

Daring to Know
May 10, 2026
Soul Matters: Awakening Curiosity

- The season: mid-May
 - world is fully erupting into green and the instinct to look closer feels almost biological
 - translucent new leaves
 - warbler passing through
 - forest floor doing its urgent work before the canopy closes
 - world in its fullest act of curiosity about itself
 - reaching toward light without knowing what it will find
 - Curiosity as a natural impulse, written into living things
 - What are you reaching toward?
- Transition
 - Curiosity is a sacred posture rather than a mere personality trait
 - willingness to lean in without needing to control the outcome
 - Last month, *Possibility* cracked the egg open
 - *Curiosity* is what climbs out and starts exploring.
- Tales of three women (in honor of Mother's Day)
 - Eve
 - Story: In the beginning, there was a garden, and in the garden was everything: food, water, shade, companionship, the easy warmth of a world that asked nothing difficult of its inhabitants
 - And in the center of the garden, a tree.
 - Not hidden. Not locked away. In the center, couldn't avoid knowing it existed. Walk past it every day and feel its presence.
 - The fruit was beautiful. Of course it was. But that isn't why she reached for it.

- The serpent might have encouraged her, but in the end she reached for it because the tree was called the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, and she wanted to know the difference
 - Not the taste
 - Not the pleasure of taking what was forbidden
 - She wanted moral discernment
 - She wanted to understand the shape of the world clearly enough to navigate it wisely
 - Perhaps the most human desire there is
- She ate. She knew. She gave some to Adam, because her curiosity isn't hoarded
- Everything changed. The garden receded. Mortality entered. Consciousness brought with it shame, and effort, and the long complicated work of being alive in a world that doesn't arrange itself for your comfort.
- I.e. the punishment is consciousness itself
 - Is that a wound, or the birth of something essential?
- Note: the serpent didn't lie to her. You will know more, it said. You will be like gods, knowing good and evil. And she did. And she was.
- We've spent millennia calling this the Fall.
 - What if it was the *birth*?
- What if Eve didn't *lose* paradise, but just *outgrew* it?
- Pandora
 - Story: when Prometheus stole fire from heaven, Zeus took vengeance by presenting Pandora to Prometheus' brother Epimetheus. Pandora opened a jar left in her care containing sickness, death and other unspecified evils which were then released into the world. Though she hastened to close the container, only one thing was left behind – usually translated as Hope

- background:
 - Pandora means all-gifted
 - oldest traces of her suggest she was once a goddess of abundance, an earth-figure who *gave* gifts rather than receive them
 - Hesiod recasts her
 - a gift given to men, beautiful trouble, a curious woman who couldn't leave things alone
 - Hesiod's agenda
 - a theology of decline: a world once golden, and humans ruined it
 - needed someone to blame
- story: Pandora is given a jar (not a box) and told not to open it. And she opens it.
 - Because of course she does!
 - Because she is all-gifted, which includes the gift of wanting to know what is inside a sealed vessel that belongs to her.
 - What comes out has been called every evil in the world.
 - Suffering, disease, hard labor, death
- Were these truly locked away before?
- Or were they always part of what it means to be alive, and the jar could not contain them forever?
- What remains when everything else has escaped?
 - Hope.
 - Not a consolation prize. Not as the crumb left to make the punishment bearable.
 - Hope is the most potent thing in the jar, so potent it stays. Still inside. Still available. Still ours to reach for.
- Pandora opened the vessel and the full range of human experience entered the world.

- Then she looked inside and found that Hope had not abandoned her.
- She is not the villain of this story!
- Persephone
 - V1: She is taken.
 - A girl gathering flowers in a meadow, the earth opens without warning, the god of the dead reaches up to claim her.
 - A mother's grief so vast it silences the birds and stops the grain from growing.
 - A daughter who has no say in any of it.
 - V2: She chooses
 - A goddess who has begun to feel the limits of eternal spring
 - Underworld calls to something in her that the garden cannot satisfy
 - She descends not because she is taken but because she is ready: to know what lies beneath, to hold the weight of the dead, to become something more than her mother's daughter
 - She eats the pomegranate seeds knowingly
 - an act of curiosity rather than a trap or a submission
 - small, deliberate act, a taste of something dark and sweet, that binds her to two worlds forever.
 - Her mother calls this a tragedy
 - gods call it a complication
 - legal minds of Olympus call it a contract
 - Persephone decided to know the underworld from the inside, and emerged as its queen
 - She returns to us every spring

- not rescued, not released on parole, but cycling between worlds with the authority of someone who has mastered both
 - She brings the green with her because she has also known the dark. The flowers come up because she has been below them
 - Chose to know something irreversible, and became more whole for it, not less.
 - What she tasted made her more than she was. It made her *essential*
- Eve, Pandora, and Persephone
 - similar stories wearing different cultural clothes
 - Three women. Three acts of reaching. Three domains of knowing
 - All blamed. All, on closer inspection, doing something sacred
 - Eve: dares to know good and evil, moral consciousness
 - Pandora: dares to know what is contained, releases the full range of human experience
 - Persephone: dares to know the underworld, gains authority over depth and darkness
 - the pattern
 - something keeps trying to tell us that a woman who dares to know is a woman who deserves punishment
 - women handed something and told, implicitly or explicitly, not to
 - All open/taste anyway
 - All are blamed for what follows
 - All stories told as cautionary tales about female disobedience
 - All 3 women were handed the blame for what humans are
 - look more closely before accepting that
 - All interact with the underworld

- The serpent is a creature of the underworld
 - Pandora's jar has chthonic associations
 - Persephone literally descends
 - All change the human relationship with mortality and suffering
 - women who made us mortal also made us fully human
- Rehabilitating each story in turn
 - Eve
 - reaches for moral discernment, not mere appetite
 - wants to know good from evil
 - most human desire imaginable
 - What if Eden isn't paradise lost but childhood ended?
 - Consciousness as birth, not fall.
 - Pandora
 - all-giving one, recast as the all-blamed one
 - Curiosity released everything, and left us the most important thing of all
 - Hope
 - the most powerful thing in the jar, kept back, still available, still within reach
 - can be a dangerous delusion
 - it's trapped so it can't torment us the way other spirits do
 - Persephone
 - seed tasted in the dark, willingly or otherwise
 - bound her to two worlds
 - gave her dominion over them
 - doesn't just survive the underworld, but becomes queen
 - Curiosity transformed into authority
- Curiosity is not the wound
 - *Shaming* of curiosity is the wound
 - Stories were told to make us afraid of knowing

- Curiosity killed the cat!
 - We absorbed that fear
 - Many of us still carry it
- Curiosity does cost something
 - Eating the apple changes everything
 - Eve cannot unknow
 - Opening the jar changes everything
 - Pandora cannot reclose the jar
 - Eating the seed binds Persephone
 - She cannot un-taste the seed
 - It's not "nothing bad happened"
 - It's the knowing was worth it, and we are more fully ourselves because of it
- Curiosity *does* change things irreversibly
 - Daring to know carries genuine risk
 - Curiosity isn't safe, but safety was never the point
- Knowing is worth it
 - We are more fully human, more fully alive, because these three reached
 - Despair closes, curiosity opens
 - One who can still ask is not defeated
- Return to the season
 - leaves are still translucent
 - warblers are still moving through
 - world is still mid-reaching
- Mother's Day
 - The three women didn't just give birth to children
 - they gave birth to us as a species
 - to consciousness, to hope, to the capacity for depth
 - made us who we are by daring to know
- Practice: let curiosity be a discipline, a devotion, a small daily dare
 - Contemplative / perceptual

- The five-minute look — choose one natural thing this week and give it five uninterrupted minutes of attention. Not analysis, just looking. Let it surprise you.
- Beginner's mind practice — approach one familiar thing as though you've never encountered it. Your morning coffee, your commute, your partner's face.
- Intellectual / relational
 - Follow one thread — when something catches your curiosity this week, follow it one step further than you normally would. One more question, one more search, one more conversation.
 - Ask the question you've been holding — most of us have a question we haven't asked because it feels too basic, too strange, or too dangerous. Name it, even just to yourself.
 - Curious conversation — have one conversation this week where your only goal is to understand the other person better. No agenda, no debate, just genuine wondering about their inner world.
- Spiritual / devotional
 - Curiosity as prayer — frame a question you're carrying as an offering rather than a problem. Bring it to whatever you hold as sacred and sit with it without demanding an answer.
 - The gratitude reframe — instead of gratitude for what you have, try gratitude for what you wonder about. What questions are you glad to be alive to ask?
 - Threshold awareness — Persephone and Pandora both stood at a threshold before they acted. Notice your own thresholds this week —

moments of I could look, I could ask, I could step further in — and choose one to cross.

- Communal
 - Share a question — not an answer, not an opinion, but a genuine question, with someone you trust. Practice the vulnerability of not knowing together.
- Closing
 - Curiosity coded as dangerous, transgressive, punishable
 - here are three women who paid for that
 - What they actually did was sacred
 - reached toward fuller knowledge, fuller humanity
 - Curiosity is not a flaw to manage
 - but a spiritual capacity to cultivate
 - it's an act of courage
 - Individual
 - Asking *why* and *what if* and *I wonder* leads to growth.
 - Can't stop reaching nor daring to know.
 - Community
 - Curiosity⇒Adaptability: asking *what is actually needed here* rather than what have we always done
 - World
 - You cannot work toward a world that doesn't yet exist without first being able to wonder about it
 - Today we honor the mothers of our human story, who dared to know so that we could too
 - Eve gave us the courage to ask what is right
 - Pandora gave us hope that the asking is worth it
 - Persephone gave us the authority that comes from having been in the dark and returned
 - Curiosity is their inheritance to us
 - Go not as people who have been told it's safe to be curious, but as people who know it's risky and dare to know anyway

