

CHRISTOPHER ROSS+

“Look back on your life and see if you can pinpoint the moment when everything changed.”

So says Willy Sutton, the infamous bank robber, in *Sutton*, the beautifully written and heart-wrenching fictionalized biography of him written by J.R. Moehringer. (New York: Hyperion, 2012, p. 83.)

If it isn't cheating, the following *two* moments qualify: in 1979 when I learned to meditate, and in 1985 when my (heterosexual) marriage broke up. Everything did indeed change, instantly, and so what better way to frame my own bio? (Thank you, Willy!)

It took about six months for my meditation practice to take root—I am so very grateful that I stuck with it—and 39 years later, my two or three daily meditations are the foundation of my day, and of my life.

Much of my time *off* the bench is spent studying consciousness itself and exploring Eastern and Western paths to enlightenment, including annual workshops with Tom Kenyon, a sound healer whose frequencies blow my mind and jack up my vibration every time I see him.

Meditation opened my mind and my heart to God. Moreover, every stop I have made along the way continues to inform my spirituality: the Judaism into which I was born, the Buddhism I studied when I lived in Hong Kong, the New Age philosophy I devoured in the 1980's, the Quakerism I adopted in the late 80's and to which I have recently returned, my baptism in the Episcopal church, and my ordination as an Independent Catholic priest.

Directly or indirectly, meditation and the two or three spontaneous out-of-body experiences I had over the years also led me to become a Reiki Master, an Intensive Care chaplain, a spiritual director, a vegetarian and then a vegan.

Coming out—the other “moment when everything changed”—is not, as many of us know, a one-time event. There were many moments prior and there have been many moments since. Nevertheless, the end of my marriage saved me from asphyxiation and catapulted me into gay life in New York. As tragic as that was then, it was also exhilarating. I was healthy, thank God, and I was *free*.

Other stuff about me?

I love:

Allan ... big cities ... literary fiction ... classical music ... officiating at weddings ... silence ... speed (not the drug-induced kind, at least not anymore) ... my therapist ... travel.

I hate:

dirt ... disorder ... people who drive under the speed limit in the left lane.

The photo of me was taken at a recent wedding rehearsal. Line up, everyone, or I'll rap your knuckles!