

— VIOLA FODOR —

*Where Have I Been
All My Life?*

— THE BEAN PARK CHRONICLES VOLUME 1 —



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Silence...I wonder what kind of world we would have if every day everyone took time to spend in silence. What would we discover by being still and calm and present? What would we discover collectively about ourselves, about humanity, about our place in creation, and about our possibilities? What would we discover about our capacity to be compassionate, wise, and strong? What will it take for us to look within, to connect with our spiritual core so that our healing can begin?

So began my second book. I was having trouble with it. I'd just finished one of my workshops, the last one before taking a sabbatical that would finally allow me to write full time. Sitting at a conference table after everyone had drifted away, I pulled a worn black binder from my briefcase.

All of a sudden I heard a light ‘tap tap’ behind me. I turned and saw a man standing at the door.

“Hello, can I help you?”

“I don’t know for certain, but I’m here to find out. I want to know more about your poster. It says, *‘Spiritual Healing.’*”

I glanced at the poster—a lovely eighteen by twenty-four in beautiful mauves, blues, and greens. Its central feature, a water lily. I chose it because it captured the essence of my work—the unfolding of life in its own true nature, just like the spontaneous growth and blossoming of a water lily.

The man was clean-shaven, clean-cut, in his early or mid-sixties.

“You must be Viola Fodor. I see in your bio you’ve had your own challenges. So you experienced a spiritual awakening and got well, and now you help others find their way. That’s remarkable, you know.”

I smiled. “Well, it’s been a quite a journey.”

“My name is Layton Earth,” he said warmly, still standing at the door. “I like what you say about using unhealthy patterns or crises as opportunities to change and grow. You say, *‘Through a guided process of self discovery and personal growth, you can connect with powerful, yet gentle ways to access your inner resources.’* Do you think I can access my inner resources when I haven’t been able to do it before?”

While I was deeply optimistic about people’s

inner capacities to help themselves, I didn't know how to respond to Layton. I had no understanding of what had brought him here.

"You caught me at a good time. Come in and sit down."

His arrival gave me reason to take a break. I'd worked and reworked my manuscript too much, like a car spinning its wheels only to entrench itself deeply into the mud.

"I want to know the meaning of life," Layton burst out as he rushed in to sit down.

"That's a bold request. Do you think we could start with something easier?"

"My life is passing me by, and I don't know what to make of it. You'd think I'd be okay with not knowing. But something inside doesn't let me rest."

Layton looked at me with sad eyes and an intent look on his face. There was something about him I couldn't ignore.

"Layton, I have a pretty good idea you're searching. Many people sense there's more to life, and no matter how hard they rack their brains, they can't get their heads around what's missing. I explored the same theme in my workshop today."

"So you believe there's more?"

"Absolutely."

"How come I haven't found it? I've tried hard enough and for plenty of years."

Can a conversation change your life?

Cynical, depressed, and near-suicidal, former rock-and-roller, Layton Earth, would never have believed it possible. Until, one day, he finds himself staring at a beautiful image of a lotus blossom on a poster about spiritual healing taped to a conference room door. The workshop is being given by psychotherapist, Viola Fodor, and Layton decides he has to learn more. He taps on the door, only to find Viola herself. She's facing her own challenge—a bad case of writer's block that's making it hard for her to finish her next book. But something clicks in Viola when they start talking and she realizes, they could help each other. Thus begins a life-changing conversation for both of them that would lead to *"Where Have I Been All My Life?"*, while awakening Layton to the true meaning of his life.