

Author: Paul F. Bosch [ [paulbosch31@gmail.com](mailto:paulbosch31@gmail.com) ]  
Series: Worship Workbench  
Issue: Essay 243 + March 2020  
Copyright: © 2020 Paul F. Bosch.



*This document may be freely reproduced for non-commercial purposes with credit to the author and mention of < [www.worship.ca](http://www.worship.ca) > as the source.*

## **A BLIND WALK** **A Spiritual Exercise Teaching Trust**

- 1 During those heady days of the 'Sixties and 'Seventies, when I was Campus Pastor at Syracuse University, the so-called Human Potential Movement was in full flower.
- 2 Among the many exciting possibilities for extending and enlarging what it means to be *Homo Sapiens*, the Human Potential Movement offered the exercise I post below. I first encountered it with my wife at a church retreat. And I have since utilized it on many occasions, even with my own family, training our kids to participate.
- 3 Here is another experience that almost always deepens and inspires the humanity of those who participate in it. By all means, add this one to your expanding tool chest of spiritual exercises. Those two decades – the 'Sixties and 'Seventies – were life changing. For me and for many others!
- 4 This posting will be the tenth in my on-going series of Spiritual Exercises. Previous postings in this series:
  - Essay 204 Signs of the Kingdom
  - Essay 208 A Spiritual Autobiography
  - Essay 211 A Discipline of Daily Prayer
  - Essay 214 My Ten Greatest Hymns
  - Essay 220 *Benedicite Omnia Opera* and *Berachah* (two exercises)
  - Essay 229 A Wound Map
  - Essay 233 A Supergraphic Mural
  - Essay 235 The Seven Deadly Sins
- 5 A Blind Walk is essentially an exercise in building trust. Find a partner and decide who is A) and who is B). A) is sighted. B) is "blind". B) might find it helpful to tie a blindfold or handkerchief around the eyes. Or B) might simply close the eyes tightly. No cheating!
- 6 For a short period of time – between five and ten minutes, and without any words between them, A) leads B) by the hand or arm through A's) sighted world.

7 A) has two responsibilities. First Responsibility: To see to it that B) comes to no harm. This means A) must protect B) from such things as overhanging tree branches, steps up or down, passing traffic, and the like. All of this non-verbally, without exchanging words. Because of this First Responsibility, it may be best to excuse very young children from this exercise. The very young are often unaware of hazards outside their own limited field of vision. Overhead tree branches, for example!

8 A Second Responsibility for A) towards B): To see to it that B) experiences as much of A's) sighted world as possible. Again, totally non-verbally! No words exchanged between A) and B).

9 A) should try to indicate textures and surfaces to B). The difference between sun and shade. The smells of flowers and damp earth. The sounds and noises of your surroundings. A) must stretch imagination to include B) in as much of A's experience as possible. Taking all four remaining senses into account, lacking only Sight. Hearing. Smelling. Tasting. Touching. Remember: No words!

10 B) has two responsibilities. First Responsibility: To trust that A) will lead B) into no harm. Even without speaking! Second Responsibility: To trust that A) will share as much of A's world with B) as possible. Without words! Non-verbally! B) will have to stretch the imagination as well!

11 After five to ten minutes, exchange roles. Again, without speaking. Non-verbally. No words! This time A) is B), B) is A) Take five to ten minutes with the same exercise. And the same rules. No spoken words. No unnecessary snorts or giggles!

12 After each partner has had experience in both roles, leading and being led, sit down together somewhere and begin to talk about your experiences. NOW you talk! Share feelings and impressions. What was it like to lead someone who trusts you implicitly? What was it like to abandon yourself unquestioningly to the care of someone else? How was the exercise deepened or heightened by its being non-verbal?

13 I can remember vividly a Blind Walk I shared many years ago with a partner. We were outdoors on a sunny day in Summer at a wooded Retreat Centre. When it came my turn to be led, after some minutes of walking, my partner began to run with me! Through the woods! At first I was terrified. But then I acknowledged to myself that this was to be an exercise in trust. So I abandoned myself completely to my partner's care.

14 It was totally exhilarating! To run through a wooded glade with eyes shut, completely trusting the person who held your hand securely. I found myself willing to actually race with my partner. And all without words!

15 You might want to conclude this exercise, or begin it, with the beautiful prayer of Richard of Chichester, quoted in the lovely song from the musical Godspell: "Day by day, dear Lord, three things I pray: To see thee more clearly, love thee more dearly, and follow thee more nearly, Day by day. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

+ + +