Rev's Reflections

Overflowing

My dear husband Joe and I share a commonality in our very different spiritual practices. We each start with a reading each day, working our way through books. We both like the one-insightful-reading-a-day collections that include a specific date for each. Today being my birthday, he decided to text me his current reading-of-the-day. It's a familiar story, that goes something like this:

Two scientists, who are about to publish important research, travel halfway around the world, at great expense and difficulty, to get the opinion of a famous guru. When they arrive, he immediately sits them down for tea. With a very full pot he fills both cups simultaneously, and just keeps pouring, and pouring, so that tea is flowing everywhere, until one of the scientist comments on the overflow.

"Your minds are like these cups." The guru says. "They are already full. You haven't come here to learn, only to have your ideas affirmed. When you are ready to learn, then come back."

Is the story in some way prescient about people who celebrate our birthdays on this day? Does this say something about me? My shortcomings or challenges? Am I supposed to be the guru, or one of the scientists? Or both? Or neither?

I once came across another book that told me that people who share my birthday should decorate our homes with a very specific purple and brown combination. I tried it. It didn't work out all that great. Thankfully is was a small one-room studio I stayed in for only two years.

There is something about this story that makes sense to me, though. When I first started meditating, I struggled to clear my mind, in order to hear the "sounds of the universe" or the "still, small voice within." I tried fruitlessly to silence my "monkey mind." How does one *stop thinking*?

A great (to me) teacher told me to think of my mind as a bowl, filled to the top with thoughts. If there's no room for new thoughts to arrive, they'll pass right by without notice. But if I can take the thoughts out of the bowl and

lovingly put my thoughts aside for a few moments, one after the other, then there will be room for new thoughts. I'll be able to hear the universe or the still, small voice.

I found it works. And this story is a reminder that lovingly putting aside my thoughts before entering into a conversation also works. The sounds of the universe arrive in myriad ways. Even text messages.

What a lovely birthday gift.

In Peace,
Rev Denis