

Having trouble viewing this email? [Click here](#)



Asking for Directions

A few years ago our son came home from college at the end of the term and began to unpack his belongings. Among them was a pristine and apparently never opened hardback copy of Dante Alighieri's *The Divine Comedy*. It seems he changed his mind about the "great books" course once they reached the middle ages. So on the shelf this lovely volume sat until **one day, in the midst of a funk about how stuck I was feeling professionally - - you know, one of those mid-life "is this all there is?" moments - -** I picked up the untouched book and began to explore. I had never read it either and I had time on my hands. I was hooked by the end of the first sentence.

**When I had journeyed half of our life's way,
I found myself within a shadowed forest,
for I had lost the path that does not stray.**

It didn't take much math to see myself in the story.

I took my current age, multiplied by two, and sure enough, I have gone half of life's way and then some. So how do I find the path again at my age, and do I even want to go back to the same path?

Dante doesn't remember how he got into the "savage forest, dense and difficult". He just got a little drowsy and inattentive with his life and the next time he began to pay attention to where he was, it was in a strange wood with no sign of the path. **Finding his way out would take him on one of the most famous journeys in all of literature.** Down through nine circles of hell past sinners great and small, corrupt popes and cannibals, dictators and petty thieves, through fire and ice and finally past the ravenous Lucifer himself until



Illustration by Gustave Doré, 1868 from Canto I Inferno

**My guide and I came on that hidden road
to make our way back into the bright world;
and with no care for any rest, we climbed- -
he first, I following - until I saw,
through a round opening, some of those things
of beauty Heaven bears. It was from there**

Eremos Consulting Group

*Facilitating Transformation for
Clergy, Congregations,
Nonprofits and their Leaders*

Winter 2012 - In This Issue

[Asking for Directions](#)

[Phil Thompson Joins Eremos](#)

[Mini-Sabbaticals This Week
Register Now!](#)

Mini-Sabbaticals Lent 2012 This Thursday and Friday!

It's not too late to join us for a day of personal and spiritual reflection and fun creativity. Find your way back to a renewed life.

**Only \$55 per person -
lunch included!**

Click on
Links
below for
more
Information



that we emerged, to see - once more - the stars.

Did you notice the change to the plural? We emerged. Dante is very clear he never would have made it past the first circle without help. But a guide was provided. A gift from Heaven. By the end of the Inferno we are out of the woods, we are out of Hell, we can see the stars once again and can see which way to go. Dante has a long way still to go. But Virgil, the ever patient guide, remains close by. They reach Purgatory with a lot of work left to do. Dante washes his face, puts on clean clothes and begins the long climb up the Seven-Story Mountain to find his path once again.

At Eremos we believe in guides. I have one myself who has helped a lot with my middle age funk. The "wilderness desert" is an easy place to get lost when

you are alone. But it is also a place where, with a little help, you can find what you have lost even if you can't remember the last time you saw it. Our mini-sabbaticals, individual coaching, and wellness support groups are all offered with that in mind. Sometimes the road ahead is a totally new path you have never been on before.

Wouldn't it be nice if someone was with you who has been that way before? And when you think about it, how many of life's great learning experiences did you really tackle on your own? Did you learn to drive a car all by yourself? How about your first piano lesson, the first time you baked a cake, changed your oil, took introductory Greek, performed surgery, led a fund raiser? Wasn't it nice to have someone to give you a little direction? So what should you do if you wake up one day and discover you are half way through life and don't remember where you are or how you got here?

Asking for directions isn't that bad, even for a guy my age.

Brave journey,

Phil Thompson

Eremos Consulting Group
303-968-5402



Phil & son in canyon climb

Reference: The Divine Comedy of Dante Alighieri, translated by Allen Mandelbaum. With an introduction by Eugenio Montale and notes by Peter Armour. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1995.

[CLICK HERE](#)
for Thursday, Feb.
23rd
Ft. Collins
(St. Paul's
Episcopal Church)

[CLICK HERE](#)
for Friday, Feb.
24th
Denver
(Loretto Center)

Recommended Reading

Here are two wonderful books by contemporary authors who also reference Dante's lost path.

Let Your Life Speak

by Parker J. Palmer

Published by Jossey-Bass, 2000

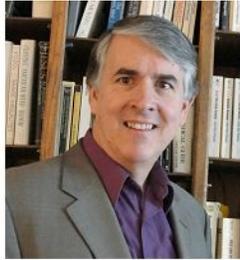
In this book, Quaker educator Parker Palmer reflects on his own life, including its turmoils and shadow sides, suggesting that it is only when we pay attention to our entire life that our life is free to speak and bring light to our corner of the world. He uses Dante's quote to help describe his own experience of depression.

The Heart Aroused:

Poetry and the
Preservation of the Soul
in Corporate America

Phil Thompson joins Eremos Consulting Group

Eremos Consulting is proud to announce the addition of Phil Thompson as a new consultant. Phil will be focusing his consulting work in the areas of nonprofit management and leadership.



Phil Thompson

Phil Thompson recently left the health care profession after twenty five years to join Elizabeth to expand the services offered by Eremos. He brings two decades of management experience in personnel administration, budgeting, financial analysis, strategic planning, information systems, legal compliance, and accreditation readiness. Upon completion of his graduate degree and administrative residency in healthcare administration, Phil's first job was as "Director of Value Systems" for the largest not-for-profit hospital system in Alabama. In that role he was responsible for organizational development which included organizing small interdisciplinary teams throughout the system to clarify the mission, suggest process improvements and increase management's application of its stated values. Subsequent management positions include executive director of a free-standing not-for-profit home health agency, vice president of operations of a state-wide home health management company with 15 branches (serving also as compliance officer and education director).

Moving to Colorado in 2000, Phil joined the management team of University of Colorado Hospital where he managed multiple outpatient specialty clinics and more recently served Children's Hospital Colorado as business manager for the department of psychiatry. Phil has served for seven years as a volunteer board member for Senior Homes of Colorado, a provider of independent housing for low income elderly, including terms as president and vice president.

Phil has graduate degrees in history from Baylor University and in health care administration from Trinity University (San Antonio, Texas).

Rev. Elizabeth Denham Thompson
Principal Owner & Consultant
Eremos Consulting Group
303-902-7805
ethompson@EremosConsulting.com

[Forward email](#)



This email was sent to ethompson@eremosconsulting.com by ethompson@eremosconsulting.com | [Update Profile/Email Address](#) | Instant removal with [SafeUnsubscribe™](#) | [Privacy Policy](#).

Eremos Consulting Group | 7461 South Gallup Way | Littleton | CO | 80120

by David Whyte

Published by Doubleday, 2002

In this book, poet David Whyte shows that the best way to respond to the current call for creativity in organizational life is to overcome our fear and reticence, and bring our full passionate, creative human souls inside the office with us. He suggests that we have lost the "true way" in work because we have split off our soul life from our work life, and can only renew corporate organizational life by "inviting the soul to work".

[Join Our Mailing List!](#)

