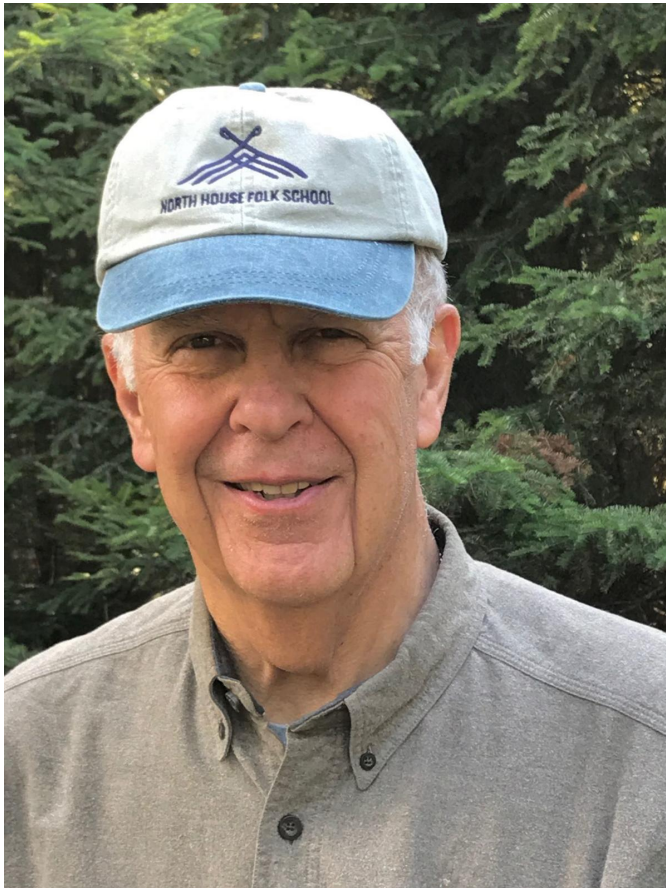


## October, 2021 Growing Edge Podcast

### Conversation Starter & Questions of the Month

#### Episode 37: Notes In The Margins & The Red Thread - A Conversation With Parker J. Palmer



For each Growing Edge Podcast episode, we offer a conversation starter that you can download from our website. You can use this with a small group or for your own meditation or journaling.

1. Parker spoke about deep intuition and following where it leads. Have you ever had a time in your life when you felt a pull, a call to a growing edge and you followed? Can you tell a story about such an experience?

2. Parker spoke about living a whole and undivided life, when our inner and outer lives are aligned, constantly informing one another. Have you ever felt like your inner was not in sync with your outer life? What leads to that kind of “disconnect?”

3. What does the phrase “befriending my mistakes” or “befriending my shadow” bring up for you? Was there a

mistake/shadow that helped you learn something you needed to learn, but might not have learned otherwise?

4. Parker and Carrie spoke about the red threads in his life and work, one being a fascination with “bafflements” and willingness to engage with life-giving questions. What red threads can you trace in your life? Are there questions that have returned to you time and again? What has served as a guiding principle or touchstone in your life?

5. Parker’s “The Poem I Would Have Writ” is filled with thoughts about power of words said and unsaid, the passage of time, and how our lives are themselves a kind of text, even poetry. Read through the poem and underline phrases that jumped out or caught your attention. Talk about one or more of the parts you marked: what does it evoke in your own life?

## **Some Approaches to this Month's Questions**

You may want to explore the podcast and Questions of the Month privately, via journaling and silent reflection. But please consider gathering online for an exploration with one or more family members or friends. If that idea appeals to you, look into using Zoom, Facetime, Skype or some other video platform or talk with each other while practicing safe social distancing. Of course, we are grateful that with the availability of Covid-19 vaccines it is sometimes possible to gather safely and have these conversations in person.



### *The Poem I Would Have Writ*

*My life has been the poem I would have writ  
But I could not both live and utter it.*

—Henry David Thoreau

Those gentle whispers in the womb become insistent when you're born. You listen, for the day will come when you must speak words, too—that's how we make our way across this trackless landscape called the world. But how? And what to say? And what does saying do? The first words are the hardest...

Later, words come easily. You learn to speak the language of your wants and needs, looking for safe passage, reaching out for friends, finding work to do, allaying fears, healing wounds, saying yes and saying no, giving you chance on chance to give love and receive. Sometimes, words fly out of you in ways you will regret—or appear out of the blue, begging to have life breathed into them by you.

Then you learn that first words aren't the hardest. The hardest are the last.

There's so much you want to say, but time keeps taking time and all your words away. How to say—amid this flood of gratitude and grief—"Thank you!" or "How beautiful, how grand!" or "I don't know how I survived" or "I was changed forever the day we two joined hands."

As you reach for your last words, you realize, this is it, this ebbing tide of language called your life, words trailing into silence, returning to the source—this unfinished poem you would have writ, had you not spent your life awash in wonder, grateful to be living it.

—Parker J. Palmer