



Handout 3 - “Communing with the Dead”

Excerpt from “Communing with the Dead: I Followed the Grateful Dead to Escape and Ended Up Finding Home” by Amy Cuddy, Salon.com - June 21, 2019

In June of last year, with less than a week’s notice, my husband Paul and I scrapped our plans to go to Europe for our summer vacation and decided instead to follow the Dead for their entire West Coast tour (and some of the East Coast too). Over the next few weeks, we drove 4,000 miles in a rented truck, slept in 14 different places, ate at truck stops, and saw about a dozen Dead & Company shows.

Before we left, I was at a particularly low point—feeling alienated and broken by the destructive and seemingly relentless attacks and fights in my professional world—and in the world more broadly. It was my Australian husband, to whom the Dead was an entirely new experience, who suggested: “Let’s do what we know makes you happy—see as many Dead shows as we can.” It wasn’t meant to be life-changing; it was meant to be an escape. From myself. From the world. We’d go back in time to my carefree Deadhead days. But not long into the journey, I realized that I wasn’t escaping myself; I was returning to myself. I was going right back home. Right back to my roots. Right back to the things that have always been and will always remain my core values and beliefs and passions.

The things I feared were frivolous during my young Deadhead days, I began to understand in an entirely different way. They’re the very things I study, write and teach about: presence, listening, generosity, trust, authentic self-expression. The building blocks of healthy human interactions, cultures and communities. The things that we now know, through abundant scientific research, lead people and societies to thrive.

1950s "Family" television shows: *Leave it to Beaver* (Left) and *Father Knows Best* (right)



1980s "Family" television shows: *Family Ties* (Left) and *Growing Pains* (Right)

