaudible] not most of the people who are listening.

Paul Swanson: Before everyone rushes to YouTube to look it up, Richard, you've brought up the St. Francis, and those who are true elders, and these wisdom-bearers that live in all three layers of the cosmic egg and what that looks like. And, you know, I've heard you speak before about how it's not like you pass from one story to the next, then you land at The Story, but it's all happening simultaneously. And, you know, thinking of Francis and others, there's this art of contemplative leadership in that when one is able to hold that post within all three and live

in that spiral. In what ways do you see contemplative circles thriving in this, and where do you see needed growth to be in all three simultaneously?

Richard Rohr: Boy, you ask good questions. Well, I hate to be negative, but not entirely will I be, I do think a lot who call themselves contemplative, imagine that they live their full life in The Story. And far too often have not had understanding, patience, love of Our Story or the individual's story. It's the person who can move almost effortlessly between speaking of God and caring for this little distracting person in front of me and can honor the things of culture. Who doesn't feel they're being secondary because they're going to a concert or an art museum? That's Our Story. It enriches your understanding of My Story. And if it's good art and good music, without doubt, it will confirm and point to The Story.

So. I'm afraid there's still too much false contemplation. I don't know what else to call it. People who think they dirty themselves by caring about the poor Palestinians, for example, "No, no, I don't have a time to get sullied by that political debate." Whereas, the true person who lives inside the cosmic egg has no worry of being sullied and, in fact, [has] a natural compassion for those who are being oppressed. And it is just without any doubt the dance of dances, the art form of art forms to know how to do both at the same time.

Brie Stoner: We have this way of idolizing, and we idolize teachers. We idolize institutions. We idolize ourselves for thinking ourselves as living the The Story or figuring out what The Map is. And, you know, you brought up Ken Wilbur a minute ago, and it strikes me that this is another area in which we have to have the humility of seeing ourselves in process and seeing our wisdom, our knowledge as being in process, because while Ken offers us really beautiful, helpful tools and ways to think about reality, it's not the only tool in the shed. And, you know, we need to have a humility toward recognizing that his tools are helpful, but they need to be harmonized with other tools, perspectives, voices, so that we don't fall into that trap of idolatry as you just mentioned.

Richard Rohr: And so, does Richard Rohr need to [remember that] he's one tool in the shed. [laughter] Now insofar as...

Brie Stoner: That was a good one.

Richard Rohr: ...he's communicating all three, when he touches upon that now on, then you can trust him.

Brie Stoner: That's a sign of your humility, Richard, that you're so quick to name that in yourself and insist that we see you that way. But if I could kind of land us in that place of humility together, what are the institutional pitfalls of believing ourselves the wielders of The Story? So, even in our contemplative world and movement, what level of the cosmic egg do institutions tend to omit, and what hope is there for us to organize and maybe run the institutional side of serving our community better?

Richard Rohr: Okay, another good one. Lord, give me wisdom. Well, I'm going to repeat what I said before. What most institutions do, to again refer to Spiral Dynamics, is they stop at the blue level of tribal thinking of Our Story. And they absolutize that. You know, I was just reading this week some of the writings by John Neihardt of Black Elk.

When I was in college, it was really in to read Black Elk Speaks. And I want to say two things about it.

First of all, everybody loved his clear, green thinking, even though much of it was yellow and turquoise. This man was a native mystic. But what isn't commonly known and, in fact, no, this isn't video is it, I've got a new card on my hearth here of Black Elk teaching his granddaughter, and he's holding a rosary and a little tiny cross. This was so unacceptable to people at the green level, that all of the part of his biography that tells that he, forgive me, he was a Catholic catechist and especially to his own children and grandchildren, that just didn't fit the entrapment and Our Story. We really don't like mystics who, well, we love him as long as he puts indigenous religions top and is a good green, but realizing he was more than green, that Black Elk said the rosary and taught Catechism, I mean...it's even shocking to me a Catholic, and this would have been the last and previous centuries. This is quite amazing.

Richard Rohr: So, you see how both the left and the right don't like The Story, neither one of them. It utterly assaults their arrogance, that I've got the final explanation in wherever I am. And I am it. *C'est moi*. Why, how do we defeat that? Well, we can't defeat it. God does, but here we get back to our notion of vulnerability. We have to live a vulnerable life where we allow our ego inflation to be punctured on a regular basis. And I don't know too many people who do that. I really don't, [who] will substitute My or Our for The?

Brie Stoner: And it, it's reminding me a little bit, as you just said, that puncture of the ego inflation. And I was thinking about the difference between being a creator and trying to enforce machinery, you know? To be a creator or even I was trying to think like institutionally, what's the right posture? And I think if the posture is of creatives, then there's a softness and a constant listening, a constant re-evaluation, a constant recognition that we are servants of the larger story flowing through us like instruments. So this is not about us, right? It's not about our ideas of what we think we're going to go out and do in the world and accomplish and kick ass in, and whatever. But that's a very different posture institutionally than that of machinery of like we're going to go; we're going to do; we're going to make; we're going to, you know, that kind of engine that just runs and pushes over and that can squelch that kind of permeability of love that you're naming.

Richard Rohr: Thank you.

Paul Swanson: It brings to mind for me just the thoughts around institutions as trying to create a sense of order and momentum, energy to serve the world. And I think about in Jewish Scriptures, right, the themes of order and chaos are very much at play. And, you know, to fall into chaos is just nihilism, you know, to not try to have some sort of order to find your way through. And I know that we've talked many times on this podcast about the tragic absurdity of reality. And so, I'm wondering, Richard, do you have the sense that the wisdom of The Story is leaning into the awkwardness of the dance between order and chaos. It feels awkward like a junior high dance that we only discover the depth dimension by stepping into it, by going through it, to find this depth dimension that will sustain My Story and Our Story, that it's going to feel awkward. How does that land with you?

Richard Rohr: [You're] brilliant beyond your years. See that's exactly it. If someone really has The Story, it's going to be the inclusion of paradox, mystery, disorder, the uncertainty principle, black holes inside the explanation of order. And that's the trouble up to now, most order was too much order. Most of The Story was a lock tight, you know, explanation, what we now call

rationalism. It allows no wiggle room, no exceptions, no failure. The genius of the Gospel as I see Jesus teaching it, is the incorporation of chaos. Now we call it chaos theory. Isn't that interesting? ...inside of order. And anybody who offers you The Story, who does not have patience with exception... Remember that phrase "The exception proves the rule"? Excellent. That's it! But no one told me as a little Catholic I could believe the exception proves the rule: No, follow the rule.

Richard Rohr: So, we ended up not being people of the Gospel ourselves. But is there a way to affirm, really affirm a cosmic corridor? And I have to add, which only God can fully know and understand, and to affirm exception without making exception, the new chaos our order, our disorder, I don't know which it is. And that's the period of history we're in right now. The several groups who are each making their choice for one or the other, but calmly and lovingly reside inside of order. The mystics would say you can't hold yourself there: you are held inside of the divine order. You can't figure it out. That's why faith was praised so much while being quite patient with disorder.

I remember as a deacon in Dayton, Ohio, when I got to do an urban plunge... They were really in. I don't know if they use that term anymore. ...and live and work in the inner city. And I met these nuns who'd been working down there for years, and they didn't bat an eye at the stories of prostitutes, and drug addicts and rape. And, yeah, and this is part of the deal. This is the tragic human situation. And this is where we have learned the school of love. This is just so good, but I don't mind saying almost all of those nuns that I worked with were at least middle age. The zealous young person just can't usually have a container to hold that much disorder. They want to purify it. They want to free themselves from it. They want to convert it by the five rules of what were they called? Five... The little booklets you evangelicals used to give out.

Paul Swanson: Are you talking about The Ways to Salvation?

Richard Rohr: What did you say, Corey?

Corey Pigg: The tracts?

Brie Stoner: Tracts.

Richard Rohr: The little tracts, yeah, that's it. That gives the young person so much comfort, and I don't want to deny them that. I had it. I had my Catechism. Yeah.

Brie Stoner: That zealotry, though, that you're talking about is... And it's funny I'm laughing because you're talking about middle age, and I'm like, oh, man, you know, I'm staring down a few more years until forty here, and I'm like, "Oh, okay. I'm only just beginning to taste that settling into, not needing to know everything, dominate everything, have an answer for everything, that edge that's always pushing with violence," if I may say so, like an edge of like attack toward myself and all mystery. Richard, you have a lot of wisdom about this, but the, you know, the real beginnings of a second half of life emerging in a chronological way, some of this is just part of being human that we reach this point in our lives where we can relax our intensity at needing to know so that we can make space for unknowing to move us into love and humility. I can feel that happening in my own life.

Richard Rohr: We don't know. We really don't what a treasure we have. "Kings and prophets have longed to hear what you have heard and see what you have seen." But the reason most of our world cannot find peace is because of this. They insist on one or the other, order or chaos.

Brie Stoner: So, I want to ask a question about the in-between paths between order and chaos, when we find ourselves in places of discernment in our own lives, you know, Richard, what do we discern with or against, you know, when our lives are in that transitional place of being remade, or our world is being remade as it is all the time but especially right now? You've talked a lot on this episode about love. And in other episodes, you've talked about the epistemology of love. Would you say that love becomes then the melody that we can tune the My, Our, and The Story to? And if so, what does that look like?

Richard Rohr: Well, we just should increase your salary. Of course, that's it. Only love has the patience, has the broad-mindedness without being silly-mindedness. There is a lot of immature love. That's silly mind. That's not great mind, and it always backfires. So, yeah, you just named it. And the loving heart, first of all, will recognize non-love almost immediately. That's what we mean by reading souls, that you gain the gift in time in showing who gets it, all three levels, who can live there peacefully, and those who have all the right words but as Jesus says, quoting Isaiah, "It's a lesson memorized." That's all it is, a lesson memorized. There's no integration between head, heart, body, gut. And the integration of head, heart, body, gut is called love, but not in a sentimental way. In fact, not even in a way that most people will always respect because you'll be partially critical from that place of love of their entrapment in My Story or The Story or what they think is The Story. So don't think of soft love. "Love is a harsh and dreadful thing" as Dorothy Day said, or no, Dostoevsky, I think. Wasn't she quoting him? Is that true?

Paul Swanson: Yeah. She was always quoting him.

Richard Rohr: Yeah, she was quoting him: "Love is a harsh and dreadful thing." Boy, any of you who've loved deeply, you know, it leads you to that kind of discernment, clarity. With a few, it'll make you more popular. With the masses, true love will make you less popular. Yeah. Thank you, Brie.

Paul Swanson: I think about that choice of love, too, in that this may feel out of left field, but it came to mind as I think I told both of you I lost a friend to COVID last week.

Richard Rohr: Yes.

Paul Swanson: She had this remarkable presence of love and where she really saw with the eye of the heart. And I just want to tell quick story. The first time I met her we had already had a mutual friend, and I didn't know that she knew that. And she came up to me and she said, "I hear that your people are my people." And I said, "Yeah." And she said, "Well then you are my people." And that immediate,

Paul Swanson: overwhelming sense of commitment to love, she chose to love me before she knew me. And that is such a rare posture, I think, to give another example of how someone shows up with that kind of...

Richard Rohr: For a young person. She was fairly young?

Paul Swanson: No, she died older. She was older. She was a mentor of mine. She was a professor. Yeah. But to have that kind of love poured in, I think speaks to what you're saying, that that intuition of like, "I'm in good hands."

Richard Rohr: Isn't that lovely?

Paul Swanson: Yeah. And then to turn towards some of the ways we can apply this to life, I want to talk about prayer for a second. So, you know, I have a toolkit of contemplative practices that helps sustain my relationship with God. And there's the sitting meditation, but then there's also the impromptu cries out to God of "God help me. I need you." And I also love prayers around the dinner table. And so, I'm wondering for you, Richard, how do you see the relationship between the cosmic egg and prayer particularly within The Story? How does prayer play that kind of deep, relational grounding role within the cosmic egg as a whole, and in particular in The Story?

Richard Rohr: The reason Paul can say twice, "Pray always," is because this is a way of being in the world where first of all, you pierce the seeming boundary around My Story. You do not allow yourself to be center stage. It's like Galileo's discovery that the earth was not the center of the universe. We have to discover that we are not the center of any universe, either. That is the first death to get you out of the centrality of My Story. It's a filter through which you will read reality, but it's not the filter. Then you have to pass through another filter, another death, usually an even greater death to those who are your friends, your community, your family, those who support you, those who like you, your tribe, people who talk like you, and you grew up with. It's hard to risk breaking that part of the egg yolk open.

I told someone just two days ago, every person who goes on the whole journey, you have to go through one major betrayal, one major loss of people you thought their love was trustworthy, or true, or would always be there. You don't have to predict it, it'll happen, usually. You're lucky if it happens. Well, if there's someone to sustain you through it, and that's the cracking of the second boundary, but you realize how they're both painful. They both demand a major letting go. And that's what prayer is. Now, once you stand, sit, are held inside all three even just for a moment, you are praying. You are an instance of prayer. You are a mediator between God and your humanity or all of humanity, I guess you could say. Now we start that by piercing the clouds with words and with our intentions. Eventually we do it beyond words just by our desire and our intentions again, but now they become much more purified, if that makes any sense, where my first intention is not, "How will this make me look? Will this make me money? Will this gain me a promotion?" And that's the whole middle

Richard Rohr: of life, the falling away of those lesser motivations, those lesser intentions. So, if you're not doing your work, I can tell you for sure, they will not fall away, but you will have all the outer coating of a prayerful person, but prayer is you using God, not God using you. Can you feel the absolute difference? Yeah. Thank you.

Brie Stoner: That is so beautiful because what you're saying in declaring that we become... You said this. I'm stunned by it, Richard, an instance of prayer when we can embrace the heartbreaks of our lives as opportunities to let the light shine in, you know, that Cohen line that's how the light gets through. That's how the The Story gets through. It comes through the cracks of our

own heartbreak if we have the courage to let the heartbreak happen and not identify or cling to it and declare it as The Story.

Richard Rohr: Or look for somebody to blame.

Brie Stoner: Exactly. Yeah. And that's...

Richard Rohr: That's the usual way of avoiding the heartbreak, blaming someone else. The people who are still at the blaming stage, will all follow you there, which makes you only feel more righteous. The spiritual journey is a thousand dyings. It really is. And yet I promise you, and you know it already, there's joy on the other side, not darkness, but joy to have such freedom.

Brie Stoner: Well, that's exactly where I was going to go with it, which is that you're describing a liberation, liberation from the stories that have been given to us, the labels that have been oppressing us, the ways in which we have been oppressing ourselves and others, and a release into the reality of our relational wholeness, which is what you've been describing all along, Richard, as the Universal Christ. That is The Story resounding in everything. You know, that is love manifesting in everything if we have the courage to allow and see it and serve it.

Richard Rohr: Thank you. And it does not demand that you are a member of the Christian religion. In fact, sometimes that will be an obstacle to the Universal Christ because you're overplaying Our Story, your tribal symbol, instead of using the tribal symbol as a universal symbol. Now that's what the Book of Revelation and Paul are doing when they call the Christ, the Alpha and the Omega. That's a good metaphor to bring in. The Alpha and the Omega language is looking for The Story, is looking for a cosmic truth. You know, this will interest you, Brie, because I know you're an artist. I was reading this week. Did both of you see in the news where about four years ago, or so, they discovered this latest of Leonardo da Vinci's paintings called Salvator Mundi?

Paul Swanson: No, I didn't know that.

Richard Rohr: You didn't?

Brie Stoner: No.

Richard Rohr: Well, what's wrong with you. [laughter] You look it up, Salvator Mundi. That's Latin, which means the savior of the world. But what's very telling about it and the most beautiful part of the painting, like a king, Jesus is holding an orb, but what people after now, five years of observing it, notice that it's not the orb of the world. It's an orb that's translucent; it's the orb of the universe. And that DaVinci could think this way in the fourteenth century...

Brie Stoner: Wow.

Richard Rohr: He's longing for this same thing, the Christ image as the Alpha and the Omega of the whole universe. Look it up. It's a quite beautiful picture. And once you see the depth of it, you say this might just be a DaVinci who clearly was a bit of a mystic, maybe more than a bit. A lot of people who are great inventors like Einstein, great discoverers like DaVinci, they could never... Oh, look at him on your wall! I'm glad I mentioned it. They couldn't think in such

big The Story so naturally. And I'm told Einstein was quite friendly to people and to animals and took time with both of them, increasingly so as his life went on. So, you know this man had put together The Story with the My Story.

Good stuff. Good stuff. Okay. What else?

Paul Swanson: Okay, we're going to round it out. We're going to encourage everyone to go check out that DaVinci thing on YouTube. [laughter]

Richard Rohr: Salvator Mundi, the savior of the world. Yeah. I see the picture and notice how you can look through the globe, that it's not the world. Well, you two are a delight. You just pull good things out of me. At least I hope they're good things.

Paul Swanson: I think this has been incredibly rich. We've covered a lot of ground, and we just hope that the listeners will let it kind of simmer and sit within them as they seek to apply this to their own life and lens in the world as they work with the cosmic egg. So, thank you so much, Richard, for the time today.

Richard Rohr: Yes. Love you both.

Paul Swanson: Love you too, Richard.

Brie Stoner: Love you too, Richard. Thank you.

Paul Swanson: And that's it for today's episode of Another Name for Every Thing with Richard Rohr. This podcast is produced by the Center for Action and Contemplation thanks to the generosity of our donors.

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