



What I Know for Sure



Balcony with a view:
Enjoying the beauty of
Fiji, December 2010.

→ **I'M IN FIJI AS I WRITE**, watching the waves break gently onshore.

I think of each ripple as each of us in the sea that is life. We believe we're all so different, but we're not. We cover ourselves in customs and costumes of aspiration, struggle and victory, sacrifice and loss—and soon forget who we really are. Lately I've been asking God: Please show me who I really am.

That may seem like an odd question from someone who spends her life on TV. But as I expand to a wider network, I want to make sure I never lose sight of the truth of my existence. I am a ripple in the ocean of God, and I want to be able to see my reflection in the face of everyone I meet, to understand that even people I will never know are reflections of my undisguised self.

One of my favorite life quotes comes from the French philosopher-priest Pierre Teilhard de Chardin: "We are not human beings having a spiritual experience. We are spiritual

beings having a human experience."

To make that experience as purposeful and poetic as possible is my heart's single greatest desire.

As I was starting to write about all of this, I e-mailed my poet friend Mark Nepo, whose *Book of Awakening* is a year's worth of daily lessons for living a more intentional life. Mark's e-mail response was this:

YOU ASK ABOUT POETRY

You ask from an island so far away it remains unspoiled. To walk quietly till the miracle in everything speaks is poetry. You want to look for poetry in your soul and in everyday life, as you search for stones on the beach. Four thousand miles away, as the sun ices the snow, I smile. For in this moment, you are the poem. After years of looking, I can only say that searching for small things worn by the deep is the art of poetry. But listening to what they say is the poem.

I never thought of poetry that way before. But sitting here on the edge of an island, I can feel that what Mark says in the rest of his e-mail is also true:

"For me, poetry is the unexpected utterance of the soul. It is where the soul touches the everyday. It is less about words and more about awakening the sense of aliveness we carry within us from birth. To walk quietly till the miracle in everything speaks is poetry, whether we write it down or not. I confess I started out wanting to write great poems, only to be worn by life to wanting to discover true poems, and now in the second half of life, I feel humbled and excited to want to be the poem!"

That is, for sure, an aspiration worth holding: to not just appreciate the poetry, but to be the poem.