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**Subject:** "Don't Sell The Art" (Autumn 2013)  
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## The Dan Keusal Newsletter Autumn 2013 edition:

### "Don't Sell The Art"

#### Greetings...



My essay in this newsletter was evoked by a story I recently heard on the news; it's a reminder that the collective and the individual, the macro and the micro, the mundane and the meaningful are always intertwined.

A tech note: research shows that 2013 will be the first year in which more people access the internet (including their email) on their smartphones and tablets...than on their laptops and computers. To make it easier for you to read this newsletter on your own mobile devices, I've switched to a "mobile friendly" template. Let me know if you have any comments or questions about this change.

I hope something here...helps you find meaning and mystery in the seemingly mundane occurrences of your own journey.

~Dan



In this edition:

- \***Reflections:** "Don't Sell The Art."
- \***Quotes** for Inspiration and Action
- \***3 Good Poems.**
- \***Resources** For A Richer Life.
- \***Jungian Psychotherapy.**

\*[Upcoming Lectures & Workshops](#).  
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## Reflections: "Don't Sell The Art"

A story I recently heard on the news got me thinking about how the city of Detroit's bankruptcy might hold some clues to your own well-being. Allow me to explain.

Detroit is a city that's been experiencing some severe "symptoms" in these difficult times: if it were an individual we could probably diagnose it with depression, anxiety, even Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. In an attempt to create some time and space to reflect, regroup, and begin the process of becoming again a city that will not only survive but thrive, Detroit filed for bankruptcy back in July.

The news story I heard was about a small group of people with a particularly craven suggestion for how to respond to this bankruptcy: they want the Detroit Institute of Arts, a prestigious museum owned by the city, to sell off the artistic masterpieces in its prized collection, including works by Van Gogh, Matisse, and others. In an **interview** with Warren Olney of NPR's "To The Point," Mark Stryker, the Arts Reporter for the *Detroit Free Press*, said this:

*"The question becomes...how do we define what a city is? Is it simply a collection of departments that provide trash pickup, police & fire protection? Or is a city a much larger kind of entity that has to do with a community, a cultural soul, the notion of a place where intellect and culture come together and offer a sense of aspiration."*

Stryker went on to note that selling the art would be, at best, a short-term measure,

lining the pockets a few already-rich creditors, and leaving Detroit not only in about the same place financially, but also stripped of the cultural assets that are essential to a deeper sense of rebuilding.

During stressful, troubling periods in your life, you, too, might feel the need to "file for bankruptcy," to do something that will create time and space for you to reflect, regroup, and rebuild. Such a "filing" might include pulling back from your usual expenditures of time and energy, withdrawing a bit, even entering into psychotherapy to explore the deeper meaning of your concerns, and what it might look like to make your way through them.

At times like this, you may find yourself searching for any course of action that looks like it will provide some immediate relief...and that's when it can be tempting to "sell the art," to give up soul-sustaining, long-term assets in the desperate hope that you'll feel a *little* bit better NOW. You forgo a nutritious, life-giving meal and instead indulge in alcohol and junk food...You pass up the chance to see what would have been an uplifting, inspiring movie with some friends and instead stay home on the couch watching "reality TV"...You skip taking a walk, or spending a few moments in silent meditation, or playing some treasured music on your CD or MP3 player, so that you can get to the office a few minutes earlier and maybe "get ahead"...Or you tell your therapist "I can't spend time reflecting on some dream I had last night, I need techniques, something practical..."

A friend of mine recently told me about driving home one Wednesday night, worn out after a long day at work (I love that this story takes place on a Wednesday night, which is perhaps the perfect symbol for the ordinary middle, the unremarkable, the in-the-moment *now*). On the commute home, he heard a story on the radio about a rumor that popular Seattle-based rap artist

Macklemore might be filming a music video that night at a local landmark not far from his home. Though he thought it sounded interesting and fun, he at first said to himself "I'm just too tired." When he got home, however, he somehow summoned the energy to turn around and head back out to see the filming, and his enthusiasm proved contagious enough for one of his children to agree to come along. They wound up, through a few quirks of fate, in the front row, and returned home late that night with some great memories, and with their emotional coffers filled in ways they hadn't imagined when they woke up that morning.

I am in no way meaning to shame the occasional need we all feel to say "Not today," to indulge in a little escape, a little relief: a drink or some comfort food, a "guilty pleasure" TV show, a little more sleep. The point is this: as a city is more than just "a collection of departments that provide trash pickup, police & fire protection," you are more than just an entity capable of accomplishing tasks and taking care of business. You have a soul that needs to be fed, a "sense of aspiration" that needs to be nurtured.

In the now-classic 1989 film "Dead Poets Society," Robin Williams plays John Keating, an English teacher at a high-powered, 1950s prep school, filled with boys whose parents have all sorts of ambitious plans for them to attain better lives through careers in engineering, law, medicine, and business. In a scene early in the film, Keating speaks passionately to the students in his poetry class about why they need "the art":

*"We don't read and write poetry because it's cute. We read and write poetry because we are members of the human race. And the human race is filled with passion. Medicine, law, business, engineering, these are all noble pursuits, and necessary to sustain life. But poetry, beauty,*

*romance, love, these are what we stay alive for. To quote from Whitman: 'O me, o life of the questions of these recurring, of the endless trains of the faithless, of cities filled with the foolish. What good amid these, o me, o life? Answer: that you are here. That life exists, and identity. That the powerful play goes on, and you may contribute a verse.' That the powerful play goes on and you may contribute a verse...What will your verse be?" (to watch the scene on YouTube, click [here](#)).*

What will *your* verse be?

As you explore your own answer to that question, remember: there will be times when you will feel empty, spent, at the end of your rope...when you will feel 'bankrupt.' That's OK. There is a way back, a way through. Just don't sell the art.

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### **Quotes for inspiration and action...**

"Do not believe that he who seeks to comfort you lives untroubled among the simple and quiet words that sometimes do you good. His life has much difficulty and sadness and remains far behind yours. Were it otherwise he would never have been able to find those words."

*(Rainer Maria Rilke)*

"I would ask you to remember only this one thing. The stories people tell have a way of taking care of them. If stories come to you, care for them, and learn to give them away where they are needed. Sometimes a person needs a story, more than food, to stay alive."

*(Barry Lopez)*

"I think it pisses God off if you walk by the color purple in a field somewhere and don't notice it."

*(Alice Walker)*

"We were made for something cosmic, and will not fit peacefully into anything much smaller."

*(Matthew Fox)*

"From being driven to being led, that is the inner change that takes place in me, as I feel it, when I consent to restlessness and find rest, so subtle a change that it can seem no change at all. And yet I do change from being driven by 'a consequence that lies behind me' to being led by a light that goes before me."

*(John S. Dunne).*

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### 3 Good Poems

"It is difficult to get the news from poems, yet men die miserably every day for lack of what is found there." ~ *William Carlos Williams*

Click on the titles below to read the poems online. You can also access them by going to the "**Writings**" page of my web site, finding the link for my "e-newsletters," and then clicking on the link for the Autumn 2013 edition.

1. "**Foundations**" (Leopold Staff)
2. "**Sex Ed**" (Betsy Sholl)
3. "**Night Vision**" (Suzanne Vega)

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### Resources For A Richer Life

*More than just "self-help," Resources For A Richer Life is meant to bring you music, movies, books, articles, web sites, events, videos, and more that will stir your soul*

*and awaken the deepest, most alive parts of you.*

(book): ***A Little Course In Dreams*** (Robert Bosnak). When people tell me "I can't remember my dreams" or "I don't understand why dreams are important," or "How can I learn what my dreams mean?" "...I send them to this small, 121 page book, which James Hillman called "full of surprises, charming, intelligent, subtle yet simple...not mystical or pompous as dream books tend to be. It never talks down. Ideas are original, deep, and many, and they are packed right into dream examples. This 'little course' is big stuff! There's nothing like it anywhere."

(movie/DVD): **"Love Is All You Need."** Grossly mislabeled as a "romantic comedy," this film is actually a poignant, realistic, life-affirming drama about the complexities of family, love, illness, and a testament to the resilience of the human spirit. Directed by Susanne Bier, written by Anders Thompson Jensen, starring Trine Dyrholm and Pierce Brosnan.

(online video): **"Jimmy Fallon, Sesame Street, and The Roots Sing Sesame Street Theme."** I was surfing the web on my cell phone one day at lunch when I came across a headline that read "This may be the happiest thing ever filmed." I let my curiosity overcome my wariness of hype...and I'm glad I did: this video is a creative, joyous celebration of a cultural treasure. I was already in junior high school when my younger sisters discovered Sesame Street, but I came to love it as "they" watched. Remember: into every serious, sophisticated, psycho-spiritual newsletter...a little Sesame Street must fall.

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## Individuals & Couples.

*"The greatest and most important problems in life can never be solved, only outgrown."*  
~C.G. Jung

I offer Jungian-oriented psychotherapy for individuals and couples. Whether you come to me with a problem or simply the sense that it's time for a change, I help you look at how that starting point is calling you to grow, and how you can respond to that call with creativity, vitality, and hope.

To learn more, visit my web site by clicking [here](#).

To schedule an appointment, or if you have questions, call me at (206) 523-1340.



## Upcoming Lectures & Workshops.

10/12/13: "Giving The Soul A Voice: The Unique Role of E-Newsletters In Conveying Therapeutic Wisdom," a workshop for therapists and other healers. ***If you'd like to attend at this late date, you must call Dan Keusal (206-523-1340) by noon on Friday 10/4/13.*** For details, click [here](#).

If you would like me to come speak to your group, please call me at (206) 523-1340, or [email](#) me.

On my web site, you can view a list of other [organizations](#) that have invited me to speak.

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That's it for this edition of my newsletter. As always, I welcome your comments and suggestions. You can call me at (206) 523-1340, or **email** me.

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