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Title: The Finger

This is a story about me, and *my* fingers. We are intimately acquainted and stridently oppositional; cherished and chastised; beckoning and rejecting. Perhaps in my finger you will recognize your own?

The finger: a point of relevance; a point of dissention; a point of accusation; a point of information...I think it is true that for the most part we only use the index finger of our dominant hand to point. Like a diving rod it knows it is right. Finger pointing is rather endemic in the healing arts. Maybe it is simply ubiquitous.

I have been pointed at all of my life. "My goodness look at all of those children...there are three of them who look to be about the same age...how does that happen?" Of course I have no other reference *point*. As children we are all unwilling participants in our parents circus act it, is just that my act was a bit more unconventional. So the finger pointing started early and slinking under a rock is difficult when you are attached to two other people who are not interested in slinking underneath it with you.

Fingers that point in curiosity bend slightly as though inviting explanation. Critical fingers are ram-rod straight: inflexible and judging. They dare you to meet their tension. Critical fingers are designed to condemn. They hold court with themselves while in search of an audience. "Who can I get to see and have reel from my rightness?" Critical fingers work just as well with the meek as with the mighty – where they stumble is with the majestic. Critical fingers become brittle when used against someone who stands confidently in the center of their own story. Critical fingers cannot exist in confidence - they only thrive in arrogance. Children are perfect fodder for critical fingers, primed as they are, to wonder. What did I do? What should I do? What can I do? What will you do? How will I know what to do? So critical fingers live in symbiosis. They spend their lives searching for a host upon which to feed and very often they acquiesce to the sub-conscious desire to pig-out. They gorge themselves on their need to extend themselves into the attitude and aptitude of others. They abandon fairness for 'right-ness' and sometimes they dance with their bed-mate, the middle finger, and say 'up yours' to the world. Critical fingers are rigid with fear and hyperextend in their attempt to feign courage. Courage is firm not rigid.

Curious fingers rotate in circles, usually always clockwise – gently and with possibility. Curious fingers don't *have* an opinion; they *provide* an opening. How do I love thee let me count the ways: 1) they curve toward themselves when they invite you in; 2) they make suggestions and bend with grace; 3) they leave space for the wind to blow around them. Curious fingers are humble not meek. They respectfully decline to participate without fanfare when their sense of self is compromised. Curious fingers know it isn't rigidity that makes them right it is flexibility that makes

them strong. Curious fingers laugh at themselves not at others. They make mistakes that are redeemable because they don't take themselves too seriously. Curious fingers aren't attached to being loved for appearance only. They know that to hold onto anything in a meaningful way they must be able to flex and arc around what is important. Holding onto things demands tension, holding onto people requires caress.

Curiously we are much more familiar with our critical finger. We know it like we know the back of our hand. Reaching for something that isn't ours to take just because it's there. Do we really know the back of our hand? Just wondering! It is not possible to use the critical finger on others without first using it on yourself. It is the grand delusion of Self to imagine that the finger pointing out is not also pointing in. If I point out the magnitude of your flaws then not only will I not see mine but I will deflect you from seeing them also. Sometimes the finger pointing of the 'other' is so refined that your own critical finger becomes remotely governed by their motor cortex. When they say, "you stink" you say, "I will wash away my smell and leave no trace."

The curious finger does not want you to disappear it wants you to expand. The curious finger knows that it is connected to everything else, including it's 'up yours' bed-mate which on an inspired day might cross itself over its partner in a gesture of 'good luck' as a, "we can make it," statement.

Today I commit to using my non-dominant hand. I will begin again, like a child, to learn to write rather than be right. To write the story that I have lived rather than the one I have wished. Today I shall embrace my own smell and wash because I have the desire to be clean rather than the command to be eliminated. Today I will fully begin to experience the counter-clockwise curiosity of my left-hand. Not because it is the one on the left side of my body but because it is the other one. The one I have left behind out of my fear of being wrong. We could all use a little less of the finger.