

Drinking from the River of Light: Creativity and Resilience with Mark Nepo

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Transcript

Patricia Martin:

[0:01] Hello, this is Patricia Martin, your host for Jung in the World.

Society tends to regard the quality of being creative as something reserved for artists.

We assume that not all people are creative, but Carl Jung had a very different idea.

He felt creativity was an impulse found in everyone.

His own creative output over his lifetime was massive, including writing and the art that can be found in the Red Book.

Joining us today to talk about the spirit of creativity and what it brings to our lives is the poet Mark Nepo.

He will talk about his experience growing as a writer and learning about how to tap his inner resources to create work.

He is the author of 25 books, and he has moved and inspired readers and seekers all over the world.

Mark Nepo is a New York Times bestselling author.

His numerous award-

winning books include *The Book of Awakening*, *Surviving Storms*, and a book we'll talk about today, *Drinking from the River of Light*.

They have been translated into 20 languages.

[1:19] Mark's most recent book, due out in September of 2023, is *Falling Down and Getting Up, Discovering Your Inner Strength and Resilience*.

Mark devotes his writing and teaching to the journey of inner transformation and the life of relationship.

Mark Nepo, it's an honor to have you on *Jung and the World*.

Mark Nepo:

[1:42] Oh, thank you. Thanks for having me.

Patricia Martin:

[1:45] Well, I want to open with a little story about how I found your work.

I was on retreat at the Gilchrist Retreat Center in Three Rivers, Michigan.

It was a bleak winter day, And I was holed up, you know, doing my own writing.
And I went up to the Thomas Merton library and I was just scanning the spines.
And I came across a collection of your work. And I pulled one out, sat down with it, and your poems were incandescent.
I mean, they just, I could feel the energy on the page.
And I thought to myself, I have to get to know this poet better.
And lo and behold, here you are on *Young in the World*, and I'm gonna be able to get to know you and introduce you to our audience. And so it's really, it's a delight to have you.

Mark Nepo:

[2:46] Wow, thank you.

Patricia Martin:

[2:48] So speaking of origin stories, we're gonna talk a little bit today about another one of your top-selling books, *Drinking from the River of Light*, and what a title. It must have an origin story.

Mark Nepo:

[3:05] Yeah, it does. And let me just frame it by saying, as you know already, but that *Drinking from the River of Light* is a book that I really wanted to explore the depth, the healing journey of expression at the heart of all art forms, not reserved for, quote, artists, but that place of creativity within us and between us.
So I had the book finished and I had a different title for it and my publisher for this book, Sounds True, was saying, well, can you live with it a little more?
Can you, you know, it doesn't seem like it's really quite speaking to us.
And of course, as any writer, I was open to it, but I was a little like, oh gee, you know, come on.
And I was speaking in London about the previous book, which was *More Together Than Alone*.
And of course, while I was there, I went to the Tate Museum to- I was speaking at St. James Church, where William Blake was baptized, which was a big thing for a poet.
And I went to the Tate Museum as soon as I got in town to see some of Blake's engravings.

[4:34] And so I went up there and it was in a dark room to not to have the light damage the engravings.

[4:45] And I was walking along and there were drawings, not engravings, he had toward the end of his life, and this is interesting about creativity, he wanted to illustrate all of Dante's *Divine Comedy*.

And he had done 102 sketches, drawings, but he only got to engrave seven before he passed away.

And one of the drawings I'm standing before was a drawing of Dante drinking from the river of light.

That there was this drawing from coming from the sky, this infinite luminous stream of light, and he was on his knees with his hands cup drinking.

And I was stunned. I was stopped.

I was first stopped by, my God, he didn't realize, or maybe he did, but he did a portrait of himself.

[5:42] And then as I stood there more, I said, oh my God, this is a portrait of me too.

And every writer in soul who's ever opened themselves to be a conduit between the infinite source of life and have it coming pour through us.

To everyone around us. And then I said, oh my God, I think that's the title for this book, Drinking from the River of Light, which was so much better than the original title I had.

Patricia Martin:

[6:18] Well, it sounds very synchronicity, synchronicity that it came to you like that.

I also, you know, I'm really struck by your thoughts on how creativity is really, It's the domain of every man, every woman.

It is not something that is just reserved for poets and painters and dancers.

I think that's how Carl Jung felt about it.

Actually, I want to offer a quote that Jung said. Many artists can only produce because they don't know what they are producing. there is a willingness to capture on the page what we're feeling without having to understand it.

And so it seems like everyone has that capacity to drop into some source and you advocate for that in this book.

This is not a book for other poets.

Mark Nepo:

[7:24] No, this is a book for everyone because everyone is an artist in their heart.

And to me, and how I came to this, you know, that poetry to me is not the arrangement of words on a page.

It is the unexpected utterance of the soul.

[7:45] And I first was dropped, and so to back up for a second, I think archetypally that everyone at some point or other is, will be given the chance to be dropped into the depth of life, which is when our deeper journey begins.

And often that is triggered by a, that drop into the depth of life is by a difficulty you are a life-threatening situation or a loss, but it's not relegated to that.

It can be wonder, surprise, joy, being loved unconditionally for the first time. For me, it was, you know, I'm 72 now, and when I met someone my age when I was younger, I thought they were ancient. It doesn't seem so old now.

[8:34] But in my early 30s, I had a life-threatening journey with a rare form of lymphoma and almost died and we're still blessed to be here.

So in that journey, I was thrown into the, that was my being tossed into the depth of life.

And I was teaching at Albany University, recently, a few years earlier, gotten my doctorate.

And I was, you know, on a journey to, I would hope maybe, maybe if I worked hard enough, maybe I'd write one or two great poems, you know, that, well, all of a sudden I'm just, you know, inside out, upside down in the hospital.

[9:22] And now I was climbing a rope of expression just to get to tomorrow.

Forget writing great poems, forget any of that.

And that opened me to this deeper journey of expression that this is a lifeline.

To being whole and connected to the rest of life. So, wanting to write great poems, now I suddenly needed to discover true poems that would help me live.

Not great, but true. And now, now I wanna be the poem.

Patricia Martin:

[10:03] Yeah, talk about that.

Mark Nepo:

[10:04] Well, the words are really the trail of the moment of the poem, and that poem being the unexpected utterance of the soul.

And I feel like creativity is the inlet between the inner life and the outer life.

And more than what we create, we are created and shaped for our wholehearted engagement.

You know, I use a quote in there by John Ruskin, who was a literary critic, English literary critic and watercolorist in the 1700s.

And he said, the highest reward for a person's toil is not what they get for it, but what they become by it.

Patricia Martin:

[10:54] And then you have this great line in *Drinking from the River of Light* where you say, quote, the inescapable truth is that the instrument is you.

And I sat back and thought about that in that we can tie ourselves up and shout at ourselves, shout ourselves down from our inner critic.

And the truth is that you put forth in this book is that the instrument is us, and it is a channel.

And I'm curious to know, do you write like that every day?

Mark Nepo:

[11:43] Well, yes, and let me talk a little bit about that. to talk a little bit about that.

So I think that one of the great gifts of almost dying and still being here, it was that I was given the lens of the miraculous.

What I mean by that is the extraordinary is in the ordinary.

And so, you know, as a young writer, as a young artist, I was taught to look for good material. Well....

[12:26] Everything is miraculous, everything is good material. So that changed the experience of creativity.

It wasn't me selecting, sorting, and prioritizing, it was opening my heart and being present enough that the miracle of what is would show itself and be my teacher.

So we relate to material, we don't author it. It's about discovery, not invention.

And so, you know, I've been blessed to be prolific as we were talking because I write about what I need to know, not what I already know.

If I'd only written about what I know, I would have written very little.

Patricia Martin:

[13:19] But you keep returning to this idea of really having to face a moment in your life, really you were facing your own mortality at 30.

That's a big moment for anybody. And so how was your creativity healing to you?

Mark Nepo:

[13:39] Well, it was healing because it, and this is very much, so through being completely myself, I was able to touch into everything that was not me.

So, through, you know, when I was in, so let me tie this back to a real impact of Jung on me.

You know, when I was, before I'd written very much, I really knew I was a poet because of a mystical vision.

And I was, I mean, I started writing in high school because the first woman I fell in love would dump me and broke my heart, which is inevitable.

[14:32] And I wasn't a loner, but I didn't have real friends yet till I got to college.

I hadn't experienced that depth of connection.

So I began writing as a way to heal, and I quickly learned that I wasn't just talking to myself.

I had begun a conversation with life and the universe.

So then when I got to college, and again, I hadn't written very much, but I went to Cortland State in upstate New York, which is near Syracuse and Binghamton.

And the state college is on the top of a hill, and in the bottom is the town.

And I was walking downhill to the town one day, and a sudden wind came and passed my ear from behind me, and it stopped me.

And I watched, and of course you can't see wind, but in a few seconds or so it had reached the far next hill that was maybe half a mile away and I could see it go through the trees.

And in some way I understood the reach. And in that moment, I knew I was a Pauler.

[15:46] And as I started, you know, I had a very, I think as a young man, I was feeling the oneness of things.

I was seeing the oneness of things. And I really didn't have anyone to talk to about it. So I was very disoriented, like a little crazy here.

And that's when I first read Carl Jung.

And in his, you know, in that essay, I forget which one, but the second half of it is about the poet. I think it's in psychology and religion, I'm not sure.

But there's a line in there where he says the poet is the lightning rod for the unconscious.

And that sentence let me know that I wasn't crazy.

That sentence made me know in some intuitive way that I was part of a tribe.

And since in my life, I have learned and I believe that the lightning rod is our humanness.

The lightning rod is our authenticity.

And that when I can be real and authentic, through that authenticity, the rest of life comes through me.

[17:09] And so that I am blessed to record the truth of being here through, it's like being authentic and real cleans the window to the rest of life and all that we share.

And so this has, let me take this a little further because this has been a profound, it's unfolded more deeply as I've lived my life.

My parents are gone, but my father, probably been gone about eight, nine years.

And at the end of his life, he had had a stroke and he was in the hospital and I went to see of quarters and I had this moment when, that I'm sure a lot of people have experienced, where suddenly in the glare and noise of the hospital I was alone with him and I was feeding him applesauce.

[18:22] And it was a beautiful, bittersweet moment, and I gave myself completely, all of life was in the spoon, going in and out of his mouth, not wanting to interrupt his breathing, not wanting to hit his teeth, and, you know, tearing and me crying and being with him.

And I gave, and suddenly, because I gave my all to that moment, I tripped into a moment of a wonder, and a moment where suddenly, by being true as I could be to my life experience, I tripped into the moment of every adult child who ever fed a dying parrot

And since then, this notion of being the lightning rod, rod, and again, not just the poet, but the open-hearted human being is the lightning rod for the unconscious.

[19:32] And so it seems that, to me, it's recast how I understand resilience, because resilience to me, as I've started to explore since that moment, is when I can live what I'm given into the fullest, that brings me to the bottom of my personality, I trip into the well of all personality.

Patricia Martin:

[20:00] Which is the collective.

Mark Nepo:

[20:01] Well, yes, and so by not mentally, but through the heart, through being and facing and holding what I'm given, in that moment, I wasn't alone.

I had the company of everyone, whoever, bed and dying parent, and I was thoroughly myself and I was, by being thoroughly myself, I was opened to all that is beyond me.

Patricia Martin:

[20:34] That is such an important feeling and I believe in my heart that Carl Jung intended us to feel the support of the collective unconscious, meaning we're not in this alone, and yet we live in a very lonely society, and writing is a very lonely business.

You talk about, and in fact I think you quote in your book Plato who said, we are born whole but we need each other to be complete.

And I just wondered about this, this sense of...

Alone and together that seems to be a tension for creative people.

Mark Nepo:

[21:23] Well, it's a tension, and let me back, and let me, I'll talk about that a bit, how it shows in my life, but let me back up and talk about kind of the spiritual physics of alone and togetherness, if you will, because it, again, it's a journey that every, everyone who ever lived it goes through.

So in addition to Plato, you know, a wonderful thought there, a paradox, you know, you can look in Eastern Europe, in European Jewish villages, rabbis, there was a term Shekinah in Yiddish, which means God is in exile.

What it really means is God is in exile but God is dormant.

And they would go around waking up like spiritual roosters at dawn, they'd go around ringing a bell in these little villages going shekinah, shekinah, like God is dormant, he

's only there when you are in relationship.
Get up, make God visible.

Patricia Martin:

[22:28] Ah, that somehow our souls animate all this.

Mark Nepo:

[22:32] Yes, and I think that's the same at the heart of what I understand Plato, that we're born whole but we need each other to be complete.

It's like a match, that flame is dormant until it's struck against a surface.

[22:50] And that whole completeness is dormant, God is dormant until we are in relationship.

So back to solitude and community. So we all need both, every one of us.

And if we look at whales and dolphins, they are great teachers of this.

Because whales and dolphins, while we take this for granted, they are air-breathing creatures that live in water.

So no matter how long they can stay under, they have to surface or they will die.

So no matter how much they're in the deep, they have to break surface in the world or they will die.

Now, they can't stay out of water because their body needs to be immersed in the deep or they will also die.

So they are great teachers about this endless rhythm between depth and surface, between solitude and community.

[23:59] And so the question is not whether we're introverts or extroverts, the question is what is your personal rhythm between solitude and community?

What is the healthy balance?

Are you too much in the world or too much in the deep? As you know, just like Icarus couldn't touch the sun.

[24:20] As much as we'd love to live in the deep, we live in the world.

We must be renewed by the deep, but we have to break the surface in the world of relationship.

And so the kind of spiritual elements, if you will, you know, we think of fire, air, water, earth as the physical elements, well, presence, meaning, and relationship, I think, are spiritual elements.

And presence is the spiritual element by which we know the world directly, and that happens in solitude.

No one can replace our direct experience.

[25:09] However, life is so much more than just my experience. So if I'm left only to my experience, oh boy, you know. So how do I experience your presence?

This is what opens us to meaning.

Meaning is what connects your direct experience and my direct experience.

And you know, Martin Buber so helped us with this with his notion of I-

Thou, which he characterized as when two authentic living centers connect, the dialogue between, it's the unrehearsed dialogue of God that becomes present.

So meaning, presence and meaning, so we all need to be committed to this depth experience and this relational experience.

And so now to get to my life, you know, my rhythm at this point in my life, I feel blessed, this rhythm between writing, which is really retrieving the words or the trail of my exploration.

I feel like an inner explorer.

[26:32] So what happens is, you know, in my study, here I'm in my study, and I work out in the world of course, but this is where I come back or where I launch, and then I discover things like this deeper notion of resilience, and I try to explore it, and then I bring that into the circles where I teach.

[26:58] And bring that to others and say let's look at this together and when people share in those circles and when they are authentic I'm always moved by what happens because I feel like my job is to create and open a heart space where people can discover their own gifts and their own wisdom and when that happens who's the teacher moves around the room and it doesn't get any better than that and often what happens is someone will open up a question about living and there's no answer but I move to speak to it from my heart and I wind up saying things I didn't know I knew and then I take notes and bring that back here to explore further.

So at the best, this wonderful rhythm between solitude and community, and it all centers around the life of questions.

[28:06] Questions in the outer world have answers, how to turn on the computer so we could be here together, and the expiration dates on milk.

But in the inner world of meaning and presence, questions don't have answers.

Questions open up relationships. Questions invite practices.

I feel like we ask questions the way we'd open a door we'd like to walk through with another.

Patricia Martin:

[28:41] Well, it sounds to me also that you are talking about integration.

And this was a big theme in Carl Jung's work that our job in life is to integrate shadow

material and light and the unconscious with the conscious.
And these are sometimes paradoxical, sometimes they're just metaphoric, but in the end, that integration becomes how we become.
The process actually makes us who we are, how we individuate.
But I recently read some brain science that said this process of integration also maps to the brain, the hippocampus, and it makes us more resilient.
It makes us more, if you're integrated, you're less likely to devolve, fall apart.
You talk in the book about, in *Drinking from the River of Light*, you talk about how things fit together and how creativity helps us.
Pieces together, and that sounded like integration to me. So I want to kind of get you to talk about that and resilience. Sure.

Mark Nepo:

[30:03] So I do believe that the reward of inner exploration is integration and wholeness, and so let's talk about it. Let's explore that.
I think that creativity doesn't make order, it reveals the order that already exists.
So one of the things that I feel, and not just me, it's historically both where spirit and poetry come from the same kind of original starting point is the belief that all things are connected and that creativity and authenticity, regardless of their form, show us how.
How is life itself integrated?
So, you might be familiar with the Hindu, the Hindu myth of Indra's net.

Patricia Martin:

[31:05] I do, yes, but go ahead and tell us, share it with the audience.

Mark Nepo:

[31:09] So Indra's net, Indra was the god of connection, And it is believed that Indra, in this palace in the sky, he created a net that covered all of existence.
And instead of, you know how a net is made by all these knots that hold it all together, well, instead of a knot, wherever there would be a knot in a normal net, there was a jewel.
And it was believed that if you looked into any one jewel, jewel, you could see the reflection of all the rest of the net and all the other jewels that hold the net together.
And very quickly in Hindu philosophy and teachers made a metaphor of this and said, you know, every soul is a jewel in the net of existence.
And just like in biology or in science, we have DNA where all of life is encoded, while Spiritually, all of existence and all of the connections of life are can be seen in the clear jewel of a heart.

[32:23] And in the Sufi tradition, there's a practice known as polishing the heart until it is a mirror, so that you can see all those connections, so that we carry that integration

in our spiritual DNA, and the life of authenticity and presence and meaning and creativity and expression in, help polish the heart, and so when we are clear, we can see, I can see in your heart all of existence and all of the connections and all the other souls. And when I'm not clear, because being human, I can't be clear all the time, well, I'm still holding things together in my one little spot, I just don't see it. So I go from a clear jewel to a knot.

[33:13] And this is also part of life's journey. And when we're not, we think it's not connected, but it's still connected, we just have lost sight of it.

So the work of creativity polished is that jewel. So let me talk a little bit now about, I wanna talk about ritual.

So I really am interested in the origin of words.

Not because I'm a word geek, but because often words, when we can go back, you know, words erode like stones in nature over time, they get fragmented.

So I like to go back because often the more original definitions are so much more revealing and helpful.

So the word for ritual in Sanskrit is the word artha, R-T-A.

And what ritual in Sanskrit means is the hidden order of the universe.

So ritual makes the hidden order visible.

[34:21] So let's talk for a minute about, and I can then personalize this about, and again, this is for all people.

So when I'm present and openhearted, the jewel of my heart is clear, and ritual reveals the deeper connections.

But when I'm not present, then I'm not clear, and ritual turns into habit, and things seem chaotic and disconnected.

So let me give you an example. I have three very simple rituals, and I invite all of our listeners to create your own.

Very simple rituals I do pretty much every day when I get up.

My wife Susan, who's a potter, she's a night person, I'm a morning person, so I'm always up first.

[35:10] And so the first thing I do is I open the blinds and let light in.

The second thing I do is care for something living and take care of our dog.

And the third thing I do is do something for someone I love, which is Susan, and I make coffee for her before she gets up.

When I am present those things make the hidden order visible and they make a difference in how the rest of the day unfolds and some days when I'm rushing and I got too many things to do and oh I forgot to pay the phone bill and oh what about this and I didn't call so-and-

so and then I'm going I gotta open the goddamn blind, oh I forgot to feed the dog, Jesus

s Christ, you know, but then everything, ritual turns to habit, and things are disconnected and chaotic.

But the value of consciousness is I can right in the middle of it go, wait a minute, let's back it up.

I'll actually close the blinds and go, ah okay, let's start over.

Let's be present and turn the habit back into a ritual. I can open the blinds very much aware that I'm letting light in.

[36:30] So this, to me, creativity and expression and authenticity and relationship are how we are always involved in a practice of return.

Patricia Martin:

[36:44] Say more about that. that?

Mark Nepo:

[36:45] That the spiritual journey for me, the journey of being fully alive, you know, I don't believe in an arrived state of enlightenment.

I mean, maybe that happens for some, maybe the Dalai Lama lives there all the time.

But I'm human and I believe, you know, my new book which is just coming out is called Falling Down and Getting Up and that comes from a saying that when medieval monks were asked how they practiced their faith, they said by falling down and getting up. I understand that.

And so I wanna be wholehearted, sometimes I'm half-hearted. I wanna be clear and sometimes I'm confused.

I feel safe most of the time and then I trip into being afraid.

So I think that the spiritual journey of being a spirit in a body in time on Earth is one of course correction.

We're always, and what are the practices, experiences, and understandings of consciousness that help us course correct so that we can return to this corridor of aliveness?

That's the practice. That's the practice of return.

[38:02] And so that's the journey. and every time I enter this space of creativity and writing, which has really become listening and taking notes, then I am brought back to, that brings me back to the corridor of aliveness.

That turns the knot of my heart back into a jewel.

And so the question, and this is very much the work I do in circles with people, is what are the practices, commitments, vows, commitments, vows, understandings, personalized.

That are in your toolbox to, in a practice of return.

A return to making the hidden order visible.

Patricia Martin:

[38:59] A return to ritual?

Mark Nepo:

[39:01] A return to ritual, from habit to ritual.

Patricia Martin:

[39:06] So, that is to say that this process of integration of integration is one of, first and foremost, consciousness.

You know, the first time I did Jungian analysis, I remember going through some deep material with my analyst, and we covered a lot of ground, and it was profound work, and I ended up saying to him, why don't I feel any better.", And he said, he said, I don't offer you happiness. I offer you consciousness.

Mark Nepo:

[39:49] And I feel very deeply that, you know, this is why, you know, we have such an emphasis, misguided I think, in the modern world of be positive or, no, be real.

Patricia Martin:

[40:02] Well it's what you said earlier about truth. Your job is to reveal truth and to locate the truth within yourself and share it, not necessarily to create great art.

Mark Nepo:

[40:16] Well, and I think that this brings in, and I want to honor another Jungian who was a mentor for me, Helen Liu, and who of course was at Three Rivers for many, many years in Michigan.

[40:33] You know, this sense, you know, she did this amazing book, which you probably know, Dark Wood to White Rose.

Yeah, that, you know, I was blessed before, you know, many years ago before I was teaching and speaking, I was blessed to stumble into her being a mentor for me toward the end of her life for a couple of years, and we would have these amazing sessions.

And at one point, you know, because of things that I was struggling with, not out of ego, she said, have you read Dark Wood to White Rose?

And I was, oh, I was out of sheep, no, I'm sorry, not yet, Helen, oh, I'm sorry.

And then after she died, I did read it, and wonderfully, I heard her voice in reading it, and it changed my life.

It was one of those profound books, And as you know, she takes Dante's divine journey from hell through purgatory to paradise.

And she says, no, no, this isn't a climb up some mountain of virtue.

Let's put it sideways, horizontally, okay? We're all the same six inches from heaven in

the gutter. Okay? And she suggested, no, hell is the cost of false living. of false living

[41:56] Purgatory is the struggle to be real, and Paradise is the struggle to To stay real. And so this, and to add to that, Ram Dass had a wonderful statement. He said, you might think enlightenment is like a bolt of lightning, but after the first ah a, it is more like the passing of cloud.

Patricia Martin:

[42:28] Beautiful.

Mark Nepo:

[42:32] And so I think that we are in this constant journey of staying real, of falling down and getting up, of tripping and then finding our way. And so wisdom is not a shortcut to being fully alive. It's a support. No one is exempt. Doesn't matter how many books I've written, what I've read, you know, I can sit at it, I feel so calm and in such a good space with our conversation. I can get off this call, trip-taking the garbage to the curb and adrenaline all of a sudden, forget the Juul, what, what, I gotta learn this all over again. And outside of the frustration of that, what a wonderful, what else would we do?

Patricia Martin:

[43:26] There's nothing more, is there, to really feel a part of it. Right?

Mark Nepo:

[43:30] Yeah.

Patricia Martin:

[43:31] To have life not be an abstraction. And I, you know, I think about this a lot, Mark, is that we are living in a digital age. You and I are now having a beautiful conversation, but it's virtual. We're not having a cup of coffee together, we're doing this virtually, and it has created. And I think a sensibility that has put us into life is an abstraction.

Mark Nepo:

[44:00] Well, and I think that, you know, in my last book, *Surviving Storms*, the first part of that book, I offered my guess and attempt at how we are where we are today. And part of what I was exploring was, yes, you know, we think we live in a digital networked world.

[44:23] You know, when you look at all of our devices, you know, especially young people, we think when we're on our devices, our phones and our iPad, we think we're alone, but we're not really alone, so we don't get the benefit of solitude.

[44:40] And we think we're in relationship, but we're not really in relationship. And it reminds me of, Rilke had this wonderful line in one of his poems, he said, "I'm alone, but not alone enough "to make every moment holy."", And so this, where not only did the pandemic isolate us, but then this bubble of technology where we think that, and so I frame it like this way, when I was, and this is one of the trappings of the modern world is, when I was a kid, my father, he subscribed to National Geographic. He never traveled much in his life, and he liked to look at the pictures. Well, now I can go on, like I'll never climb Mount Everest, but I can go online and I can find a video of someone climbing Mount Everest and look over their shoulder. But one of the menacing trappings of the modern world is I didn't climb Mount Everest. It's nice that I could look, But I didn't make that climb.

[45:54] And so, one of the illusions in the modern world is that so many of us avail ourselves of these things and we think we made the climb.

[46:24] No. No, we didn't. And so, things are lost for not making aerobics to compensate for progress and we have gyms and we do yoga and we jog and we do all these things.

Well, what I was just discussing just a moment ago about we now have to have spiritual aerobics to compensate for the loss of a climb.

No, no, we're not, you know, I can go all over the world on the Internet, that doesn't mean I made the journey.

This is why we need authentic expression and listening and caring and, as you're saying, not a virtual, you know, virtual is great, but it's not a replacement for authentic living.

Patricia Martin:

[47:30] No, and I love the, I love the Rilke quote you shared and it reminds me of our timing today and that you have, in a week when you are probably juggling so many things to get a new book out and launched into the world, you sat down with us and we had several holy moments together.

I want to thank you for that, Warkne.

Mark Nepo:

[48:02] Oh, you're so welcome. Thank you.

Patricia Martin:

[48:05] And I look forward to having you back on Jung and the World again. And maybe we can talk about this new book, Falling Down and Getting Up?

Mark Nepo:

[48:14] Oh, I'd love to. I'd love to. Thank you. Thank you.