



EVERYTHING BELONGS

The Integration of the Masculine and Feminine
with Jennifer Abe and Douglas Christie

Mike Petrow: Hey friends. Welcome back to the Everything Belongs podcast. Thanks for joining us again this season as we're talking about Richard's book, *Eager to Love: The Alternative Way of Francis of Assisi*. Just a reminder, you do not have to read the book to follow along with us week to week on each of these great episodes where we get together with Richard and his hermitage and chat about one of the chapters of the book and then interview a guest to live the teachings forward with us and give us even more insight. This week we are talking about chapter eight, *Lightness of Heart and Firmness of Foot: The Integration of the Masculine and the Feminine*. And Mr. Paul Swanson, it is always a gift to get to be in these conversations with you.

Paul Swanson: Amen. It's a joy to be in these conversations with you and with Richard. And this particular chapter is such a... I'm even struggling for the words because I think this is part of how we approach the chapters within our own experiences in the bodies we're born into, and then also how we relate and integrate to the masculine and feminine energies. And we got a chance to ask Richard about that and we got a chance to explore how Francis approached that. And of course, you and I toss in our own thoughts and stories along the way. Anything in particular pop out for you from our time with Richard?

Mike Petrow: You know what was so great was hearing Richard talk about his personal experience and how this has been made real in his life. It's so interesting to me, talking about masculine and feminine, it's one of those things where experientially I feel in my bones like I know what it means, and then as soon as I try to talk about it, I realize how limited the language is that I have. It's like trying to talk about God or love. It's this sacred thing that's always too small for the container that you pour it into.

Paul Swanson: It's so near to us and intimate that to put words on it, you lose something.

Mike Petrow: Yeah. And so I think what I would say is I'm so excited about this. I'm super excited about the conversation that you then had with our guests Jennifer Abe and Doug Christie after this. And what I would say to our listeners is, come along for the ride and bring your own experience to this and be willing to let it help you think beyond boxes and above all, forgive us, let us in humility, do the best we can and recognize that we are stumbling in the dark with barely lit candles in humility and ignorance trying to talk about things that are just bigger than we have words for. So where we say something that's too small or too limited, meet us in our humility and do forgive us, listening family, and we look forward to you bringing your wisdom to this conversation as well when we have our listener questions at the end of the season.

Paul Swanson: Beautifully said. Yeah, I want to just add on that and just say linger in the mystery. And we know that it's going to be different for each person listening, what it looks like in their own context and how they live these teachings forward and we can't wait to hear how this hits you all and what questions you might have.

Mike Petrow: All right, let's get to it. Thanks for being with us, friends.

From the Center for Action and Contemplation, I'm Mike Petrow.

Paul Swanson: I'm Paul Swanson.

Mike Petrow: And this is Everything Belongs.

Richard and Paul. It is such a gift to be here with you again today. Richard, thanks for welcoming us back into the living room of your hermitage.

Richard Rohr: A privilege.

Mike Petrow: It is an absolute joy to talk with both of you. Paul, how are you doing today?

Paul Swanson: I'm doing well. I'm excited to be here and to be back in our nest of the grooves of our seats to pick up this conversation again.

Mike Petrow: Oh my gosh, Opie is snuggled on Richard's lap. We've been working our way, Richard, through your book, *Eager to Love*, and each chapter expands on something about the genius of Francis and the Franciscan tradition. Last episode, we talked about the Franciscan genius in the integration of the negative, and today we're going to talk about chapter eight, which is *Lightness of Heart and Firmness of Foot: The Integration of Masculine and Feminine*. And so even before we get started, when we talk about the genius of Francis and integrating the feminine and then putting the feminine and the masculine together, we have to acknowledge that we are three men so we are limited.

Richard Rohr: Yeah, who are we to talk, right?

Mike Petrow: Exactly. We're going to do our best, but we're using imperfect language with limited experiences to talk about mysteries that all the great world's religions have identified as powerful forces in reality that are so hard to talk about. And so we also want to be clear, masculine and feminine, you say this in a chapter, Richard, are not male and female.

Richard Rohr: No.

Mike Petrow: This is not about gender.

Richard Rohr: That's right.

Mike Petrow: And at the same time, we recognize that we are often given the tools to talk about these things in a particular time and in a particular way, and often gender is the container that we get first to try to wrap our heads around these experiential realities. And so it's very, very easy to take it back to gender roles, especially gender roles that are usually shaped by a culture. So Richard, if we start out a little bit personally, if you don't mind my asking, and I don't think you're sensitive about this, what year were you born in?

Richard Rohr: 1943.

Mike Petrow: 1943. And so, again, thinking about gender as the container, but not as the same thing.

Richard Rohr: Boy, was it all defined then and clear, yeah, yeah.

Mike Petrow: Yeah. Growing up as a little boy in the '40s, let's talk about gender first, what were you taught about men and how men were supposed to be or who were your heroes?

Richard Rohr: I don't think hardly anything was directly taught, although it might've been said, "Boys don't do that," or, "Men don't do that." But it was more just modeled and assumed. And if you were real, you followed the cultural norms thinking they were universal archetypal norms. Why wouldn't you assume that? It's all you ever saw.

Mike Petrow: And I'm sure masculine was for men, feminine was for women and men and women were clear boundaries, that was a clear binary.

Richard Rohr: Yes, yes.

Mike Petrow: Who were the heroes that you were told to look up to as a little boy?

Richard Rohr: Well, they were all World War II warriors, our 1940s cinema John Wayne stars who were over masculinized by our standards today. And we all compared ourselves to them. But do you see they're both warrior archetypes?

Mike Petrow: Yeah.

Richard Rohr: Even the movie stars were not soft. They might've been cool like Cary Grant, but they weren't soft. They were focused, determined, aggressive toward the feminine, yeah.

Paul Swanson: It's fascinating to hear you talk about that because Mike and I have talked about it in our own context, but when we were born and the stories and the cultural waters that we were swimming in, and to think about how some of that, like you said, is just kind of absorbed by culture and then there's ways in which what's modeled before us. So thinking about your own education, Richard, knowing that you've talked about how the sisters taught you when you were in elementary school, but is it safe to say by the time you entered the seminary at 14 that your religious education was mostly done by men or all men?

Richard Rohr: Well, seminary was all men.

Paul Swanson: So you went from all women-

Richard Rohr: All women in grade school to all men in high school. That's very good, yes.

Mike Petrow: I always love the story that you tell about Sister Ephraim, was it?

Richard Rohr: Yes.

Mike Petrow: Because it's such a-

Richard Rohr: Old Sister Ephraim.

Mike Petrow: Because, again, we're talking about gender here, but it's such a stark contrast to your later theological education. Would you tell us a little bit about Sister Ephraim?

Richard Rohr: She was this older Irish nun who still spoke with a strong Irish accent who would be wheeled literally in her wheelchair to each classroom several times a year and just talk to us about something current, a saint, a feast day, a virtue or a value. And she was in

her full robes and veil and it was like grandma talking to us. No one would think of disrespecting her. Well, there was no reason to. She was dear, she wasn't judgmental.

Mike Petrow: I love that. I love the story that you tell about her telling you why to pray the rosary. Would you share that with us?

Richard Rohr: You still want that one?

Mike Petrow: I love that story so much.

Richard Rohr: Well, she said, "Children, I'm going to tell you how to get into heaven." And this is so shocking to you, good evangelicals, but we lived in a mythic universe much more feminine than masculine.

Mike Petrow: We'll unpack that in a bit.

Richard Rohr: Yeah, yeah. It wasn't that biblical, it was archetypal. And she says, "I'm going to tell you how to get into Heaven." We all leaned forward as best I can remember, she said, "When you die, you're going to appear before the throne of God." Now, I don't think she said God is male, but we were supposed to assume that. "And then Jesus, his son is standing there at his right hand. And to get to them, you have to get through Peter." She's named three men. She says, "I want you as soon as you have a chance to run around the edge," it is so absurd, only little second graders who were Catholic would believe such a thing, "Run around the edge of Heaven and if you go around the back, there's a window high up. And if you look up Mary, your mother, is looking out the window."

I am ashamed to tell this story. I shouldn't need to be ashamed, but I realize why we needed the Reformation because Catholics grew up on stories like this. She said, "And she will be holding in her hands the rosary. Now the rosary was always identified with Mary's prayer, hail Mary, hail Mary. She will lower it to you and you'll recognize it because you've been saying it all your life. She will pull you into Heaven with no questions asked."

Mike Petrow: Oh, that's amazing. I love that.

Richard Rohr: "If you've said the rosary, you'll be ready for heaven and Mary will take you." Well, most little boys in those times who were raised by our mothers, men after World War II didn't participate in child-rearing, that was a woman's job, so when we were told our mother would accept us without question, that was immediately believable. So as I always say, it was bad theology, but magnificent psychology. And we all just were sort of swooning with delight at Sister Ephraim's story. And we remembered, we would try to always remember how to run real quick around the back and look up at the window and be pulled into heaven. So the idea of grace was still there, but it was mediated through a woman, not through a man because we had no experience of a man being graceful, all we had were warriors.

Mike Petrow: Again, it's wild to see how that shapes your experience, the culture. And then you move on to seminary, which I'm assuming was in the '50s. But I think when we hear

seminary-

Richard Rohr: '57, yeah.

Mike Petrow: Yeah, and when we hear seminary, for a lot of us we're thinking, you go to seminary in your twenties as grad school. You started seminary at what age?

Richard Rohr: No, they started us early to keep us away from girls.

Mike Petrow: Oh, okay.

Richard Rohr: I mean, they would never admit that.

Mike Petrow: How old were you when you started seminary?

Richard Rohr: 14.

Mike Petrow: You started seminary at 14?

Richard Rohr: I went to high school. Well, they wanted to give us, and they did, and in later years I'm grateful, a very disciplined education.

Mike Petrow: Which you certainly got.

Richard Rohr: Which I got, I had to learn Latin, Greek.

Mike Petrow: So was your seminary education mostly men?

Richard Rohr: Only Men.

Mike Petrow: Oh wow.

Richard Rohr: There wasn't a woman in sight.

Mike Petrow: So then you enter the Franciscan order, you're taught by men with other men, right, because you're not going to seminary with women?

Richard Rohr: No, there's no women around at all. Except if we served for the sisters, the Mexican nun's baths, we could go through the tunnel over to the convent, and that was our only contact with women.

Mike Petrow: There was a tunnel?

Richard Rohr: There was.

Mike Petrow: Oh my gosh.

Richard Rohr: At the minor seminary. Yeah, there was a tunnel.

Paul Swanson: The convenience of it. I am thinking, Richard, about you had all this impact from men, do you remember when, and I'm obviously assuming that your image of God was male was

kind of reinforced?

Richard Rohr: Oh yeah, sure.

Paul Swanson: Do you remember when the first kind of feminine energies were being presented from a divine standpoint? When did that kind of start to enter into your consciousness as a student?

Richard Rohr: Not until the late sixties when Vatican II had happened, the hippies had happened. What the hippies did for culture was the huge feminization, the long hair. I hate to admit it, Michael, it was a feminization of culture that men could wear long hair.

Mike Petrow: And never going to stop making fun of my long hair, that's fair.

Richard Rohr: And I love it, don't be self-conscious.

Mike Petrow: No, no, I appreciate it. Oh, you just said don't cut it, excellent, thank you, that's great advice, I'll stick with that. So to step back into that, you are originally educated by women, then educated by men in an environment surrounded by men, told probably what's interesting to me is there's a cultural idea of what it means to be a man, which is probably a little bit different than being a Franciscan, I imagine.

Richard Rohr: I think so.

Mike Petrow: And then at some point you encounter this idea of archetypal masculine and feminine, which is not the same thing as a man or woman.

Richard Rohr: I wouldn't use those words of course.

Mike Petrow: Yeah. Where did that idea come into your journey, recognizing that masculine and feminine are not the same as male or female, but they're these big archetypal energies?

Richard Rohr: When did I first discover Carl Jung? That was in the early '60s. I used to go up to our brilliant library, spend hours just perusing books. And there discovered the writings of Carl Jung and the notion of things being archetypal, which meant for me universal beyond Roman Catholic, beyond USA, beyond cultural roles of male and female, but universal roles of masculine and feminine. Well, they're not roles anymore. Yeah, go ahead.

Mike Petrow: Well, it's like energies. I'll say energy.

Richard Rohr: They're energies.

Mike Petrow: We'll come back around to this, I know for me, I struggled growing up because I didn't always fit the script that they're given. And when I learned more about masculine and feminine as energies and not gender roles, I was like, "I relate to the feminine so much more."

Paul Swanson: But to talk about Francis and the scripts that Francis was given as an Italian of that time in that culture, what did it mean to be a man, to embody the masculine energy in that time? Those were not divided, they were one and the same. Would you say that's true?

Richard Rohr: That's right.

Paul Swanson: What would've been the script given to Francis about what does it mean to be a man?

Richard Rohr: He must have been a warrior. Central Italy was just one war after the other between clans and cities and city-states and those who were on the side of the emperor and those on the side of the pope. And their big enemy was Perugia down the road. So they all idealized warriorship.

Paul Swanson: And so this is the script that Francis enters into and even tries to live up to it, wouldn't you say?

Richard Rohr: Yes, yes.

Paul Swanson: He went off to war to be a knight.

Richard Rohr: Very young, yes.

Paul Swanson: Got involved in the merchant classed, his father was-

Richard Rohr: Competitive, highly competitive. He just had no respect for that.

Paul Swanson: Yes. And then to watch him break free from that script into something emerging from the script in a way that is disregard, but it's also like writing one's own script based on the gospels that doesn't have a sense of confinement to it. How would you speak to the sense of Francis breaking through a script of what it meant to be a man in that time into, again, when they conflated masculine as being a man, how did he break that into a different way of being and living in the world?

Richard Rohr: There's a quote at the very beginning of the book.

Mike Petrow: "Yearning for a new way will not produce it. Only ending the old way can do that. You cannot hold onto the old all while declaring you want something new. The old will defy the new. The old will deny the new. The old will decry the new. There is only way to bring in the new. You must make room for it." - Neil Donald Walsh.

Richard Rohr: Yeah, isn't that good?

Mike Petrow: That's really good.

Richard Rohr: We must make room for it. I think his disillusionment with war, we don't know how many months he was in a prison in Perugia, but thank God was released and came riding back on a horse to Assisi totally disillusioned with violence and war. And you might say masculinity, the world he had lived in for a few years in wartime. He knew, he believed, he hoped there had to be a better way. That, and the embracing of the leper, are the turning points of his life.

Mike Petrow: So we all come into this world, we're given scripts about so many things about who we can be and how we can be. And often those scripts ask us to, I am going to go Jungian on this for a second, but to hide parts of ourselves to split them off. And then the great goal is to flip

the script and bring back the parts of ourselves that are lost and become a whole person and make room for the full weirdos that we are. But Francis, we've talked about this before on the pod, tries to be a soldier, tries to be a merchant like his dad, like you said, flips the script, doesn't do it, has this conversion experience and then becomes this religious, I don't want to say reformer, but we have used that term, right?

Richard Rohr: Yeah, it's okay.

Mike Petrow: All right. What's interesting-

Richard Rohr: But you're right, in the Catholic mouth, reformer has a bad term.

Mike Petrow: All right. So he becomes this spiritual religious leader but then even when he does that, Richard, I think about the church at the time, and it was a very patriarchal church, it was structured a particular way.

Richard Rohr: Order.

Mike Petrow: Yes.

Richard Rohr: We hadn't experienced any disorder.

Mike Petrow: And he doesn't follow the ordinary script to be a monk.

Richard Rohr: No, "Don't speak to me of Benedict," he says, "Don't speak to me of Augustine. God has shown me a different way." That was the subject of my bachelor's thesis.

Paul Swanson: And that seems to be the Franciscan way. It's never a counter argument as in a direct, it's like, "I hear the script, let me go this circuitous route without having to fight the norms."

Richard Rohr: You understand it well.

Paul Swanson: And I think that in this conversation is pertinent, but the way that it is embodied throughout Franciscan spirituality.

Richard Rohr: It's the integration of disorder with order.

Paul Swanson: There it is.

Richard Rohr: By not rejecting order. He was still a good Roman Catholic, but did it in such a different way it was hardly Roman Catholic anymore really, yeah. That's his genius.

Paul Swanson: And that's a great thing to draw inspiration from when someone is upset with the institution that just fighting it doesn't necessarily lead to any life-giving results, just fighting a script, finding other ways.

Richard Rohr: Positive criticism.

Paul Swanson: Positive criticism yes.

- Mike Petrow: And I appreciate that to do that external work, you also have to do the internal work of not letting yourself get hammered into a container or a script that is too small for who you are, and dare I say it, not who God made you to be.
- Richard Rohr: Well said, you two are okay. Yeah, that's good. Your first sense of order has to have been imbued with such deep love. He deeply loved and was loved by his mother, and then Clare undoubtedly builds on that, and then Lady Jacoba. So he has the divine feminine in his life.
- Mike Petrow: He has, in a moment in time where the church is run by men, he has these women who we talk about in future chapters who come in and show him a different way, which brings us to the topic of the chapter at hand.
- Paul Swanson: Yeah, yeah. And I know that many scholars, and you as well, say that one of Francis's genius was the celebration and integration of the feminine. And of course this is a time when the church is so patriarchal and threatened by feminine energies, what does that mean for you that this is one of Francis's great gifts, is the integration of the feminine, when we talk about it in this energetic sense?
- Richard Rohr: Now, what it means to me is how could we lose such an integration and go right back to the post-Reformation church where we became just like everybody else. In other words, sometimes we were called parish priests in brown robes because we operated just like every other church, we weren't uniquely Franciscan. And I think Francis first saw that with not even wanting us to become priests because whenever you're head of an institution or an organization until very recently, not even now totally, you tend to take on masculine focus, masculine order, which is the elimination of disorder, the elimination of the exception to the rule. There's no room for exceptions to the rule. Ask any woman, this would still be highly operative even in our so-called liberated culture, it's still patriarchal.
- Mike Petrow: Yes. And it sounds like what you're describing as patriarchal is a need for control.
- Richard Rohr: There you go.
- Mike Petrow: And many other things controlled by men. And I love that Francis, because he is willing to go against the script given to him of who and how he can be in the world as a man, as a son of a wealthy merchant, as a citizen, and then he feels this call and he's willing to do that in a completely different way. And so then folks say that that and his willingness to listen to the women teachers in his life lets him step into a religious expression and a theology that is very feminine and he brings in more feminine. But feminine, Richard, in the book you say on page 120.
- Richard Rohr: What do I say?
- Mike Petrow: I'm going to read you to you.
- Richard Rohr: What do I say?
- Mike Petrow: "When I say feminine and masculine, what in the east might be referred to as yin and yang, I am defining these categories based on my observation and study in these general ways. The feminine principle has greater interest in the inner, the soul, the formless, deeper feeling,

intuition, connections, harmony, beauty and relationality in general. It is more identified with lunar subtlety and not the over-differentiating light of the masculine sun God or the literalism and linearity of the left brain. Not all women fully identify with a feminine principle of course, and some men do. But these descriptions give you a sense of what I mean by the feminine. Carl Jung calls it a more diffused awareness, both for good and evil.”

Richard Rohr: That’s right, yeah.

Mike Petrow: And then you say, “The masculine principle as I experience it and have taught it is more interested in the outer, the mental, the form, the idea, the movement or action of things, the naming and differentiating of things, one from another, separate solar clarity as it were, as opposed to the relationship of one thing to another. It prefers the ascent of spirit and mind to the descent of soul. It often moves towards agency and action before relationship or intimacy.” And I would add control, you just talked about that. So I appreciate this because I feel like masculine and feminine are concepts that I feel like I know what they mean until I try to talk about them and then the language is always too small.

Richard Rohr: Yes, yeah. Well put, yeah.

Mike Petrow: But what does it mean for you that these masculine and feminine, first of all, are not the same as man or woman? And then what does it really mean that Francis brought the feminine in?

Richard Rohr: Wow, where do I start?

Mike Petrow: I know this is a really hard question to answer.

Richard Rohr: It’s huge.

Mike Petrow: And no matter what you say we own the language is going to be too small because these are concepts that-

Paul Swanson: It’ll be limited no matter what.

Mike Petrow: Yeah.

Richard Rohr: Thank you for clearly struggling with this because it has to be struggled with because this issue is just so electric people can’t talk about it calmly. People who are otherwise progressive, the last idol to fall is the idol of sexuality. They like the division. “It’s Adam and Eve, father, not Adam and Steve.” It’s like, “Oh, stop it.” It’s a clever statement, but reality is more subtle than that. But remember, the masculine doesn’t like subtlety. It likes focus, likes clarity, likes answers. And this lasts so deeply, please don’t hear this in a negative or critical way, but the Protestant Reformation is almost entirely masculine energy, almost entirely. So here we have a 300-year period and we don’t learn anything. We’re right back into judgment and exclusion and definition and so forth. I don’t know that I’m answering your question.

Mike Petrow: Well, and Francis did it different, what was it that Francis brought in?

Richard Rohr: He was poetry, isn’t it interesting that he wrote the first piece of recorded Italian poetry,

Canticle of The Brother Sun? He's poetry, not prose. When Rome told him, "Okay, we've given approval to your new community, now you have to go back home and write a rule." Yes, Holy Father, he comes back and all it is a tying together of a whole bunch of scripture quotes. And some cardinal is supposed to, "This is not a rule. This is merely the scriptures. We already have the scriptures. We need a rule." So he wrote the rule of 1223 that we have to this day. And it's still hardly a rule, it's a description of a lifestyle because there's that diffused awareness instead of focused awareness. When you think of Benedict, and no offense Benedictines and Jesuits or Ignatius, you think of focus, order, timetable.

Paul Swanson: Higher education, yeah.

Richard Rohr: Yeah. Francis is a break with that in between the two very masculine notions of religious life.

Paul Swanson: Can we talk about that in the practical sense too? I'm thinking about the economic move going down to the lower land, dispossessing wealth, that path of descent because that also, just the relationality of what that is speaking to feels more like feminine energy than masculine energy of a sense of power, seeking that order and privilege.

Richard Rohr: Very much.

Paul Swanson: So it's even in the radicality of how he approached money in the market of that time. Would you say that's true? Is there further things to unveil?

Richard Rohr: It's overwhelmingly true, so true that people on the ascent can't see it or respect it, which gets us back to Jesus. We can't or respect Jesus, who is very almost completely, not almost, completely in touch with his feminine, talking language of littleness, of gentleness, blessed are the meek, blessed are those who weep, blessed are the peacemakers, the nonviolent. Francis, as far as he's concerned, is always and only building on Jesus.

Paul Swanson: I just had this personal memory popping in my head about my dad was never afraid to cry in front of my brother and I, and what a gift that was.

Richard Rohr: That's why you're as sweet as you are. Go ahead.

Paul Swanson: But it was an unintended lesson of being in touch with one's feelings to be able to not be afraid that this is not how a man should be, but allowing the vulnerability to just pour out through his own experience, which allowed my brother and I, I think, a deeper kind of touchstone.

Richard Rohr: Yeah, because your brother's a minister

Paul Swanson: And a much better human than I am.

Richard Rohr: Well, you're both pretty extraordinary.

Paul Swanson: But I think there's something about how we see parental figures, how we see leaders integrate or not integrate that we pick up on.

Richard Rohr: I had the same, I had a farmer, very masculine father, but who was very tender and cried. And I had a masculine mother who was an 8 on the Enneagram and was attacking the world

all the time. Maybe that's some of my fascination. Neither of my parents fit the description of what they had been handed.

Mike Petrow: And that's what I think is so liberatory. And also, I'm excited for the next part of this episode where you're going to have a deeper conversation with a truly wise guest about the feminine, and I'm cognizant of the fact that much of what we think of when we think of the masculine is something that is handed to us through the lens of gender by very unhealthy men.

Richard Rohr: Well put.

Mike Petrow: And so, again, not a problem we're going to solve today because we're running out of time, but what strikes me in this conversation is how much our language is a liberation and a limitation, right? It connects us by finding common ground, but in doing so, it sometimes puts us into containers and categories. In theology, we talk about having apophatic and cataphatic theology, right? Cataphatic is the theology of what we try to know and try to say, and apophatic theology, am I getting it right, is the theology of what we can't know, what we can't say?

Richard Rohr: Can't know and can't say.

Mike Petrow: Brings us back to mystery.

Richard Rohr: Very good.

Mike Petrow: And we know to apply that to God who's too big to categorize, and yet I wonder if we need to have an apophatic theology for ourselves and remember that as much as we can try to identify and categorize ourselves, we ourselves also need to remember that we are a mystery and the ways that we try to talk about ourselves in things like gender or even these helpful terms like masculine and feminine themselves, we need to remember there are things we can say and there are things we cannot say. And now I'm going to break that rule by saying, and it seems like that generative expansiveness of thought and language is probably more easily identified with the feminine.

Richard Rohr: Yes. The diffused energy of the is able to include the masculine, whereas the focused energy, the masculine is not able include the feminine. I think of how nuns have put up with the patriarchal church.

Paul Swanson: Beverly Lanzetta, a contemplative teacher, talks about the via femenia as a way, and I think it's what you were saying, Mike, around being brought enough to welcome and include the masculine as well, but it's more of that generativity, that openness that makes room for the masculine energies but is not dominated by it there. And so how do we keep moving in that direction?

Mike Petrow: And I'll even take it back to the language familiar with the CAC audience because it seems like it hits the dualistic thinking that we get into and it moves us beyond our this or that into not no distinction, but infinite distinction, like so many different ways, so much nuance, so many different ways of being and gifts of weighing the show up in the world and reflect the divine.

Paul Swanson: Which is so Franciscan.

Mike Petrow: Right. But it's easy to get stuck on the way.

Richard Rohr: Easy, yeah.

Mike Petrow: So Richard, recognizing that we have shown a very imperfect light on the tip of an iceberg.

Richard Rohr: Very well put, thank you.

Paul Swanson: In a limited amount of time.

Mike Petrow: And we're at time, what advice would you give to our listeners in parting for staying open, for stepping into this generative expansive energy of the feminine and staying open-minded?

Richard Rohr: Don't speak from your woundedness, don't speak out of your wounds, speak out of your healed wounds. That allows a much smaller group of people to speak. A lot of them who speak the most are the ones who should not be speaking.

Mike Petrow: I appreciate the invitation and I want to say thank you because I think what's been helpful for me has been to encounter individuals who I feel like live out of a healthy expression of the masculine and the feminine and everything in between. And that's shown me models to move towards, yourself being one of them. So thanks for that, I appreciate it.

Richard Rohr: I wish, but thank you, I hope. Yeah. You asked very good questions and you make very good observations, both of you. I wouldn't have thought we'd be able to say as much as we did in half an hour. Thanks to you we did.

Mike Petrow: It's been a blast.

Paul Swanson: Yeah. Thank you, Richard.

Richard Rohr: You're two men in touch with your feminine.

Mike Petrow: Ah, stumbling in the dark doing our best, may it continue. Thank you, thank you. Thanks everybody. Thanks to listeners as always for joining us in Richard's hermitage, and we'll see you again soon.

Richard Rohr: Hallelujah, amen.

Mike Petrow: Hallelujah. Everything Belongs will continue in a moment.

Paul Swanson: Today I'm in conversation with a profound couple, each offering their perspective and wisdom. And I first met them in the deserts of Arizona. Douglas E. Christie is Professor Emeritus in the Theological Studies department at Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles. His latest book, and honestly one of my top shelf favorite books of all time, is *The Insurmountable Darkness of Love: Mysticism, Loss and the Common Life*. He lives with his family in Los Angeles and is currently working on a book about the desert spiritual landscape.

Jennifer Abe earned her PhD in clinical psychology from UCLA and has been on the faculty of the Department of Psychological Science at Loyola Marymount University since 1994. She's currently the interim director for the Marymount Institute for Faith, Culture and the Arts at LMU and leading efforts to strengthen the legacy of the woman religious and the Marymount educational tradition at her institution. To read their full bios, please go to the show notes of this episode.

Jennifer and Doug, I am delighted to see your faces and to be in conversation with you today on some of the themes and some of the extension and rippling effects of Richard's book, *Eager to Love*, particularly chapter eight, *Lightness of Heart and Firmness of Foot*. Great to see you both, how are you all doing today?

Jennifer Abe: Well, we're talking to you while LA is burning around us, so it's a little bit surreal to be in the studio and talking with you, but we're grateful to be here with you.

Paul Swanson: Thank you. And we're thinking of you all amongst the fires and praying for safety for all and so much heartache and loss in this. And yeah, there's no words, it's just such destruction and we appreciate presence here and knowing that you're safe being there, that we're not asking you to do anything beyond any extreme measures, but we're so grateful that we had this chance to talk about this work together and your work in the world.

The first time I met you all in person, it was so delightful, it was in Patagonia, Arizona, a few of us from CAC huddled together in a vehicle and charged our way down to southern Arizona to be a part of this delightful rascally desert spirituality get together. And Doug, you and I had spoken before, but Jennifer, it's the first time I got to be in conversation with you, and it's so delightful the way that you both bring your skills and gifts and expertise and shared love into conversation. I would love to know, how did this spark of interest in desert spirituality from both of your own locations come to thrive in your relationship?

Doug Christie: So for me, it goes back many years to my own first encounter with the Eastern Mojave Desert with biologist friends who took me out into the most remote desert I'd ever experienced in my life. That tumbled over into emerging passion for understanding ancient desert monasticism in Egypt and Syria and Asia Minor. It just kept rolling and rolling, desert spirituality, desert places converging. And then Jennifer and I took an epic trip with our boys across the Southwest one spring and we just kept encountering these extraordinary desert places. And I'll let Jennifer speak to this, but I think she found herself smitten with these landscapes and we found ourselves sharing a love of the desert more than we had before.

Jennifer Abe: I had one idea of the desert, an image of complete barrenness, just sand and sky, which was beautiful in its own stark way but didn't really feel like my kind of landscape. As you know, Patagonia and the desert in southern Arizona at higher altitudes, it really blows your mind about what a desert can look like and you realize there is no one desert. So the kinds of trees, the washes, the boulders and canyons, and I did fall for that landscape and for the spaciousness and the stillness and the birds and even javelinas that there's so much life and beauty in these places that I didn't know that I could love.

Paul Swanson: That's such a beautiful imagery, and what a wonderful segue for us to drop into Franciscan spirituality and some of the themes of that and as a way of entering into that conversation

about learning to love what you didn't know was possible before. That's so much the part of the life of St. Francis and St. Clare. How did you first bump into those mystics, those troublemakers, those Franciscan changemakers? How did they first enter into your life?

Jennifer Abe: Okay, I'm almost embarrassed to answer this, so I have to tell you a little bit. I am a second-generation Japanese-American, a nisei, and my parents came from Japan converting to Christianity from Buddhism, and they converted into Baptist, a Baptist tradition. And I grew up in a strong Protestant tradition. I grew up around a lot of Christian music in the '80s, and John Michael Talbot was someone I listened to a lot. So I wish I could be very intellectual and sound like, "Oh, this is how I encountered Francis," but it was really through music, through the simple spirituality and openness to the natural world and the sense of worship and intimacy with the divine that I really found drawn to in his music. And then subsequently, it's been an unfolding. I mean, reading Richard Rohr's book, *Falling Upwards*, was really important for me at this time in my life, very helpful.

I have a feeling, like a lot of things in my life, it's discovering things along the way that help me become more who I want to be and who I think I am. But it's really happened organically as just part of my felt experience rather than purely through encountering works through books or speakers and such.

Doug Christie: She's offering a perfect segue to me, and I will offer a wildly intellectualized response. No, it's not true. So I think my first real encounter with the Franciscan tradition came in the late 1970s when I moved to East Oakland and found myself in a Franciscan parish in the flatlands of East Oakland, St. Elizabeth's. And the Franciscans I met there were amazing. They were led by the provincial at the time, Louis Vitale, and he was somebody really committed to the peacemaking vision of Francis, and so were a lot of the other Franciscans that I met. They might've been mistaken for hippies in their own way of living out the Franciscan vision, very simple, very open-hearted, and they were committed to peace and I got involved with some of the work they were doing at the Nevada test site witnessing against nuclear proliferation. It made a big impression on me and left me feeling like this is a community really trying to live out the gospel.

Paul Swanson: That's lovely. I love the imagery of both of your entry points into Franciscanism because anytime arts or music is a gateway to a tradition, that warms my soul because that is usually the way that I first get tickled by curiosity. And then of course the radicality of how Franciscans can live at times I think, really living out that gospel. As we think about this chapter, chapter eight, Gather Richard seeks to highlight how Franciscan spirituality does not divide life and reality into binaries. So I'm curious for you all, what is your sense of the significance of living in the both and beyond either or?

Jennifer Abe: Your question is in one way so theoretical, but it makes a huge difference in everyday life to live in the both and. I was telling you I was raised as a child of immigrants and raised in a tradition that gave me a lot of security, a lot of grounding, a sense of safety, and always be grateful for the grounding I received, especially in scripture, in the tradition I was raised in.

But one challenge is when times are uncertain, when there is a lot of ambiguity and uncertainty, when you live in a place where you have to have the right answers or the right categories, it puts you in a defensive posture whenever those categories get challenged. And

so I know in my own faith journey, I had many years as a young adult of not knowing how and where I fit. And I couldn't fit into categories, I couldn't fit my understanding of God into the categories that I had grown up with, and it caused me a lot of distress. And it was many years, a lot of struggle. And I think that growing into an understanding of faith that has become as clear within me as it ever has been, but much more open to not knowing in a way that I would've been uncomfortable with earlier in my life, has been really critical for me to find a way to be very rooted and very open at the same time.

Doug Christie: I think probably like many people who grew up in the Catholic tradition, which I did in the '60s and '70s, it was the time of Vatican II with a lot of transformations happening, theological, spiritual, the transformation of the whole idea of community. Nevertheless, I think it's probably fair to say there was some residual dualism in the air that seeped into our consciousness where to be spiritual meant refusing certain things of the world, not necessarily in a good way, but in a way that seemed to be refusing the very goodness of life and creation.

And so encountering the Franciscan tradition, I know for me when I really began to take on board the radical vision of the Canticle of the Creatures, for example, and that power of that little Italian pronoun 'pair', praise to you, God through brother Son, through Sister Moon, there's no other way to lift our voice in prayer to God, but through the created world, through the beauty and vitality and mystery of this world. And that's a kind of re-knitting of the whole that we really so desperately need in this moment, a fragmentation. And so I've really come to appreciate that. And I feel like the Franciscan tradition invites us back to a deeply incarnational spirituality again and again.

Paul Swanson: It's so wonderful to hear both of you respond to this because I think what I'm hearing you say, Jennifer, about the categories that did not no longer worked. And then, Doug, you talking about the re-knitting that's possible from a different lens and it doesn't easily parcel life into cute categories, and that's part of what I think some of the gift of this chapter and joy of this chapter is is not parceling life into either or even into masculine and feminine, but allowing the re-knitting, the emergence to coalesce in a way that is more reflective of creation that Francis was so keen to sing about and praise about.

I want to make this conversation, I have the opportunity to invite this conversation to be as practical and incarnational as possible. So I want to share some of the context that you all operate in, you've both taught at Loyola Marymont University in California, a university that's rooted in both the Jesuit and Marymont traditions. And Jennifer, when we were talking a few weeks ago, you had mentioned that you have this new-found kind of deeper appreciation for the Marian role in your faith life and that has expounded in your work at LMU. But can you share with all those listening and what that means for you and what you've been exploring within that?

Jennifer Abe: Well, I think that many people who have been raised in Protestant tradition can understand why sometimes there's a little bit confusion of why Mary is so important within the Catholic Church. And I think that my shifting appreciation for Mary has really accelerated more recently. And part of it is working with the women religious at LMU, the religious of the sacred heart of Mary, the Sisters of St. Joseph of Orange, and trying to understand what the contributions of these women have been to the history and identity of this institution

as my way in. But really then what it comes to is really reflecting on Mary and her example of radical receptivity to what she was being invited into, a young woman who said yes at great risk to herself for something that seemed preposterous and huge and dangerous and completely unknown, that she said an unequivocal yes.

And that yes has been resonating with me. What does that mean for each of us in our lives to say yes without reservation, without a complete understanding, without weighing all the pros and cons, but just a deep intuition that what you really want in your life is to follow completely and what that looks like in every season of your life is going to change. What is the invitation? What is the invitation in my life now given what is happening, given what I feel invited into? So this continual dialogue, this continual relatedness with your sense of God, of who you are to be in the world, that model and example of Mary becomes very relevant and very powerful, I think, for all of us, or can be.

Paul Swanson: Yeah, that's so beautifully articulated, and I would love to ask you, Jennifer, what is the yes that you are responding to right now in this season of your life? What's the Marian yes that you are consenting to?

Jennifer Abe: I have to go back again a little bit, I have to tell you a little bit about where I've been stuck before. I can tell you where I have been able to say yes. And the places of stuckness are as important as the places of feeling like, oh, I'm finally understanding. And I'm a clinical psychologist by training, but I never got licensed. And the reason why is I got stuck after graduate school at UCLA, I was working with clients doing therapy when the acquittal of the officers who beat Rodney King resulted in, again, the fires erupting around me in Los Angeles all those years ago. And I became acutely aware that I couldn't quite conceive of only working with people on an individual level, a personal level, however meaningful that was, without somehow connecting it to the injustices and brokenness that I saw in our society.

So for me, I came to an impasse as a clinical psychologist. I was a psychologist who couldn't practice, and I remained that way for decades until I discovered the work of Father Ignacio Martín-Baró, a Jesuit priest who was killed, murdered during the El Salvador civil war. And as one of the martyrs of El Salvador, I had seen the commemoration of the anniversary of the martyr's deaths on our campus had heard about Oscar Romero, and I had heard Martín-Baró's name, but I didn't know who he was and I found that he was a psychologist, he was chair of his department, he was working on his publications when he was pulled out and killed. And I began reading his work.

As a psychologist at a Jesuit institution, how did I not know what he stood for? Not just that he died. And as I read, I found a way to address my impasse from decades before, which was that he called for psychologists to orient towards society, towards the people on the margins and called for psychologists in Latin America to not uncritically accept the precepts and findings and assumptions and values of western psychology, but to critically consider, to develop a critical consciousness of how the tools of psychology could be used to help liberate the minds of people who exist in very oppressive situations, that psychologists too had a role in social transformation, but it required that we saw individual well-being as connected to social justice. The sense of wholeness I felt, the sense of connecting what is personal, what is collective, inner transformation with outer change spoke to me.

So at this season of my life, thinking about how can I continue to contribute in my own peculiar ways, we all have some way, how do I keep saying that, yes, I don't have a total answer and I'm entering another transition in my life, but I know that I want to say yes and I believe that some of these insights that I've gained from learning about Martín-Baró's work and liberation psychology help connect us, our longing for wholeness, our longing for a sense of a way forward together that is something beyond simply trying to bridge divides. That's what we need, but we need a vision, that St. Francis saw long before any of us had any of our issues to deal with, of a whole world connected to the natural world around us, interconnected with others. I want to contribute to living into that vision.

Paul Swanson: Thank you for taking a step back to bring us forward because, again, there's this resonant theme through what you've shared so far is of this kind of busting of categories, like seeing the wholeness beyond the container that's offered and who you draw inspiration from and what is possible. And it just seems to keep opening categories that seemed like they were static into a dynamism that you keep unfolding and consenting a Marian yes into. Are you willing to talk about the new role that you're stepping into and how that is in deep consideration and respect and flourishing with the religious sisters at the university?

Jennifer Abe: I am with the Marymount Institute for Faith, Culture and the Arts at the moment, and I'm serving in a midwifery role working towards a new director for this place, which will serve to uplift, we're a Loyola Marymount University, what does that Marymount signify? And it signifies this whole tradition of education, a Marymount tradition that really focused on women, women's empowerment and the development of women so that they could live full whole integrated lives. At this moment, we're looking at how do we think about leadership in a different way, in a way that maybe could speak to our time that women, religious, not just at the institution, but so many communities have been practicing for so long, which has been hidden underground, faithful to a call, quiet, collaborative, nourishing. And it feels like in this time what the Marymount Institute can do, what other communities, and what we can do is keep feeding the taproot of our deepest values, which is based on the practice of love, which is based on strengthening relationships, honoring people, their cultures, their ways of being, of being respectful, of giving dignity, of humanizing, not dehumanizing.

And one way that the Marymount Institute is looking forward into the future is how can we envision a new way of fostering leadership in this very collaborative in a way that's very much in a servant humble, maybe even hidden way. It feels very counterintuitive to talk about leadership in this way, but it's not just strength from the top that can contribute. And even the fact that St. Clare, St. Francis in their own ways just honoring their own vocation and call so many years ago, that we still speak of them, that we still follow their example just as in other religious charisms, the origin stories of founders make a difference. It points to the fact that faithfulness in all the small and hidden ways, we don't know what's going to endure. We don't know the kinds of influences or ways of being that will stand the test of time, but we have to be faithful to whatever we're being called into. Even if it feels small, it's real. We want to fully inhabit.

I don't know if I'm being concrete enough, but I think this is what I'm excited about in what I'm learning through the Marymount Institute and what I feel like it can point to offering for the rest of us not in a particular institutional role.

Paul Swanson: I think what you shared was so concrete and it speaks, I know for me, I am tired of leadership that is boisterous and out front and attention grabbing and the way that you described leadership as underground, faithful, collaborative, and nourishing is a beautiful holistic communal modeling. And it's not about the individual out front with a spotlight, but it's a rooted way of providing leadership in a time where we need leaders that aren't necessarily seeking spotlight, but seeking to lead for transformation, for the goodness, for the common good.

And this is sparking a thought for me around a story you all had shared about, I know that you and Doug will sometimes lead things together, and you were talking about this gathering in the desert where you talked about this embodied prayer, and I'm always going to get this word wrong, I feel like my pronunciation is often wrong, creosote plant. Do you all mind telling that story and how that connects to this kind of underground flourishing that I hear so resonant your description of leadership?

Jennifer Abe: Maybe Doug can set the stage for what this was.

Doug Christie: I'll try. Jennifer is the creosote dancer, the creator of creosote rituals. I think there's a whole new thing about the burst forth here from the silence of the desert. So it goes back to the desert in a way and toward another element of hidden life. And I think that's part of what certainly the contemplative traditions in Christianity and other great religious traditions have always been bringing us back to is to cherish the hidden and the mysterious and the secret and even the lost and to listen in those places for the still small voice of God.

And so there's a hidden place in the Eastern Mojave Desert that I've been going to for many years, and Jennifer has joined me more recently, we've been taking students out there regularly for many years. And so post-COVID we decided to convene a different kind of gathering out there of folks who'd been out of school for a while and elders as well, about a dozen of us, to gather in this hidden place and reflect together about how we mean to live. And so we've done it two years in a row now, and it's been a really beautiful thing to gather in this way. And for the agenda-driven among us, people would just be shaking their heads at how little, if any agenda is operative at all in this gathering, and yet that's part of the beauty of it. And then waiting to see what emerges of spirit, of communal feeling, of insight. And I'll let Jennifer describe what she's invited us into toward the end of our time.

Jennifer Abe: So Gary Paul Nabhan, who was one of our desert companions, and through his eyes and deep knowledge of the desert we were not just in the desert, the desert was one of our companions along with each other. And we would take walks in the early morning and he would tell us about how the different plants of the desert support each other, that they're not so much in competition, but they're cooperating together. And he told us of flowers that don't bloom for many years until the conditions are just right and then they burst forth and flower for just a few weeks before they're gone again. And he talked to us of the creosote, which is why that stood out to me. It's not an extraordinary looking plant, it's one of the flowering desert trubs or trees. And its leaves, I can't give you exact dimensions, but six, five, seven feet tall.

But he talked about the taproot, the roots going maybe 20, 30 feet down into the earth, the root system was far more extensive than anything that you could see above ground, and that

its leaves were coated with oils, constantly coated with oils that were released in a fragrance after rains or when animals or people would brush up releasing some of the fragrance. And he's so poetic, he talked about when it's wounded, it offers up its fragrance. And it grows outwards, the leaves, the branches grow continually outwards and the center becomes empty. I love that image, seeing the creosote and feeling that creosote. And one of the things that ended up happening, and I can't say I let it, I felt it and I shared it with others, it felt more like a yes, like, okay, this seems really silly, but I'm not going to keep it to myself just in case it helps others like it helped me.

But the creosote, Doug called it a dance, it's like an embodied prayer, what it felt to me this year is that we cannot stand alone. Sometimes contemplative practice, I mean, it's always deeply personal, but it cannot be just individual, it must be communal. And the creosote inspired me to do this kind of communal prayer together where we connected with our deepest values, just like that roots that go so far down into the ground, the root system that helps you locate yourself in the world, that cannot move you because you know who you are, where you came from, what you live for, that vertical axis that will help us through uncertainty. And then the branches extending outwards, ever outwards that we held hands, that we circled and remembered that we are connected to each other, we are connected to the natural world, and that we can never forget our connectedness, it's a source of nourishment and strength.

So we moved in that way vertically, horizontally, and then we turned in a circle to regard the beauty of the desert world around us, to remember that they've been here far before us and they'll exist far after us, that there was something about beholding and being beheld by the world, the natural world that we're part of that is also consoling, a sense of perspective and time. It's not just us and we are a small blip. It can make us feel insignificant, but this kind of perspective can remind us of scale. We can only do all we can and offer all we can, but we're just one word in this larger vaster world of words across time, and we just got to contribute all we can in our time and there is always a need for trust in the larger patterning.

That's hard for us. We want impact, we want outcomes, we want to see what we've done, and it's not for us to see. I'm sure Francis and Clare couldn't have looked forward and they didn't think, "We're going to set up a legacy so that it will be maintained for at least these hundreds of years." So it's kind of letting go of what we think it ought to be or whether we think it's big or small, and doing what we can, participating in this ecosystem of life and making sure that we're life-giving in how we participate in this world. So that creosote prayer dance was just a physical reminder, a manifestation and expression drawn from the inspiration of the desert plant in front of us that we could draw from to gain strength for our own lives.

Paul Swanson: You paint such a vivid picture of not only the creosote and how it is a communal plant and that imagery of when it is wounded is when its fragrance is released, and the connectivity across the support across the desert community and then how you all responded in this embodied prayer or dance. Again, categories fall apart because of how you all were experiencing with it. And it's such a great model, I think, of the Franciscan both and moving beyond categories towards deeper integration.

As a way to round out our conversation and put those listening at the center of this, how might you offer those seeking to embody some of the themes and directions and

incarnational practices that have been mentioned here, how would you invite folks listening to kind of experiment or walk towards horizons of living these teachings forward in new and bold ways without cutting ties with the legacy of the Franciscan spirituality?

Jennifer Abe: The legacy is such an open invitation. There's no need for any cutoff, it's something to grow into. And I don't know if you've seen that movie, *The Curious Case of Benjamin Button*.

Paul Swanson: Oh yeah.

Jennifer Abe: I think it was, aging backwards. I feel in some ways my life has been about, I was a lot more like the person who wrote in outlines and color coded categories and had a lot of thoughts, I still have a lot of thoughts, but I had a lot more answers. And as I grow older, I find that I'm living in more mystery and living in uncertainty, not inside so much as kind of an openness to all that I don't know.

And so I think a way to move forward is to embrace learning, to embrace in an almost fearless way, not uncritically accepting what has been given to us, but part of that incarnational work is translating it, what does it mean for our lives and in whatever season we're in to say yes, to live fully, to contribute to the humanization of yourself and of others, to grow further into a practice of love that is very ordinary and concrete and unconditional, that we don't negate anybody, that no one gets excluded in that circle, and that we keep opening ourselves to all that we don't know because it turns out there's a lot more we don't know than what we do know.

Paul Swanson: Beautiful.

Doug Christie: Amen.

Paul Swanson: What a great way to land, and I think really invite listeners to deepen into that. And I'm so grateful for the two of you, for the work you do in the world, the work you do together and the way you open these perspectives and doors and invite people in without a sense of exclusion of anybody, but to invite folks to pay attention to their own lives, to the places that seem like they don't have life to bust through categories and re-knit with the beautiful possibilities that I think creation reflects to us with the divine imprint and the spirit leading the way. So nothing but eternal gratitude for both of you and for your time today. Thank you for being here. And I hope we can meet again in Patagonia someday soon.

Jennifer Abe: We'd love that, and thank you so much for the invitation.

Doug Christie: Thank you, Paul.

Paul Swanson: It was such a joy to be in conversation with Jennifer and Doug. The way that Jennifer spoke about the different scripts that one can be given or categories that a person can be brought into, and so much of what I heard in her stories and in her direct practices was around how moving through a category, busting out of it is very similar to what Mike and I were talking about with Richard in moving beyond a script that we were given. There's these scripts that we're given in culture by religion, by family, by community, and they often land in very simplistic terms like what does it mean to be a man? What does it mean to be a woman? It gets codified in gendered language.

And I think one of the reasons we stumbled through this conversation with Richard, and recognizing our own limitations, was trying to hold and access the energies that we call masculine and feminine that are integrated within every person regardless of how they identify and that it's in the naming, in the recognition of how those energies are living within us and flourishing within us, and the interplay and how they help us live into who we were created by God to be regardless of the scripts that we were maybe given by culture or by religion or by family, that God's desire for us is to live into the fullness of who we are created to be.

And so the invitation for all those listening is hopefully to do what we were trying to do in this episode, knowing that we were given scripts, how are the energies of masculine and feminine alive within us, and how are we integrating them into ourselves? And that is not wholly dependent on how we identify in our gender, but those energies are alive and go beyond scripts, go beyond categories. So sometimes this week I invite you just to sit down and take a look about how these energies are alive and well within you, and how you have integrated them into your day-to-day life.

Corey Wayne: Thanks for listening to this podcast by the Center for Action and Contemplation, an educational non-profit that introduces seekers to the contemplative Christian path of transformation. To learn more about our work, visit us at cac.org. Everything Belongs is made possible thanks to the generosity of our supporters and the shared work of...

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Dorothy Abrams: Dorothy Abrahams.

Brandon Strange: Brandon Strange.

Vanessa Yee: Vanessa Yee.

Corey Wayne: And me, Corey Wayne. The music you hear is composed and provided by our friends Hammock. And we'd also like to thank Sound on Studios for all of their work in post-production. From the high desert of New Mexico, we wish you peace and every good.