

ISSUE 15

Insights and inspirations for living in the light

heart & soul

Formerly RETREAT Magazine

The Secrets of Silence

Rich in Things, Poor in Time

In Praise of Detachment

Five Moments of Truth

How Big is your Heart?

The Transforming Power of Beauty



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The Paradoxes of Our Age

We have taller buildings, but shorter tempers; wider freeways, but narrower viewpoints; we spend more, but have less; we buy more, but enjoy it less.

We have bigger houses and smaller families; more conveniences, but less time; we have more degrees, but less common sense; more knowledge, but less judgement; more experts, but more problems; more medicine, but less wellness.

We spend too recklessly, laugh too little, drive too fast, get too angry too quickly, stay up too late, get up too tired, read too seldom, watch TV too much, and pray too seldom.

We have multiplied our possessions, but reduced our values.
We talk too much, love too seldom and lie too often.

We've learned how to make a living, but not a life; we've added years to life, not life to years.

We've been all the way to the moon and back, but have trouble crossing the street to meet the new neighbour.

We've conquered outer space, but not inner space; we've done larger things, but not better things; we've cleaned up the air, but polluted the soul; we've split the atom, but not our prejudice; we write more, but learn less; plan more, but accomplish less.

We've learned to rush, but not to wait; we have higher incomes; but lower morals; more food but less appeasement; more acquaintances, but fewer friends; more effort but less success.

We build more computers to hold more information, to produce more copies than ever, but have less communication; we've become long on quantity, but short on quality.

These are the times of fast foods and slow digestion; tall men and short character; steep profits, and shallow relationships.

These are the times of world peace, but domestic warfare; more leisure and less fun; more varieties of food but less nutrition.

These are days of two incomes, but more divorce; of fancier houses, but broken homes. These are days of quick trips, disposable diapers, throwaway morality, one-night stands, and pills that do everything from cheer, to quiet, to kill.

It is a time when there is much in the show window, and nothing in the stockroom.

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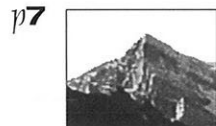
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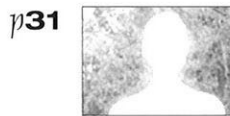
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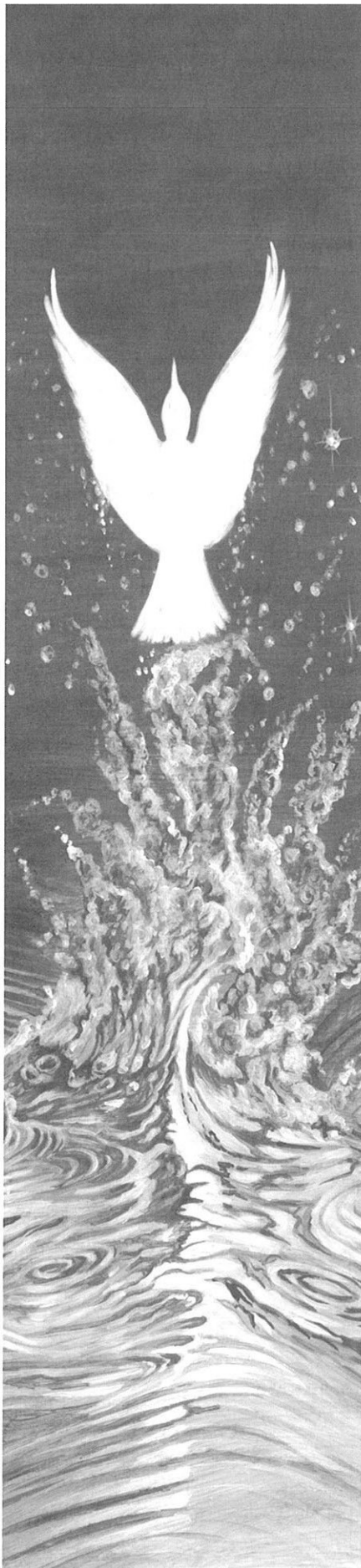
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Burnout *John McConnell*
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The Territory of Spirit

So we made it into the 21st Century, with hardly a glitch, and that bug turned out to be nearly much ado about nothing. In fact, the hi-tech rollercoaster gathers pace by the day, with no respect for time or space. Can you remember the prophetic visionaries of some two decades ago who said that by now we would have more time for greater leisure and longer pleasures? While most of us were entranced by such visions, few of us have escaped some aspect of the treadmill of accelerating change, in which our homes and offices are filled with whizzing gadgets, we are surrounded by mountains of paper and we make ourselves cellularly available twenty four hours a day! **Wolfgang Sachs** reminds us that we may have had our values upside down all along. In **Rich in Things and Poor in Time** he connects our priorities with a deeper awareness of the significance of time.

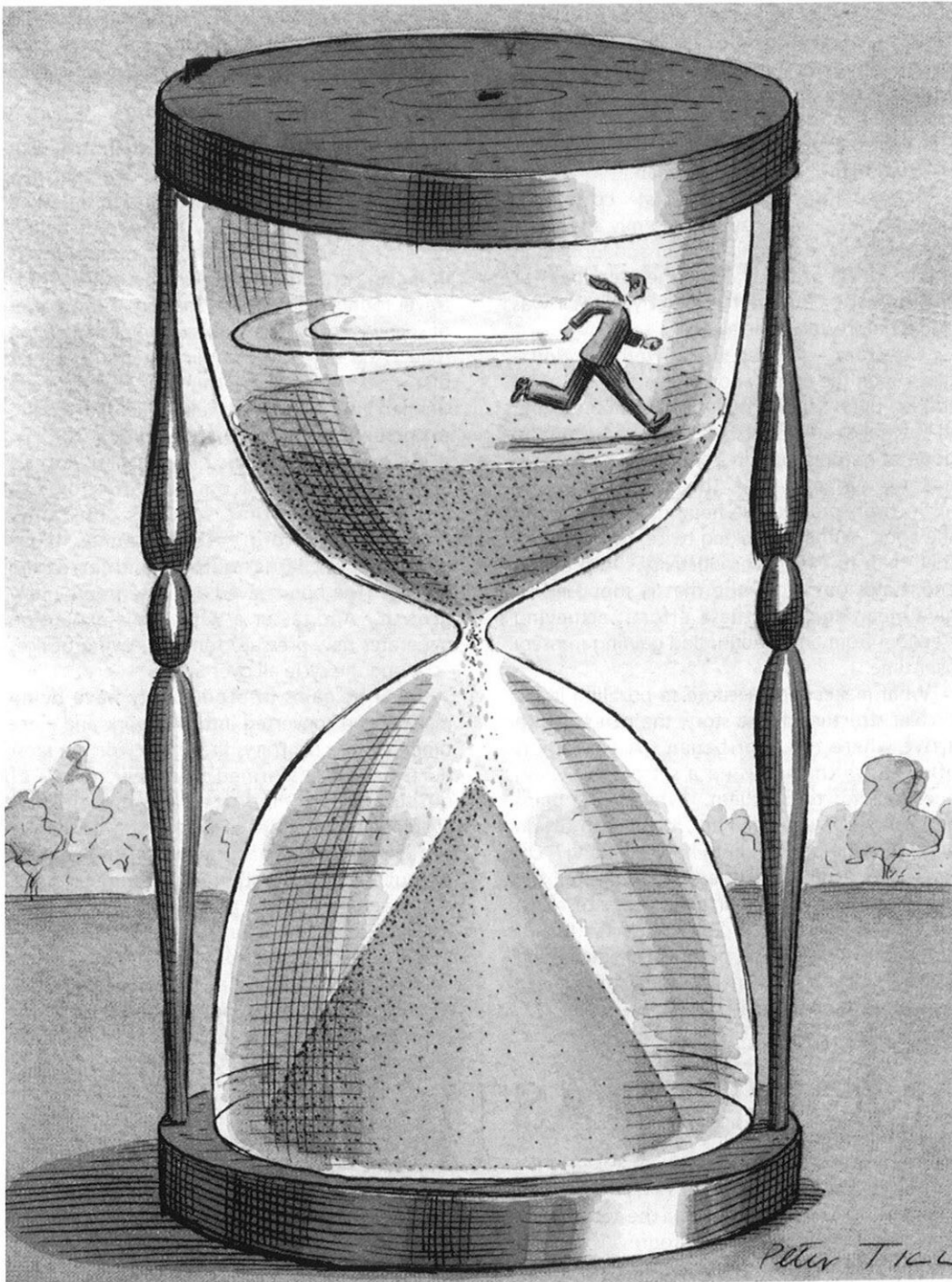
One reason it's all not going quite to plan is not so much our tremendous creative capacity for invention, but more to do with the nature of our inventions. Have you ever noticed how all our techno-toys are simply the functions of human consciousness, replicated by sophisticated and slick machines. The television and the computer generate and swamp us with images and information, much of it superficial and superfluous to our needs. There is no need to think and decide for ourselves, no need to stretch our imagination, dream our dreams and reach for our personal stars. It's all done for us, every day, across sixty channels, and down the cyberhighway. All we have to do is 'tune in'. And what do we do as the creators of such toys? We bow in worship to our creation. We even expect and demand that those same instruments restore peace and happiness to our stressful, unhappy lives? Deep down we all know that real leisure and pleasure, true peace and happiness cannot be found in such electronic sources, and that genuine contentment of heart and clarity of mind can only be found in the territory of spirit. Exploring this territory means we must do a different kind of work – an inner work – the work of meditation, detachment and spiritual empowerment. **Dadi Janki** illuminates some of that territory in **The Secrets of Silence**, as she shares some of her wisdom from sixty years worth of exploration. And then, **Meister Eckhart** is a voice from the past, with a timeless message about the need to let go. In **Praise of Detachment** he describes the kind of personal effort that is required to restore our spiritual power.

But who will lead us through the jungle that is our modern age. No one but ourselves, according to **D.H. Groburg**. We are all leaders in training he says, and in **The Five Moments of Truth in Becoming a Leader** he highlights the core values and principles at the heart of all effective leadership.

And yet, the intellect is not enough, as **Charles Hogg** reminds us in **How Big is Your Heart**. We all have a heart filled with love and understanding, which must be allowed to express as true compassion if we are to find our destiny in deepest contentment.



RICH IN THINGS POOR IN TIME



WOLFGANG SACHS
explains why
the poverty of
time degrades
the wealth of
goods.

A tourist focuses in on a most idyllic picture: a man in simple clothes dozing in a fishing boat that has been pulled out of the waves which come rolling up the sandy beach. The camera clicks, the fisherman awakens. The tourist offers him a cigarette and launches into a conversation, "The weather is great, there is plenty of fish, why are you lying around instead of going out and catching more?"

The fisherman replies: "Because I caught enough this morning."

"But just imagine," the tourist says, "you would go out there three or four times a day, bringing home three or four times as much fish! You know what could happen?" The fisherman shakes his head. "After about a year you could buy yourself a motor-boat," says the tourist. "After two years

“ The utopia of affluence has undercut the utopia of liberation. ”

you could buy a second one, and after three years you could have a cutter or two. And just think! One day you might be able to build a freezing plant or a smoke house, you might eventually even get your own helicopter for tracing shoals of fish and guiding your fleet of cutters, or you could acquire your own trucks to ship your fish to the capital, and then . . .”

“And then?” asks the fisherman.

“And then”, the tourist continues triumphantly, “you could be calmly sitting at the beachside, dozing in the sun and looking at the beautiful ocean!” The fisherman looks at the tourist: “But that is exactly what I was doing before you came along!”

The story – told by writer *Heinrich Boll* – plays upon the hopes and fears of the rich. The tourist, upon seeing the lazy fisherman dozing in the sun, remembers his fears of becoming poor, of getting stuck in a situation in which he has no options. At the same time, he instinctively projects the hope of the rich upon the poor. Without thinking twice, he outlines a road map to expand productivity. And at the end, holds out a promise that is supposed to give meaning to all these efforts: achieving freedom from one’s labour and gaining mastery over time.

What makes the anecdote so puzzling is the circular structure of the story; the rich strive to arrive where the poor began. A paradox is offered, which throws up a set of unsettling questions for the affluent. Why all the pains and efforts of development, if the rich attain only what the poor seem to have all along? Or, worse, how come that the rich, despite all the hustle and bustle, appear never even to reach the state enjoyed by the poor? For if the tale of development consists in progressively acquiring a wealth of time, then rich societies today have evidently missed the mark. What went wrong?

In remembrance of time

As is often noted, the economy of time is at the core of any economic action. From Arkwright’s Spinning Jenny to Bill Gates’ web browser Explorer, we know that most of the technology employed for the pursuit of progress is used in the belief that doing more things faster is better than doing fewer things more slowly. Indeed, the ability to save time has always been the hallmark of productivity revolutions, which have transformed patterns of production and consumption over the last 200 years.

From the very start, far-sighted men and women saw the reign of freedom rising at the horizon, a realm where toil would finally cease, vastly increasing the ability of people to engage in activities of their own liking. Hunting in the

morning, fishing in the afternoon, raising animals in the evening, engaging in literary criticism after dinner. This imaginary day was an ideal not just of the young Karl Marx. But what happened to this Utopia? Where has all the time gone?

The use of the automobile can serve as a case in point. From the outset, it was hailed as the ultimate time-saver, dramatically shortening the time it takes to reach a desired destination. But contrary to popular belief, drivers do not spend less time than non-drivers in moving from one place to the other. They travel to more distant destinations. The power of speed is converted to more kilometres on the road. And time saved is reinvested into longer distances. As a consequence, the average German citizen today travels 15,000 km a year, as opposed to only 2,000 km in 1950.

Across many sectors - from transport to communications, from production to entertainment - time saved is constantly transformed into greater distances, more appointments, larger outputs and increasing activity. The hours saved are eaten up by new growth. And, after a while, this expansion generates new pressure for time-saving devices - starting the cycle all over again.

Gigantic gains in productivity have by no means been converted into less work and more time. On the contrary, they have, for the most part, been transformed into new rounds of output and commodities. It is evident that everyone could afford to work just a fraction of today’s normal working hours, if levels of output had stayed stable over time - just as everyone could afford to spend much less time on all kinds of daily chores if levels of aspiration had not also changed. It is the relentless expansion in output and aspirations that continues to eat up each generation of productivity gains. The Utopia of affluence has undercut the Utopia of liberation.

Why is there never enough?

The fisherman in our story would be amazed at the never-ending urge for more in already rich societies. After all, he was satisfied with his morning catch and could then afford to rest. The issue is one that has been examined before: John Maynard Keynes, one of the master thinkers of 20th Century economics, wondered if an exceedingly successful economy would not at some point reach a state of saturation. In his ‘Essays in Persuasion’ he speculated that the imperative of productivity might lose significance under conditions of affluence, as abundance makes it less and less important to allocate means optimally. But rich societies still



fail to conform to that expectation. They are hooked on the principle of non-saturation. Why do they ignore the notion of 'enough'?

What matters in such a society is the symbolic power of goods and services; they are more than ever simply vehicles of utility: they serve an expressive function. What counts is what goods say, not what they do. In modern societies goods are means of communication. They constitute a system of 'signs' through which a purchaser makes statements about him- or herself. While in the old days goods informed about social status, today they signal allegiance to a particular lifestyle.

Many products have by now been perfected and cannot be developed any further; new buyers can be found only when these goods offer more symbolic capital. Cars that cannot become faster and more comfortable are designed to be technological wonders. Watches that cannot show the time more accurately take on a sportive flair when they become diving watches. Television sets whose images cannot become clearer take on a cinematic effect with wider screens. Designers and advertisers are continually offering consumers new thrills and new identities, while the product's utility is taken for granted.

In such a context, the relationship between consumer and product is shaped mainly by imagination, which is infinitely malleable. Feelings and meaning are anything but stable; their plasticity and ease of obsolescence can be exploited by designers in an unending variety of ways. Imagination, in effect, is an inexhaustible fuel for maintaining a growing supply of goods and services. For that reason, the expectation that rich societies should one day reach a level of saturation has not come about: when commodities become cultural symbols, there is no end to economic expansion.

Frugality and well-being

Beyond a certain threshold, things can become the thieves of time. Goods have to be chosen, bought, set up, used, experienced, maintained, tidied away, dusted, repaired, stored and disposed of. Likewise, appointments have to be sought, co-ordinated, agreed upon, put into the diary, maintained, assessed and followed up. Even the most beautiful of objects and the most valuable of interactions gnaw away at our time - the most restricted of all resources. The number of possibilities - goods, services, events - has exploded in affluent societies, but the day in its conservative way continues to be just twenty-four hours long. Scarcity of time is the nemesis of affluence. The rich may have plenty of things, but are poor in time.

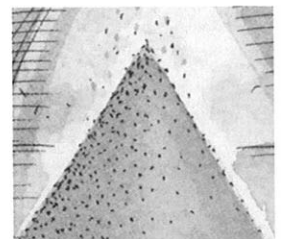
In fact, in a multi-option society, people do not suffer from a lack but from an excess of opportunities. While well-being is threatened by a shortage of means in the first case, it is threatened by a confusion about goals in the second. The proliferation of options makes it increasingly difficult to know what one wants, to decide what one does not want, and to cherish what one has.

Human well-being has two dimensions: the material and the non-material. Anyone who buys food and prepares dinner has the material satisfaction of filling his or her stomach, and the non-material satisfaction of having enjoyed cooking a particular cuisine or partaking in good company. This non-material satisfaction requires attention, which means time. The full value of goods and services can only be experienced when they are given attention: they have to be properly used, adequately enjoyed and carefully cultivated. Having too many things makes time for non-material pleasure shrink; an overabundance of options can easily diminish full satisfaction. So poverty of time degrades the richness of goods. In other words, there is a limit to material satisfaction beyond which overall satisfaction is bound to decrease.

Frugality, therefore, is a key to well-being. Indeed, it is often the inability to exercise a certain degree of frugality that is at the core of the problem of time. The art of living requires a sense for the right measure. Less can definitely be more. The modern consumer society continually squanders the wealth of time. In an age of exploding options the ability to focus, which implies the sovereignty of saying no, becomes an important ingredient in creating a richer life. Without that ability, the lament of dramatist Odon von Horvath may become the universal apology, "I am really an entirely different person; it's just that I never get around to showing it."

It goes without saying that without a wealth of time, there is bound to be less generosity, less compassion, less dedication and less freedom - a sort of modernised poverty which the fisherman innately understood, and the tourist only reluctantly became aware of.

“...the ability to focus, which implies the sovereignty of saying no, becomes an important ingredient in creating a richer life.”



Wolfgang Sachs is presently with the Wuppertal Institute for Climate, Environment and Energy, in Germany. His most recent book is Planet Dialectics: Explorations in Environment and Development.



Jacqueline Berg talks to Dadi Janki about the power and importance of silence.

JB *This morning, during the Peace conference in Noordwijkerhout 'World Peace, Inner Peace', you were sitting on the stage with a group of elderly, wise people. After you delivered your speech, you were standing there in complete silence and I felt you were saying something.*

DJ When we are in silence, we are even beyond thought. The feelings in your heart are visible through the eyes. The feelings of the heart, the peace that I experience from God, is not something that I can express through words, but through my eyes. God doesn't come into sound so He doesn't say anything, in fact He is the One who takes us beyond

The Secrets of Silence

sound. As human beings we have the habit of coming into sound, while God can free us from that habit. Human beings tend to have the habit of thinking a lot, and of using their intellect a lot, asking many questions having doubts. So God says, "Don't do all of that, be silent!"

In fact this is what everybody wants, is it not? This is what we are hungry for. We are tired of listening and speaking, and this silence removes that tiredness. Just by sitting quietly in one place, our inner battery is charged. That which is negative finishes, and we begin to develop the understanding of thinking good thoughts. My heart tells me this is what I must do.

JB *I think it also requires practice, I know myself that before I started to meditate simply sitting down in silence didn't give me any peace of mind.*

DJ Yes, it is true, nothing happens if you just sit quietly. We definitely have to allow the mind to become still and stable, but we have to do that sitting in one place. We have to quieten the intellect with understanding. We have to understand how and why we are doing it, otherwise it is possible that one could become depressed.

JB *What is depression, can you define it?*

DJ Suppressing everything inside us. We are not able to find solutions to how we are feeling, solutions from ourselves or from other people. We become depressed because we think a lot, but we are not able to do all the things we think about. When we work very hard and we are not able to become successful, then we become depressed. When there isn't the experience of real love, seeing the world of deception around us, we become depressed.

JB *But what is the remedy, especially when a lot of wasteful thoughts and feelings may come up when depressed people sit down in silence?*

DJ Give them good thoughts to think about, positive and right thoughts, so that they are able to nourish the mind. When somebody is physically ill, their body becomes very weak and they may need glucose or blood. You then have to know what is needed, because if somebody needs glucose and you give them blood or if they need blood and you give them glucose, that is not going to help to strengthen them.

I had a little dream the other day. There was a strong pain in my toe and afterwards I realised I was dreaming and the toe was fine. It was as if somebody really pressed my toe hard. When you press something there is pain.

If we suppress our feelings then that suppression causes pain within ourselves. So it is not a question of suppressing our feelings, because there won't be the experience of peace, but to change them by gently and quietly by observing them. Some say, "I have pain" and they keep thinking and speaking about it, but you are not going to remove your pain by doing that. But if you sit peacefully, in silence, there is the

possibility of removing that pain. Pain has penetrated our feelings. My understanding tells me the pain will go, but first I need to separate myself from the pain by observing it and being peaceful. Some people need a little bit of understanding in terms of clarity, some need love, and some need power and strength. Whatever it is that a person needs, when they receive that, new hope awakens in them. They begin to experience new life, a new way of thinking. Some even have a lot of fear as a result of a lot of unnecessary doubts. When there are doubt it is as if all sorts of things happen inside, like a sickness.

JB *Isn't it very human to have doubts? So many things are happening in a human life and nothing is certain, so there are questions and doubts.*

DJ Having doubts means we haven't recognised or understood truth. It means truth has not yet become a part of our life. Faith and conviction about something is created through our intellect as well as through our heart. When we have a feeling about something and it becomes a reality then we begin to become certain about it. Or when something is in our understanding and it becomes clear on the intellectual level we also begin to be certain. Whilst something does not seem right to me, even on an intellectual level, then I am going to create doubts. As human beings we understand the difference between right and wrong, truth and falsehood, we do understand, but we are under the influence of falsehood and searching for truth. We don't know whether we are going to find truth or not, this is also a form of doubt.

JB *Also of hopelessness, perhaps?*

DJ Yes, when I went to America for the first time, many years ago I realised how much fear, worry and hopelessness there is in today's world. If we were to become free from these three, we would be able to do anything. There is nothing to worry about. Engage in good thoughts. When you engage yourself in good thoughts, you are able to create hope inside you. When there is hope there is no fear, because you create courage to do what you have to do. A good cure for everything is meditation, it helps us not to worry about anything, but to engage ourselves in the eternal



thoughts of God. This is the best medicine for spirit.

JB *Can Dadi clarify the difference between the mind, the intellect and the heart?*

DJ All three are used by every human being. Heart means the feelings that come from the spirit. When things are not working out, then it is the heart that feels the pain. In terms of the mind, everyone talks about peace of mind. They don't say that they want their intellect to become peaceful; they want their mind to become peaceful. What does the heart want? Love, real love. Then the mind also becomes peaceful. Mind becomes peaceful when the heart experiences love. From a very young age until we become older we want to experience love.

When I have the experience of true love, then I will be peaceful. If I don't experience true love, I will not be peaceful. I look at the world and see the world is peaceless because people are not able to give and experience real, true love. People seem to be deceived all the time, and the two main things that deceive them are relationships with people, and with wealth and possessions.

JB *How can the mind become peaceful?*

DJ The mind becomes peaceful for a while and then gets kicked from this side and that, so how can the poor mind become peaceful? Then the intellect, that part of us that understands clearly also has the power to bring into practice what it understands. But intellect doesn't seem to have the strength to do it. People are caught up in clashes with others. A clash of ideas, of personality and the intellect spins with thoughts of someone else. You become so impressed with someone else that you totally lose yourself as if you are unable to have your own sense of 'self'. First the clash and then the spinning. It is as if the human spirit isn't being nourished, like trying to drive a car that has no fuel, and you have to push to make it move. Everybody is pushing himself or herself in terms of life. This is why there is hopelessness. They say, "What can I do, I have to do something". Then they find and use external methods such as drugs.

JB *Coming back to peace and love, which comes first, peace of mind or a heart with true love?*

DJ Firstly we have to use our understanding and clarify things in the intellect. We need to remove the sorrow that is in our heart, accumulated as a result of deception. Last Thursday someone came to see me, she told me she had avoided seeing me for the last year and a half, because she thought that when she came to see me, she would just burst into tears. So she had come, parked the car outside the front door, but did not come in and drove away again. She said that about a year and a half ago, her mother died and that it had deeply affected her. She kept asking herself, "Why did this happen to me?" This created a lot of sorrow and suffering inside her. She said, "I never cried so much in my life as when my mother died. I did not want to cry. So I did not want people to ask me, "How did she die?" If they did, I would start crying". Sometimes we think too much about something and fill our hearts with all sorts of feelings. So I sat with

her for an hour and I explained to her with a lot of love. I knew her mother as well. In that hour I spent with her, she said she had the feeling that she had experienced more love than from her mother. I said to her, "Okay, your mother has died and she is not here any more, but why have you forgotten the love she shared with you?" She was really struck by that. "Your mother died, but she did not take the love she gave you with her". From that moment she started to smile.

JB *So the experience of true love heals?*

DJ We have to understand what true love is. Our interpretation of love is physical, gross love. But love is a deep feeling from the heart, and that is something that is not taken away just because someone has died. I explained this to myself first, before I explained this to anyone else, that true love only comes from God. Take true love from God, so that your heart can be strengthened and you are able to give love to other people. Without the experience of God's love the mind becomes peaceless and unhappy.

JB *Even people who are in love are very peaceless.*

DJ Human love is never going to make you peaceful. I would say that those who are satisfied because of human love have a foolish intellect. In fact human love makes human beings foolish. They cannot turn to God and take God's love, because they are catching hold of someone else, for a short period of time.

JB *I must admit they behave a little strange sometimes.*

DJ God's love is so beautiful. You can't receive God's love by asking for it from God. All you have to do to have an experience of God's love is have a true and honest heart, then you receive endless love from God.

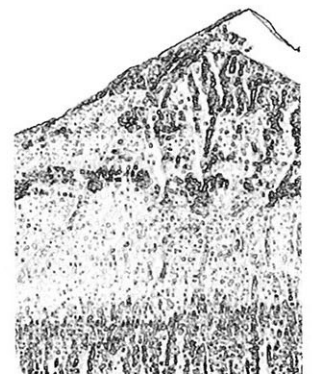
JB *What is an honest heart? There are a lot of interpretations of honesty. Some people think they are very honest, but they lie all the time.*

DJ Two virtues are needed to have an honest and true heart. I should not be possessive, attached to the consciousness of my own body or bodily relations, and I should not have any personal desires for myself. Become free from both of these. God gives so much to us. In our relationship with Him, the One who gives an experience of true love, you also experience the wealth of knowledge and understanding. Personally, I have the feeling that God is decorating me with many virtues, so that I can show my face to the world in a state of egolessness and free from anger.

Why should one with a true and honest heart get angry? Why does someone get angry? Because they are attached to something or someone, and they are not receiving what they expect from the other, so they get angry. The one who gets upset can never sit on their seat of self respect. They are constantly unstable.

JB *Can you trust your feelings? Suppose you think*

“...in today's world there is fear, worry and hopelessness. If we were to become free from these three, we would be able to do anything.”



“ Why does someone get angry? Because they get attached to something or someone, and they are not receiving what they expect from the other, so they get angry. ”

you have a true heart and you sincerely love, can you trust those feelings or do you have to sharpen your intellect to understand them more?

DJ Some think that they know, but they are cheating themselves a little bit. The proof of having true love is that I will be self aware and I will have the consciousness of myself as a being of light, which has no physical form at all.

JB *What is a spiritual personality?*

DJ A person who has the experience of true love will have a spiritual personality. It is a love that is beyond the consciousness of the physical body. They can easily maintain spiritual love. It is not easily disturbed. They will have the feeling that they are egoless and viceless. There will be no negativity within them.

When I don't have the consciousness of "I am this", when I don't have the ego of the self in any way whatsoever, my attitude will touch others. They will say, "this one has the experience of true love in her life and she is taking love from God".

JB *What is the connection between true love, peace and silence?*

DJ When the experience of peace and love come together, then we are able to go into a state of deep silence inside ourselves. It is as if we dive deep into the ocean and find many beautiful things.

JB *But does it start with love or with peace?*

DJ We want the experience of love, but in the process we become hungry for praise and recognition from other people. When we experience God's love then the hunger for recognition from others finishes, and we begin to experience true peace. We have defined what we mean by love, but what do we mean by peace? Peace is actually our original religion.

There is the expression 'religion is might' but which religion and what might? When somebody leaves their religion, then it is as if they become weak. They don't have inner strength and they wander around here and there, searching and looking. When there is truth in my love then I am able to experience peace and I recognise there is nothing that can make me peaceless - nothing that allows that peace to be disturbed. We begin to have

confidence in ourselves. We begin to have faith in God, because that One has given me the experience of real love and peace.

JB *So it starts with the heart. If the heart experiences true love then the mind becomes peaceful, and the two together give an experience of silence.*

DJ There is a difference between peace and silence, although in Hindi it is the same word. It is easier to separate the two in English. We say, "Be quiet, stop speaking!" That is being peaceful. The mind wanders here and there, and the intellect says to the mind, "Use your understanding, stop wandering around here and there!" The mind and the heart have a conversation with each other, a dialogue. My understanding tells me and my intellect says, "I want to explain to my mind". But what is filled in my heart comes to the surface. That then pulls the mind. So the intellect says, "Clean out your heart!" A heart that was filled with things from the past then begins to become clear.

People like peace, but until their heart is emptied out, no matter how clever they are, or how much they understand, it is as if their sensibility doesn't seem to work. They sometimes say, "It's okay, leave me alone, I'll sort myself out. I am working on myself". When you feel like that it is good to take co-operation from someone, and to open your heart to someone you can trust. The intellect understands and knows what to do, but it will not take help or co-operation from someone else, because of its ego. Ego doesn't allow the heart to empty itself, because the ego will say "Well, what are they going to understand from it"?

JB *Does ego also prevent realisation?*

DJ Ego is our first and most severe enemy that won't allow us to move towards God. First there has to be the realisation of what ego is. One of the wisest teachers in this University once said to someone, "See this one, she has many qualities, but she has no realisation of the little that is negative within her. In fact she has ego about all the good qualities she has. But this other appears to have fewer good qualities, but she realises and accepts this. Now, watch and see who is making spiritual progress and bringing about transformation in herself. It is going to be the one who has realisation and recognition, even though she doesn't have so many qualities".



Realisation frees us from that which is false. Realisation cleanses your mirror and then you are able to see yourself in that mirror. You will then become a mirror in which others can see themselves. This is what it means to have realisation.

JB *Why do we have the expression 'silence is golden'?*

DJ Because when we become peaceful and start to experience true love, we are able to go deep inside and find the treasures that are there. Then we are also able to take many beautiful gifts from God, gifts that we have a right to take. First we have to learn to take help from God, then the realisation that 'this is what I have to do'. The one who has courage in this way is able to take help from God and then receive blessings from God.

JB *Do you need silence in order to experience God's love?*

DJ Yes, you need silence because without silence there is nothing. Just as in our physical world there is the need for science, because without the facilities of science we would be in a world of darkness, in the same way we need silence to experience God. People have become subservient to science, but it is the experience of silence which will uplift the soul and ultimately the world.

Silence means: with peace and love, only think about that which it is essential to think about. When you speak words, speak with silence and understanding. Speak that which will bring benefit to others. Don't speak anything that will cause sorrow to anyone even slightly. Speak that which will remove the sorrow of others. Silence helps us to learn virtues and powers of spirit, which we all have in abundance, and it also helps us to put those into practice.

JB *Does silence assist in the healing process?*

DJ Yes. Around 14 years ago I became seriously ill. As those around me at the time will tell you, silence was essential to my recovery. Sometimes you sit in the sun to make the body healthy, and it is the rays of

the sun that help cure the body. In the same way, sitting in silent meditation is like sitting under the spiritual sun, God the Sun. Total healing took place through that, as if those rays penetrate the spirit.

JB *Can we also heal the earth?*

DJ The earth also needs people to give it good, powerful vibrations. In India people still worship at the feet of those whom they believe are doing this kind of work. They say that the earth also benefits from the truth that is inside of them, so every step they take on the earth benefits the earth. Let me tell you something funny. I never wore high-heeled shoes because I thought that wearing high-heel shoes will cause pain to the earth, just by walking tic-tic-tic like this. I never ever wore high-heeled shoes!

To walk gently on the earth, my sweet earth, this is the earth on which we sit comfortably, even if it is three square feet of land, and remember God. This is the earth on which we lie down, comfort and rest ourselves. This is the earth that produces food that feeds us. The earth is called the field of action; whatever is the seed you sow here, you eat the fruit accordingly.

The seeds that we sow should be seeds of elevated actions. Our quality of action should be such that others are able to take benefit and eat the fruit of those actions.

Meditation also gives us the power to perform good actions. If your actions are not good, will you be able to meditate well? If somebody says he meditates, people will turn around and look at him and at the quality of his actions. If they don't have quality they will ask, "What kind of meditation does he do?" If someone lies and cheats and says they meditate, will someone believe them? This was one of the reasons why I stopped adopting gurus and scholars as those who can teach me.



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Jacqueline Berg is writer, author and Director of the Brahma Kumaris in the Netherlands.

“
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Don't take Sorrow



Kiran Coyote explains the difference between pain and sorrow, why others sorrow is not meant for personal consumption and how to avoid making a meal of it!

"Do unto others as you would have them do unto you."

"Judge not, lest ye be judged."

Having been raised a Christian, the wisdom of the Golden Rule and its derivatives were a big part of my understanding about how one should live one's life. I also inherited a somewhat dim view of my own worth and a keen sense of my own shortcomings, which meant my worst fear was that criticism and condemnation might be 'done unto me'. I therefore made a special effort to be non-judgmental and forgiving, hoping that would be 'done unto me' instead.

Whenever something was done unto me from which I took sorrow, I added it to my inner landscape of low self-esteem, for I believed that sorrow was my lot. "Mea culpa" was my subconscious motto. Yet often my immediate feeling was "I don't deserve this!" Knowing that "as I sowed, so I would have to reap," I refrained from deliberately giving anyone sorrow in return. However, I was not above silently blaming and cursing the person I thought responsible and secretly wishing them sorrow.

I know that I'm not the only one who does this! How often we button our lips and denounce others in our minds. We accuse and blame through our thoughts while feigning a smile. Or we write the other person off in our 'book' and gradually excuse ourselves from keeping their company. We think this doesn't matter because there's no 'hard' evidence that we've actually hurt anyone. We feel justified in our judgment and never consider there may be a price to pay for making it. Most of the time we don't even realize we've made a judgment. Our attitude feels so 'right', so correct. When even our close relationships aren't working very well, we never consider that our own mental attitude has anything to do with it.

My continuing search for wisdom eventually led me beyond the teachings of the Christian faith, beyond forays into many other religious, philosophical and occult studies, and onto a more spiritual path on which I have felt at ease for over 20 years. I have learned (and am still learning) that sorrow is not my fundamental lot, but rather a temporary condition which has a beginning and an end. I am gaining an understanding of

myself which includes a positive, wholesome vision of my original nature; an understanding which encourages me to accept my shortcomings without negating my value as an individual. Oddly enough, I've found that compassionate acceptance of my shortcomings is the prerequisite to moving beyond them.

I wasn't far along this path before I encountered the slogan, "Don't give sorrow, don't take sorrow." What strange twist of the Golden Rule was this? I wondered. The second half of this injunction puzzled me because, whilst I could understand that sorrow would come back to me if I dished it out, whilst I could accept the responsibility of refraining from hurting anyone, I could not grasp how it was possible to avoid taking sorrow. As far as I could see, sorrow just comes unbidden as part of life. I couldn't see any connection between what I was receiving with what I had done unto others. Isn't taking sorrow just a natural human condition?

Gradually, two aspects of spiritual knowledge have helped me make sense of the implications of this slogan. The first is a deep understanding of the great Law of Karma, the essence of which is captured in the Golden Rule. I began to realise that even the movement of my thoughts and feelings are subtle actions and reactions, also subject to the Law of Karma.

Gary Zukov, in his groundbreaking book, *The Seat of the Soul*, explains karma with great clarity:

"Every action, thought, and feeling is motivated by an intention, and that intention is a cause that exists as one with an effect. If we participate in the cause, it is not possible for us not to participate in the effect. In this most profound way, we are held responsible for our every action, thought and feeling, which is to say, for our every intention. We ourselves shall partake of the fruit of our every intention. It is, therefore, wise for us to become aware of the many intentions that inform our experience, to sort out which intentions produce which effects, and to choose our intentions according to the effects that we desire to produce..."

Every cause that has not yet produced its effect is an event that has not yet come to completion. It is an imbalance of energy that is in the process of becoming balanced."

Karma works on the principle of Newton's Third Law of Motion. For every action there is an equal and opposite reaction. However, as Zukov describes it, karma is an 'impersonal energy dynamic.'

"Karma is not a moral dynamic. Morality is a human creation. The Universe does not judge. The law of karma governs the balancing of energy within our system of morality and within those of our neighbours. It serves humanity as an impersonal and Universal teacher of responsibility."

Because it is an 'impersonal energy dynamic', it is not a simplistic balancing that takes place, as in "an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth" or "tit for tat". This is why trying to "settle the score" does not work. Trying to get even in this way creates additional karma, or, in Zukov's terms, "another imbalance of energy which, in turn, must be balanced."

The second aspect of spiritual knowledge that helps me understand "Don't give sorrow, don't take sorrow" is the concept of reincarnation, which says that the karmic, energy-balancing dynamic of my journey as an immortal soul continues over time and through numerous lifetimes. This explains why the connection between an effect and its underlying cause is not often apparent to what Zukov calls "the five-sensory" personality or what could be called the 'body conscious self'. It also means that everything that goes around eventually does come around, without exception.

When I realised that nothing can escape the law of karma, I became even more careful to suspend judgment and prevent negative emotions from developing towards anyone, regardless of what they might be doing. Now, however, I maintain this caution, not out of fear of what others might do to me, but of what I am doing to myself. Gradually I am coming to accept that any sorrow coming to me is the effect of an event that I myself once set in motion, that I am partaking of the fruit of some past intention of mine.

But then, the question still remains: how can I not take sorrow?

First let me distinguish between pain and sorrow. That they are not the same is evidenced by our frequent use of the expression 'pain and sorrow'. Pain is a

“ As far as I could see, sorrow just comes unbidden as part of life. I couldn't see any connection between what I was receiving with what I had done to others. ”

“ We are volleying pain and sorrow back and forth between us like tennis balls. The sorrow that I am wishing on them is eventually going to land back in my court. ”

signal or symptom that tells us something is wrong, that an imbalance is present, that there is need of healing. It is not the imbalance or the illness itself.

In our culture, we are conditioned to avoid pain at all costs. This is because we haven't understood pain. By making the pain go away, whether through drugs, alcohol, venting our anger, workaholism or other dysfunctional behaviour, we are merely treating the symptoms and not the underlying cause of the pain. We are in fact suppressing the pain. Anything suppressed or denied builds up pressure and erupts, usually in some far more serious form, sooner or later. It doesn't matter whether we are dealing with pain in the body, pain in a relationship, pain between the haves and the have-nots, or pain between races or nations.

Sorrow is my emotional reaction to pain. It is the depression which can accompany chronic illness; the grief which accompanies a loss, whether it be the loss of face or the loss of a friend. It is the fear and mistrust which follow the pain of being deceived, the righteous indignation which flares when one is insulted, the anger that follows the discomfort of being manipulated.

Healing begins when I accept the pain. Karma is created when I express the sorrow or other negative emotion that accompanies the pain.

Acceptance of pain doesn't mean invoking it. Nor does it mean simply tolerating it or bearing up under it. It means making a connection between the pain and its underlying karmic cause. In order to heal, I must allow myself to feel the pain and the hurt, not to dwell on it, but to acknowledge and understand what it is trying to tell me. I can alleviate the pain by taking the pills, by sharing or confiding in someone who cares for me and whom I can trust, by working through and transforming my emotions through meditation, counselling or other positive means. But if I really want to heal, I cannot deny it, escape from it, or rationalise it away. And I most definitely will not heal if I take sorrow from the pain by heaping blame, shame, judgment, guilt, anger and recriminations upon myself or others because of it. For in doing so I'm adding

insult to injury, harbouring grudges and resentments, and further depleting my spiritual vitality.

I can learn to accept pain and heal my karmic imbalances only when I have a strong sense of my worth or value as a human being. At the deepest, innermost level, the way I think about myself and the regard I hold for myself is what determines my spiritual strength and vitality. In order to heal my karmic imbalances I must not only understand the cause and treatment of the imbalance, I must also know how to strengthen myself as a whole being.

“Wait a second”, you must be thinking. “This is all very well, but, doesn't the one who hurt me have any responsibility? Do I just become a martyr? Where's the justice in all this?”

The Law of Karma guarantees that we live in a just universe. I must remember that whoever is wounding me is going to get back what he or she is giving out in equal measure—not from me, but from someone, somewhere. Eventually, he or she will unavoidably experience the sorrow that I am now receiving. But does this knowledge make me happier? Does it give me satisfaction? Do I think, “OK you so and so, you'll get yours one day!” If it does, then it is as if I am wishing upon the person who wounded me the sorrow that I am feeling. We are volleying pain and sorrow back and forth between us like tennis balls. The sorrow that I am wishing on them is eventually going to land back in my court. A better course of action is compassion. Let me instead think, “May they never have to suffer what I am going through right now.” Let us, like Jesus did, forgive them—for they know not what they do. This intention stops the volley and the game.

A deep understanding of karma can give us a perspective which Zukov calls 'non-judgmental justice'. Non-judgmental justice is a perception that allows you to see everything in life, but does not engage your negative emotions. Non-judgmental justice relieves you of the self-appointed job of judge and jury because you know that everything is being seen—nothing escapes the law of karma—and this brings forth understanding and compassion. Non-judgmental justice is the freedom of seeing

what you see and experiencing what you experience, without responding negatively.

If I do not either give sorrow or take sorrow, what kind of person will I become? OK, maybe I won't be judgmental, but will I become insensitive to others? Isn't it important to empathise with another's pain, to experience it as my own? There is a saying "By sharing happiness, it doubles; by sharing sorrow, it halves." Does it follow that if we all shared each other's sorrows there would be less sorrow in the world? Well, no it doesn't. Let's be honest. Feeling another's pain does more to make me feel alive and involved than it does to alleviate that other's sorrow.

Sometimes I take sorrow from what has happened in the past. I remember it, relive it, regret it, feel remorse over it. You might think this could itself be a way of balancing the energy, but in fact it further depletes it, because I'm not generating anything positive with my energy in the present. Whatever I need to deal with from the past will come up for me sooner or later in the present, so I don't need to keep going back into the past to recall it. Many faith traditions speak of the dire consequences of looking back. There are far more positive ways to heal. Just as a sick person can change his or her diet and start an exercise program, so also I can begin to nurture myself with positive thoughts and feelings, and engage in positive, selfless actions. This is a relatively painless way of redressing even long-term karmic imbalances.

Sometimes I take sorrow from things which are not intended to cause me sorrow. Someone inadvertently does something and I start interpreting the person's actions and building a case against him or her. Then I ultimately judge/decide the case and render the verdict, "He or she is like this or like that". Learning not to take sorrow also means learning how to be less sensitive or vulnerable, how not to take things personally.

Sensitivity which reflects an irritable or a delicate, easily offended temperament is a sensitivity rooted in dissatisfaction with the self, in low self-esteem. It is this sensitivity which convinces me that I am a victim, which then robs me of self-awareness,

transforms my response-ability into reactivity and renders me powerless.

So how not to take sorrow? Develop a kind and compassionate relationship with yourself, a solid sense of your own value. Heed the messages in your feelings, learn from your pain, accept responsibility for your karma. Forgive others and send them only good wishes and positive vibrations. Let the past be the past, remain compassionate but unaffected by the pain of others, refrain from taking things personally.

In every tradition there are memories and visions of a world free from sorrow. Have the faith that it will some day be a reality, and that we can bring it into being all the sooner by stopping the giving and taking of sorrow. Let us resolve to give and take only happiness.



Kiran Coyote is the Director of the Brahma Kumaris Centre in Vancouver, Canada

“Sensitivity which reflects an irritable or a delicate, easily offended temperament is a sensitivity rooted in dissatisfaction with the self, in low self-esteem.”

Tips to alleviate pain and stop taking sorrow

When something hurtful happens, view the pain as a messenger. Notice your emotional reactions and understand them as something which you caused someone to feel in the past. Love the pain for letting you know, and forgive yourself. Send the person who is hurting you love, forgiveness and pure good wishes.

Be proactive. Be the one who stops the sorrow from going any further. Realize the excellent karmic return that you will create for doing so. Don't dwell on the pain, hurtful remarks, etc., watch your thoughts.

Don't hold painful feelings inside, let them out in a safe environment where they won't harm you or others. For example, go to the seashore and fling rocks into the ocean, hike up a mountain and wail at the moon. Or confide your troubles to someone whom you can trust, not to be affected by what you say, not to gossip to others or to use it against you. Get some perspective on your problems by looking at them within a larger framework of reality.

Let the past be the past.

Shift the energy! Put on some uplifting music and sing or dance.

Find something that makes you smile or laugh. Spend some quality time with a child.

Clean out your room, or a cupboard or the basement. Open the windows, let in light and air.

Create some good karma: give and take only happiness.

In Praise of

Near the end of his life Meister Eckhart was condemned as a heretic; but he was without doubt one of the most brilliant and subtle heretics of the Middle Ages. At his trial particular phrases and sentences were extracted from his writings and compared unfavourably with orthodoxy. It was a procedure which was grotesquely unfair, as one of the inquisitors – a man who later became pope – acknowledged; a few words, taken out of context, cannot possibly reflect the full meaning of a person's ideas. Eckhart's heresy lay not in specific doctrinal quibbles, but in the entire way he approached truth. And his ecclesiastical mentors were right to be suspicious of him, since Eckhart's method, taken to its conclusion, undermines the entire purpose of large religious institutions. In this short extract from his writings he focuses on detachment as the way to let God into our hearts.

I praise detachment more than love. The best thing about love is that it compels me to love God. Detachment, on the other hand, forces God to love me. It is much nobler that I should compel God to love me, than that I should compel myself to love God. The reason is that God can join and unite himself to me far more closely than I can unite myself to him. Detachment compels God to love me because everything loves to be in its own natural place. God's natural place is where there is harmony and purity; and detachment brings those qualities. Thus God must of necessity love a detached heart.

I also praise detachment more than love because love forces me to suffer all things for the sake of God, while detachment makes me receptive of nothing except God. It is far nobler to be receptive of nothing except God, than to suffer all things for the sake of God. When people suffer, they naturally focus their minds on the external causes of their suffering. But detachment has no external causes. Detachment is receptive of nothing except God because the process of something being received must involve a receptacle. Detachment creates a spiritual receptacle for God because it empties the heart of everything, making way for God. And God is so simple and so gentle that he can easily enter a detached heart. Thus detachment is receptive of nothing except God.

As well as praising detachment above love, I praise detachment above humility. This is because humility can exist without detachment, but perfect detachment cannot exist without perfect humility. In fact perfect humility is inclined to destroy itself, whereas detachment leaves nothing to destroy. Thus humility leads towards detachment - and two virtues are always better than one.

I also praise detachment more than humility because perfect humility bows down before all creatures, treating all creatures as superior; in this way humility makes people focus on that which is external to themselves. But detachment remains within itself. Looking outwards can never be as noble as remaining within the self. Detachment does not bow down before anything, nor assert itself above

anything. It wishes to be neither above nor below. It wishes to stand on its own, causing neither joy nor sorrow to anyone, wanting neither equality nor inequality with anyone, desiring nothing in particular. It does not wish to become anything. If people wish to become something, they cannot be detached, because detachment wishes to be nothing. For this reason detachment is a burden to no one ...

You might ask: "If detachment is so noble, what exactly is it?" Detachment is this: the spirit is unmoved by joy and sorrow, honour or disgrace; detachment is like a mountain of lead being buffeted by the wind. Those who have become immovable in this way are like God. For God to be divine he must be immovable; and from this comes his purity, his simplicity and his changelessness. Thus if people are to become like God, insofar as this is possible, they must acquire detachment. This will lead to purity; and purity will lead to simplicity; and simplicity will lead to changelessness. That is how people become like God. But this process depends on God's grace, since divine grace draws people away from worldly and transient concerns.

To be empty of worldly concerns is to be full of God; and to be full of worldly concerns is to be empty of God. For all eternity God has been detached and immovable. When God created heaven and earth and all that they contain, his immovable detachment was stirred as little as if creation had never occurred. Moreover, all the prayer and all the good works that people can perform in the world have as little effect on God's detachment as if those prayers and good works had never been performed. Thus God will not be more pleasant or more favourably disposed towards humans as a result of those prayers and good works. Indeed, I will go further: when the Son wished to become a human being, and was born in Bethlehem and died on the cross, this affected God's immovable detachment as little as if the Son had never become a human being.

You might reply, "That means all our prayers and good works are vain, because God cannot be moved by such means. Yet we are told that God wishes us to ask for everything we need." God, in his first eternal glance (if

Detachment

one can speak in such a way), saw how all events were to unfold; he discerned how each event would be caused; he looked upon every creature that would ever exist; and he saw when the Son would be born as a human being and suffer. He also saw the smallest prayer and tiniest good work that anyone was destined to perform, and considered what his response would be. He saw, for example, that a particular person will pray to him for a particular object tomorrow. But he will not answer that prayer tomorrow, because he has answered it from all eternity - from long before the person praying was even conceived. Conversely, if a particular prayer by a particular person is not sincere, God will not refuse that person now, because he refused from all eternity.

Thus in his first eternal glance, God considered all things, and he decided all things; so he does nothing that he has not already chosen to do. God is always immovably detached ...

To understand detachment more fully, you need to recognise that there are two distinct aspects to human nature. The first is the outer person, which depends on the five senses; yet it operates by the power of the soul. The second is the inner person, the innermost part of human nature. Religious people who love God direct the soul towards the outer person only to the extent that the five senses require. The inner person is not concerned with the five senses, except to guide and lead them. The inner person takes care to prevent the five senses becoming enslaved to external objects, and thence going out of control.

Once the soul has dealt with the five senses, she devotes herself entirely to the inner person. And when she conceives a particular high and noble purpose, she draws back into herself all the energy she has lent to the five senses. This is why very holy people are often called senseless, or even mad; their focus of attention is an image within the mind, or even something transcending the mind which has not image. Indeed, God expects every holy person to love him with all the powers of the soul. There are some people who entirely dissipate the energy of the soul in outer matters; they direct themselves completely to the acquisition of wealth and pursuit of pleasure, and ignore the inner person.

The outer person may be suffering great pain and sorrow, but the inner person remains detached and immovable. Even in Jesus Christ there was an outer and an inner person, as there was in Mary. Whenever Christ or Mary spoke of outer feelings, their inner selves remained immovably detached. At the time of his crucifixion Christ expressed profound sorrow; and Mary wept profusely as she

watched her son suffer. But even at this dire moment, they remained detached.

Let us use an analogy to describe this. I compare a door to the outer person, and the hinge on which the door swings to the inner person. The door moves every time someone opens and closes it; but the hinge does not move, remaining in one place.

A person may ask, "What is the object of pure detachment?" I answer that pure detachment has no object. It aims at nothing. Or, more precisely, it aims to submit itself absolutely and without reserve to the will of God. Yet God's will cannot rule in all hearts; he can only rule if the heart is ready, or if he makes it ready through his grace. Thus God works differently in different hearts. We can find a parable of this in daily life. Imagine that you light an oven, and put inside it four pieces of dough, made of oats, barley, rye and wheat respectively. There is one heat in the oven, but it does not produce the same results in the dough. One piece turns into a fine loaf, the second is rough, and the third and fourth rougher still. The heat is not responsible for this, but the materials are. In the same way God does not achieve the same results in all human hearts; his achievements depend on their readiness and receptivity. Indeed, he will achieve very little in a heart filled with worldly lusts and desires.

Thus, if the heart is to be transformed, it must make itself ready. It must aim at nothing; and then it will have the highest possible goal. When the heart is truly directed towards nothing, it will be truly receptive towards God. We can find a further parable. Imagine that I want to write on a wax tablet, and find some extremely fine words already written on it. But if I am to fulfil my desire to write, I must delete all those fine words. In the same way, when God wishes to write on my heart, everything that is already on my heart, however fine it may be, must first be deleted. Then God can do what he wants with my heart. Thus the object of the detached heart must be nothing.

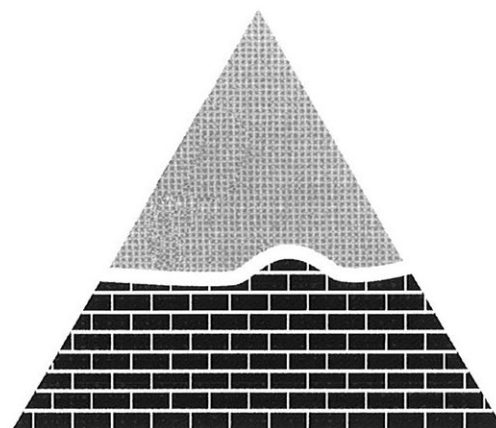
What, then, is the prayer of the detached heart? The answer is that purity and detachment cannot pray. Prayer means asking God for something to be given, or something to be taken away. But the detached heart does not ask for anything at all, nor does it wish to be rid of anything. Therefore it is free from all prayer - apart from praying to be unified with God. The prayer of detachment is submission to God.



*Extracted from Philosophers of Spirit Series published by Hodder and Stoughton.
Edited by Robert Van De Weyer.*

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Detachment does not bow down before anything, nor assert itself above anything. It wishes to stand on its own, causing neither joy nor sorrow to anyone, wanting neither equality nor inequality with anyone.
”

Five Moments of Truth in becoming a leader



Becoming a leader is not something that one can do overnight. It's a gradual developmental process similar to the growth of a tree. It's not like a float in a parade that is quickly put together with tinsel and crepe paper, then discarded and of no use the day after the parade. Leaders grow and develop by the choices they make.

D.H. Groberg describes five choices that lead to great leadership - called the Five Moments of Truth in Becoming a Leader.

I first heard the term 'moment of truth' referred to in a bull fight. It is the point when the matador is standing alone with the sword waiting for the final charge of the bull. How he performs at this moment determines the outcome and success of the bull fight. Another example of a moment of truth is in the movie, Chariots of Fire, when the runner, Harold Abrahams, is talking to his friend, Aubry, the night before his hundred meter race. He says,

"I'll raise my eyes and look down that corridor four feet wide with ten lonely seconds to justify my whole existence."

To him, that was a moment of truth.

There are three things that I would like to say about these Moments of Truth:

1. They are sequential. That is, each one depends on the one before it. Unless you have passed Moment One, you don't have the opportunity to move to Moment Two, and so forth.
2. They are progressively more difficult. Not only is each dependent upon the previous one, each is progressively more challenging than the one before.
3. All of the 5 Moments are within an individual's Circle of Influence. No one else does or can determine the choice.

Picture for a moment a person inside a camera. It's completely dark inside. Then the shutter clicks. When this happens, the person sees, for a brief moment, the light from the outside. Then the shutter closes again and it becomes dark again. The light from the outside represents the true possibilities of people in becoming the type of leaders to which they aspire. The challenge is to keep the shutter open; to be able to see clearly and continuously the vision of their full potential.

For each of these 5 Moments I will give a name, some examples, ideas on 'how to' do it, and the results or effect each has on oneself and others.

Moment One: Discovering One's Core Principles and Values

Around the sixth century B.C., the Chinese philosopher Lao Tzu talked about leadership. He said,

"The leader shows that style is no substitute for substance... that creating an impression is not more potent than acting from one's centre."

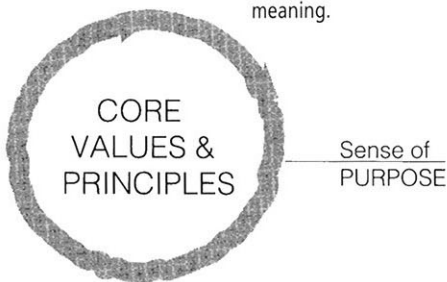
Almost 2000 years ago, a Roman historian by the name of Plutarch researched the lives of great leaders in the Greek and Roman civilisations. In his book, Plutarch's Lives, he refers to Alexander the Great, Pericles, Solon the Lawgiver, and so forth. Plutarch talks about a common quality in all great men. He described it as a **sense of destiny**. Shortly after the turn of this century, a man by the name of Napoleon Hill looked at great leaders of his day. Among the ones he talked with and surveyed were Andrew Carnegie, Henry Ford and Charles Schwab. In trying to uncover the common traits of these leaders, Hill concluded that the common thread was that each had a **sense of mission**. In 1989, two professors of the Stanford Business School, Dr. James Collins and Dr. Jerry Porras, analysed over 100 successful executives with whom they had observed and worked. Their conclusion reflected that the ingredients common to each were a **sense of purpose, mission, and vision**.

Deciding and writing down one's core principles and values is the first Moment of Truth. As such, it is the easiest to do. And yet, my observation in working with people throughout the world is that perhaps not one in a hundred people have done it - not one in a hundred really comes to grips with what they really believe and what principles they choose to govern their lives. For a leader, deciding core principles and values is an essential step. As James Callaghan, former Prime Minister of Britain put it,

"In my judgment, a leader should have a core philosophy and belief against which he can judge the important issues as they arise. Unless he has that bedrock to fall back on, the unexpected storms that blow up will toss him about like a cork. Without such a foundation, a leader may be able to survive, but he won't be a leader in the sense that I use the term."

How does one develop a core set of values and principles? The key is deep introspection, and writing out a personal mission statement. For a mission statement to be effective in one's life it must be **read regularly**.

The primary result of developing a core set of values and principles is that it gives one a sense of **purpose** and meaning.



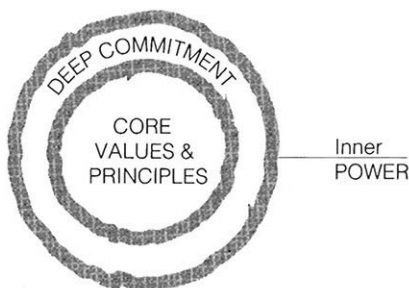
Moment Two: Making a Deep Commitment to one's Core Principles and Values

A recent poll showed that one of the most serious problems in America today is the gap between what we believe and our commitment to those beliefs. A deep commitment to one's core Principles and Values is the second Moment of Truth. If reactivity is defined as responding based on the feelings at the moment, then I would like to redefine the concept in this way: If we build our emotions into our core values, then we can and will respond based on our feelings because **they will be the same as our core values.**

When the heroine, Joan of Arc, was confronted with a difficult military challenge, none of her men-in-arms believed that it was possible to achieve the objective. She told her general-in-chief that she personally would lead the attack. The general responded, "Not a man will follow you." Her response was, "I will not look back to see if anyone is following me". This is an example of the type of commitment that I am talking about here.

How does one develop commitment? I believe the key is to **commit before the event.** Don't wait until you are in a situation to make a decision on how you are going to act. Decide beforehand, based on your values. Make a mental decision by picturing yourself in the situation. You're much more likely to respond based on values in the real situation when you have done it first in your mind.

The result of a deep commitment is an **inner power.** This power comes not from the core principles and values alone but from the strength of the commitment to them.



Moment Three: Aligning Behaviour and Actions to One's Deep commitment to Core Principles and Values

Once when Mohandas Gandhi was speaking in England, he held a group of people spellbound for several hours, speaking without explicit preparation, without notes, and in a relatively uncomfortable environment. The crowd was enthralled with what he had to say. Reporters were there, and afterwards tried to talk with Gandhi to

understand how he was able to speak so convincingly without notes or preparation. Unable to get to Gandhi because of the crowd, the reporters spoke to Gandhi's secretary, Mahadev Desai, about his remarkable man. Desai replied to their questions,

"What Gandhi thinks, what he feels, what he says, and what he does are all the same. He does not need notes."

He was all lined up, and at one with himself.



When our deep commitment to our core values and principles is lined up with our behaviour and our actions, we have integrity. It is interesting to note that the root word for integrity is the same as the root word for integer - both meaning oneness. And note our use of language here: a person who is at one with himself 'has it all together', is 'straight', 'in line', and so forth.



In Shakespeare's play, Hamlet, Polonius gives the following advice to his son Laertes:

"This above all: to thine own self be true, and it must follow, as the night the day, thou canst not then be false to any man."

The great German philosopher, Friedrich Nietzsche, described it this way,

"We may lie with our lips but we tell the truth with the face we make when we lie".

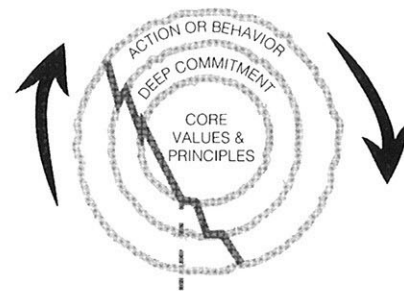
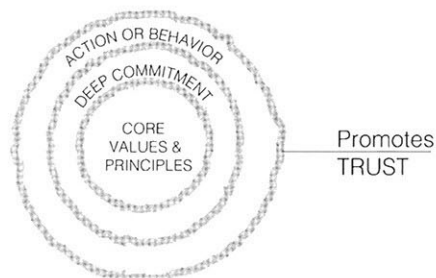
Again in the movie, Chariots of Fire, the Scottish runner, Eric Liddell demonstrates this integrity when he finds that his race (the hundred metre dash) is on Sunday. Being true to his values, he refuses to run on the Sabbath. Even when the Prince of Wales, the future King of England, tries to persuade him otherwise, he refuses saying that even though he loves his country, he cannot sacrifice his personal integrity. Finally another runner steps in and allows Liddell to take his place, but in a much longer race. One of the Olympic committee members describes the situation saying that it was a good thing Liddell had stuck to his convictions because as a true man of principle and a true athlete, his speed was a mere extension of his life force, of who he is.

That's the way it is with everyone. We all act from our core. For each of us our behaviour is a mere reflection of who we really are at our core.

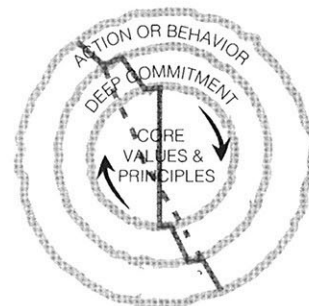
“ The leader shows that style is no substitute for substance... that creating an impression is not more potent than acting from one's centre. ”

How do you consistently line your actions up with your core values? I believe it is only by constant effort; by getting up whenever we fall; by constantly reviewing and committing to one's values, and deciding first in our minds how we are going to behave.

The result of this consistency, this inner integrity, is **trust**. The first two Moments are private. Nobody sees them. They are **within** a person. But they are reflected in the Third Moment through behaviour. People **sense** when a person is acting out of deeper values. Because of the trust that this alignment promotes, people are willing to follow that type of a person. Without it they feel manipulated and only follow grudgingly, if at all.



change to line up with our behaviour. And we become someone different.



And what's wrong with that? Is that not integrity? No. Not at all. There are two problems. First, if we change our values because of our behaviour, then we essentially have no values. We may behave in any way we feel at the moment, and then change the values to correspond. It's like having no anchor: like being driven by the winds and the waves and the influences around us. We have what are known as 'situational ethics'.

Second, if we have thought out our original principles and values so that they are based on timeless truths, and then changed them, we would then have a dysfunctional core. It would be an incorrect map and would not lead us where we want to go.

But what effect does admitting we are wrong and self-correcting have on trust? If we straighten our behaviour to match our core values (in other words, self-correct) it usually **increases trust** rather than diminishes it. An example will illustrate this.

My daughter, Tanya, had always been a good student. One day she came home from college with tears in her eyes because she had received a 'C' in bowling, no less! She explained that she had not done very well and that none of the class had done very well. As a result, towards the end of the semester, the instructor asked each of them to go out on their own and bowl three games, keep track of the scores and turn them in. He promised he would weigh their grade heavily by these three games. Tanya went with a couple of friends and bowled the three games. But she falsified the scores. If she hit one pin she recorded five. If she hit five pins she put down eight, and so forth. The other students did the same. They even hinted that the instructor expected them to alter the scores and because everyone else was doing it, if they didn't they would be unjustly punished. Then, as they were leaving the bowling alley, Tanya said that she felt that it just wasn't right. Even if the teacher expected it, even if all the other students did it, it was not consistent with her values.

So, she returned to the bowling alley, paid the money again, and bowled three more games. As she related the story to me, she said, "I did worse than I did the first time!" But, she reported the true scores and, as a result she received a 'C'. I told her that in my opinion that was

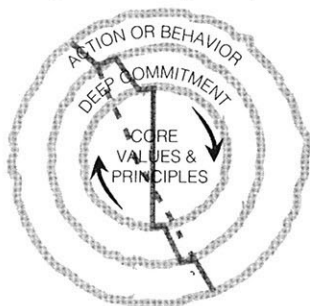
“ What people choose to do when their behaviour is not consistent with their core values, determines what they will become. ”

People don't follow a leader only because of what he does or says at the moment. They follow him because of what he has done and said in the past and because of what they believe he will do and say in the future. His power to lead is much deeper than his actions. It's in his being – what he is.

By acting consistently upon values and principles to which he is deeply committed, a leader generates trust in his followers. The foundation of great leadership is in the being – the inner self.

Moment Four: Self-Correcting When Out of Line

It's almost impossible for people to align their behaviour consistently with their commitment to their core values. Often they are off just a little in their commitment. When this happens they may become even further off in their behaviour. They experience a feeling of being misaligned. The language we use reflects this. When a person's behaviour and commitment are not lined up with his values, we say that he is 'crooked', 'twisted', 'out of line', needs to 'straighten up'.



This fourth Moment of Truth is the moment of becoming. What people choose to do when their behaviour is not consistent with their core values determines what they will become. At this point almost everyone feels pressure to 'straighten up', to 'get back in line'.

This is the moment of becoming because if we do not respond quickly and straighten our behaviour to line up with our core values then our core values may gradually

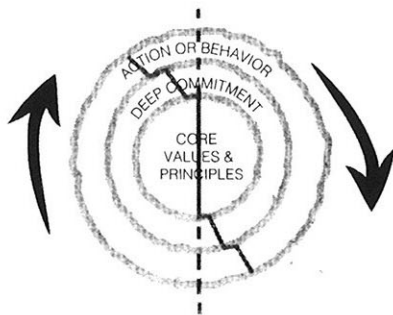
the highest grade she had ever got - the 'C' above high 'A', a 'C' for courage - courage to stick up for her personal values. And what happened to my trust in her? It soared.

The runner, Eric Liddell referred to earlier, ran in the quarter mile race - a race four times as long as the one for which he had trained. At one point he was pushed and fell down, but he got up and still won the race. He self-corrected. One of the coaches there described it as, "...not the prettiest race, but certainly the bravest."

It takes courage to be loyal to what you believe and to self-correct when you are wrong. Because it is difficult it offers an opportunity for greatness.

When someone is willing to self-correct it offers hope. Everyone is struggling with their own actions, trying to line them up with what they really believe. It's the examples of those who self-correct that offer hope to everyone.

SELF-CORRECT — Offers HOPE



And how does one self-correct? I don't know exactly how, but I believe the key is to do it fast; do it immediately after you realise you are in the wrong and inconsistent with your core values. If you wait you may begin to rationalise and to bend your commitment and your values to line up with your actions.

Moment Five: Allowing and Helping Others to Self-Correct

In his book, *Bonds of Anguish, Bonds of Love*, Terry Warner says,

"There are two ways of being a person. One is alienated, anxious and resentful; the second open, resonant, straightforward and generally speaking, buoyant. The basic thing to say about this second way of being a person is that when we live according to it, we are about other people, we are able to see them as they really are, rather than as helps or hindrances to the advancement of our interests. They, which is to say their feelings and hopes and needs, are real to us... Each of us chooses one or the other of these two very different ways of being and we make the choice from moment to moment by how we look and treat other people".

Caring about others releases their potential. This is partly because people don't care about how much you know until they know how much you care. Tom Watson of IBM put it this way:

"I believe that the difference between success and failure in an organisation can very often be traced to the question of how well the organisation brings out the great energies and talents of its people".

It's this fifth Moment of truth that brings out the energies and talents of people.

And how do you do it? How do you allow and help others to self-correct? I believe the key is in our attitudes. It is embodied in the following rule: Don't take offence and don't give offence. As Ken Heyes says,

"We make ourselves and others suffer as much when we take offence as when we give offence."

I have a friend who does my tax work. One day when I was at his home going over the numbers, the door-bell rang. He went to the door. A young boy scout was standing there, "Hey, mister, do you want to buy a ticket to the Scout-a-rama?" he asked. "How much are they?" my friend asked. "It's one dollar, and that's good for the whole family." My friend bought one and we went back to work. Ten minutes later the door-bell rang again and another boy scout stood at the door and asked, "Do you want to buy a ticket to the Scout-a-rama?" I was waiting to hear my friend say, "Oh, I'm sorry. You came too late. I've already bought one." But instead, what I heard was, "Sure. How many do you need me to buy?" That's an example of caring rather than taking offence.

When we are about others and allow and help them to self-correct and grow, we give them **value**. It may be this very feeling of being valued that creates the environment that promotes growth in people.

ALLOW/HELP OTHERS — Gives VALUE

Now we come to perhaps the most important question, "Why would anyone do these things?" Why would anyone want to pursue these Five Moments? If we do them because they work, the paradox is that then they probably won't work. I believe that the only valid reason to do them is because they are part of our nature, because we believe them, **because it's us**.

As D.H. Lawrence put it:

"Man should never do the thing that he believes to be wrong. Because if he does he will lose his singleness, wholeness, natural honour. If you want to do a thing, you've either got to believe, sincerely, that it is your true nature to do the thing or else you've got to let it alone."

Victor Frankl described it this way.

"Don't aim at success. The more you aim at it and make it a target, the more you are going to miss it. For success, like happiness, cannot be pursued. It must ensue. And it only does so as the unintended side effect of one's personal dedication to a cause greater than oneself. You have to let it happen by not caring about it."

If you do it because it's your true nature, then the paradox is that it does work. Not always immediately, but over time. Immediately it often fails. And that's the final test. For example, my daughter got a 'C' in bowling. Eric Liddell was not able to run in the race at first. And when he did run it was in a race four times longer than the one he trained for. Joan of Arc was burned at the stake. It was twenty four years later that she was canonised as a Saint. If one motivation to do these things is not because they work, can one really do them? Is it just an image? Is it realistic to think of conforming one's life to a set of core principles and values? This is something each person must decide for himself.

“ It takes courage to be loyal to what you believe and to self-correct when you are wrong. Because it is difficult, it offers an opportunity for greatness. ”

Let's move back into the camera, again. We experience short flashes of insight and belief, but then it becomes dark again. When the light is not shining through, doubt creeps in. But, as Shakespeare said,

"Our doubts are traitors and make us lose the good we oft might gain by fearing to attempt".

By doubting, we betray ourselves. In doing anything that we feel we shouldn't do, we betray ourselves. And when we don't do something that we know we should do, we betray ourselves. We even betray ourselves with our feelings. This can be illustrated by the minister who saw a man sleeping in his congregation. He was very upset and sorely tempted to comment on the evils of sleeping in church. He almost said, "Why even come if you're just going to sleep." After the sermon the man's wife came up to the minister, commended him on the wonderful sermon, and said how much she and her husband loved it. She said that even though her husband was dying of cancer and could hardly stay awake because of the medication and treatment he was receiving, there was no place he would rather be than in church with this minister. The minister's feelings immediately changed. But his original feelings were false. The sleeping man had not made him angry and upset as he had thought. It was the minister who chose that emotional response.

Another story will help to further illustrate the betraying nature of feelings. A woman at Heathrow Airport in London was waiting for a place to fly back to America. She purchased a box of cookies and a book while waiting for her flight. With cookies sitting on the table next to her, she began reading her book. Suddenly a British gentleman sitting on the other side of the table reached over, opened up the cookies, took one out and ate it. He smiled at her as he did it. The woman was horrified but didn't say anything. She just reached over, grabbed a cookie and ate it herself. The man smiled, reached over and took another cookie and ate it. The woman, becoming very upset and angry (but not speaking), took another cookie and ate it.

And back and forth they went until all but one of the cookies were eaten. And then, as though to add insult to injury, the British gentleman took the last cookie, smiled, broke it in two and slid half of it over to her. After eating his half, the British gentleman got up, smiled again, bowed politely and walked off. By this time the woman was livid. But before she could confront the man or do anything else, her flight was called. She opened her carry-on bag to put the book away, and there in her bag she noticed **her** box of cookies. She had been eating **his** cookies! And, more importantly, **she** had been generating **false** feelings of anger, resentment and accusation towards this man who himself had actually been experiencing what **she thought** she was experiencing. Yet, his reaction was not resentment, not anger, but pleasant sharing.

We create our own feelings and we often betray ourselves by creating counterfeit feelings. When we doubt that we can live according to our values - when something happens and we feel like reacting counter to what we believe inside - what do we do? Or more seriously, when we begin to convince ourselves and rationalise that we believe other than what we have

said we believe, how do we straighten ourselves back up? I think there are two things we can do that will help to bring us back to reality.

First: Drop any resentment that we have towards anyone.

Second: Perform some unselfish act of kindness.

Another example from Joan of Arc puts all of this in perspective. When Joan was accused of witchcraft and asked to recant stories of the voices she had heard, she refused, saying that even if she were under the Judgment and saw the fire before her, and even if she were in the flames she would not change what she had said. She was put to the stake and when the fire was brought to her she was given one last chance to recant. Looking down the centuries, she spoke the immortal words,

"I know this now. Every man gives his life for what he believes. Every woman gives her life for what she believes. Sometimes people believe in little or nothing yet they give their lives to that little or nothing. One life is all we have and we live it as we believe in living it. And then it is gone. But to sacrifice what you are and live without belief, that's more terrible than dying. Even more terrible than dying young".

And at nineteen, this young peasant French girl gave her life rather than sacrifice her character. Even though few people are asked to sacrifice their lives for their character, character should have that much value to us.

So leadership is primarily an inner quality. It's the continuous surmounting of five moments of truth. Not just once, but again, and again, and again in an upward cycle. It's:

1. Deciding One's Core Principles and Values
2. Making a Deep Commitment to One's Core Principles and Values
3. Aligning Behaviour and Actions to One's Deep Commitment to Core Principles and Values
4. Self Correcting When Out of Line
5. Allowing and Helping Others to Self-Correct

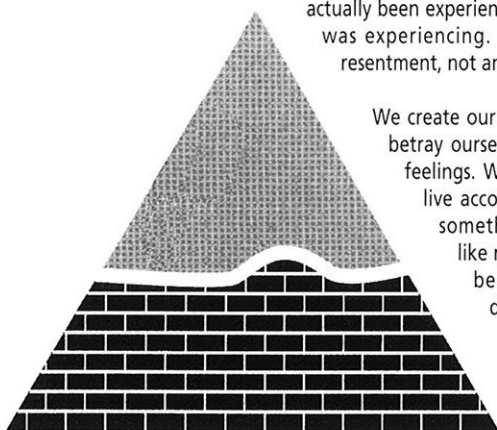
These five moments of truth are the basic elements that result in great leaders.

We are all in this world together. It's as though we're all in the same race with Harold Abrahams and Eric Liddell. We are all **both** participants and spectators. We make mistakes and we fall along the way. And we hope others will allow us to get up, even **help** us to get up. At the same time, we need to allow and help others to get up, too.



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“ By doubting, we betray ourselves. In doing anything that we feel we shouldn't do, we betray ourselves. And when we don't do something that we know we should do, we betray ourselves. ”



HOW BIG IS YOUR HEART?

Charles Hogg wonders if we are beginning to suffer from compassion fatigue!



Recently, I opened the Sydney Morning Herald to find the front page almost entirely covered by a photo of a little boy standing in the streets of Dili, East Timor. His hair was unkempt, his pink shirt was many sizes too big and hung loosely off one shoulder. He was bare-footed and clutched a little bit of bread in one hand. But this little boy's face told a story to each person who opened the paper that morning. It was a face of complete and utter despair.

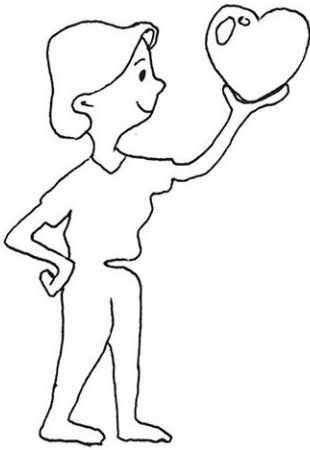
We are used to it. We are all plugged into the global media. Every day we watch the wonders and horrors of the world from our lounge rooms. A few months ago it was Kosovo, more recently East Timor, one wonders what will be next? We watch hundreds of thousands of people displaced, losing homes, losing family members losing everything. Do you ever think "What if it were me".

Does it seem real? Or does it seem like yet another TV show? What happens inside as we watch this seemingly endless trail of human misery. Do you feel angry? Do you feel

depressed or even a little hopeless? Perhaps you feel desensitised to it all, or even happy it's not you. One friend told me recently, as soon as the cameras begin to peer into the faces of despair he turns it off. "I can't stand it any more". He expressed a genuine concern that maybe he was losing compassion for his fellow human family.

Compassion is one of the most basic qualifications of being human but the overload of trauma dished up through the media has created compassion burnout. Do I feel anything anymore? Am I motivated to act for others or is it all too overwhelming.

How do you react? I have been asking myself how much compassion do I have. Do I have selective compassion? I feel for those in the Kosovos and East Timors of this world, but what about those I live and work with. Does my heart extend to them, or do feelings of judgment and criticism arise? My experience today is that almost everyone you meet has a story to tell. There may not be the external appearance of despair, but in the minds and



hearts there is a lot of pain and hurt. We are told that in most western countries, if not most countries, one in five suffers from chronic depression. So many feel lonely, or hopeless about themselves, even when they sometimes exhibit the external trappings of success.

Compassion is about relating. There is an external relating where I interact without any sense of concern about the other, a bit like railway carriages that connect, but do not influence each other. In this material world this type of relating dominates. It breeds a selfishness where I only look after my own needs and cannot see how I influence those around me or how they are feeling. I become self absorbed. Selfishness is about taking, compassion is about giving. The internal relating is a connection that transforms. This is a spiritual relating that influences the way we relate to ourselves and others. This is where compassion is one of the most powerful forces to connect us with each other.

A few years ago I was asked to give a talk in a little hall in Lenasia, a suburb of Johannesburg, where people of an Asian background were segregated during the apartheid Government. There was a mixed audience representing all racial groups. I shared my views on the topic of Creating Personal Peace and then I invited questions. Immediately a young African man sitting intently in the front row exploded with an impassioned plea "Oh brudder, please give me some peace... I will do anything to find peace. Oh brudder please, please give me peace." He looked at me with big wide open eyes that penetrated me so deeply. I felt humbled, his heart was speaking, I didn't feel any pity or sorrow but that he is my brother, and we belonged to each other. I've always loved the idea of being a part of a world family and at that moment it totally came alive for me.

“ True compassion does not need to identify with others' pain, because that can make me weak and ineffective in giving strength and hope. ”

"Can you teach compassion?" enquired a participant at a recent workshop. I began to reflect, perhaps we can model behaviour but I feel it is innate. Our daily mode of survival often brings out masks of selfishness and hardness. But occasionally that mask is removed. Not long after the earthquake in Turkey I received an example on an recent email .Istanbul like many big cities has its fair share of road rage. The writer observed a car accident whereby the two drivers promptly got out of their cars and embraced. Only a week earlier there would have been hot words and perhaps some fisticuffs. But sharing the common tragedy of the earthquake, they showed understanding and even compassion for each other. One wonders why we have to

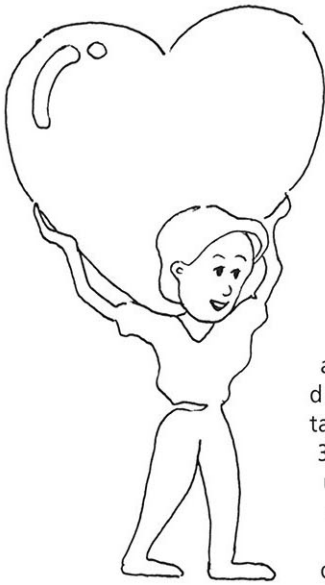
wait for a tragedy to express such feelings. It's a little like when a loved one is dying. We can suddenly forget the past and accept them in a way that we never could whilst they were well. It does beg the question, why don't we show such compassion all the time?

For me true compassion is a by-product of a closeness to God. The more I feel loved and accepted by God, the more compassionate feelings are expressed towards others. It is a compassion that does not dry up or wax and wane with tiredness and obstacles. It is the ultimate expression in action of a relationship with God. It's a way of saying I have received so much, and this is my way of thanking God. Compassion in its true state is selfless and does not want anything. It is non-judgmental. It will not analyse why you are suffering or if it is self-created. The origin of suffering does not matter. Compassion comes with the feelings of belonging to a world family, so all are my brothers and sisters. We belong. It is egoless; I am not coming from the point of "I am fine" or that "I am serving you". I am just your brother or sister and I share my understanding, good wishes and positive actions.

Sometimes there is the idea that to really feel compassion I should also experience the pain of others. True compassion does not need to identify with others' pain, because that can make me weak and ineffective in giving strength and hope. Sometimes because of my own guilt I take on the pain not to really empathise with others but to appease my own conscience. So the act of absorbing the pain is more to do with me dealing with my own issues than trying to relate to others. Compassion by its very nature is a mix of love, respect, empathy, and good will, so the feeling of pain would instantly remove the compassion. Compassion sees the pain and acknowledges it but does not absorb it. That act in itself can help massage the pain away.

It is one thing not to absorb the pain but another to maintain compassion for those who give pain to others.

During an International Indigenous Peoples Conference I heard a speaker talk with great emotion about the plight of his people. He expressed a heart full of compassion about this oppressed group that really touched me deeply. A moment later he began to curse the oppressors telling horrific tales of murder and destruction. His warmth transformed into a dark anger. I began to think about the parameters of compassion, how far does it go? Is it possible to have genuine compassion for the oppressors? Deep down it did not feel right



to have so much compassion for one group and hatred for another, though his stories served to almost justify it. I have heard the Dalai Lama address this dilemma. He was talking to a group of 3000 people in his uniquely refreshing and unpretentious manner. During question time he was bluntly asked

“How can you really have compassion for the oppressors of your Tibetan people?” The questioner went on to say that it was only human to have hatred for those who have systematically destroyed Tibet and its people. The Dalai Lama claimed he did have compassion for the Chinese. The questioner retorted even more bluntly, “How, how is it possible?” The Dalai Lama told him that, as a Buddhist, he understands that we create our future by the actions, the karma we perform now. The oppressors are doing such actions now that will create a life of suffering in the future. Hence his compassion. This unlimited view brought a hushed silence over the audience. It somehow expanded the mind beyond ‘us and them’ to see how we are caught in this extraordinary drama of life. My own experience tells me that the closer I feel to God, automatically the heart softens towards all.

Can I become a more compassionate person? Life experience can withdraw the latent feelings of compassion. A doctor friend shared his story. He considered himself a very competent and capable doctor and took a lot of pride in his work. After a period of ill health he was diagnosed with cancer. This took him on a long pilgrimage of specialists and the indignity of all sorts of medical tests. He experienced first hand how hard, cold and clinical the medical world can be. The ultimate result of his illness was a profoundly more understanding and compassionate attitude for all his patients. He says that his illness made him a better doctor, one who now cares for the soul as well as the body.

When I began on my spiritual journey, I remember reflecting on the way I treat myself. Am I caring, loving, understanding and

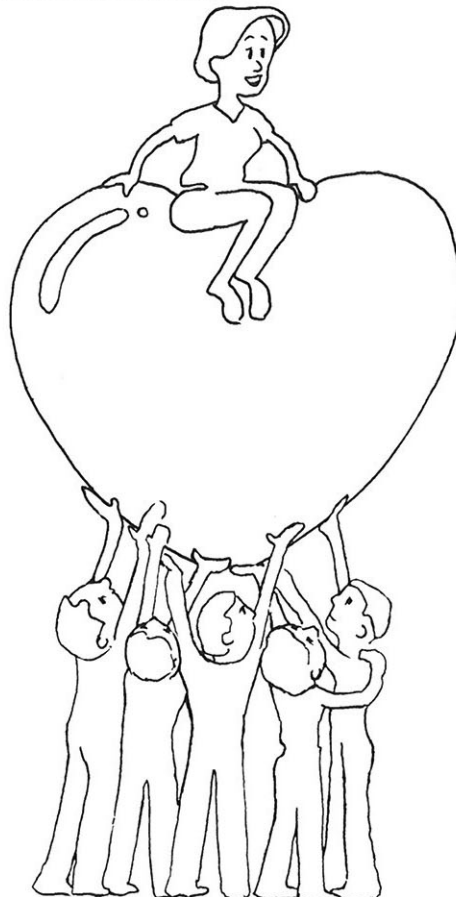
forgiving. Or do I judge harshly, react at my mistakes, mentally abuse myself and only see faults. Self-compassion has been a strong value on my inner journey because I’ve found I change naturally in such an atmosphere. A harsh attitude toward myself created a lot of inner tension and heaviness, which actually stifled self-transformation. When I understood that I am a soul, a spiritual being, I felt the compassion begin to flow. When I forget my soul identity I notice the judgmental and selfish feelings take over and they are directed both at myself and others. The more I return to my true soul identity, compassion emerges naturally. It feels as though it is a part of my original or authentic makeup. One of the most life changing experiences I have found has been discovering the art of seeing another as a soul. Rather than my vision falling on all the bodily characteristics, this act takes me beyond the physical, to gently focus on the tiny soul radiating from the centre of the forehead. Instantly I feel connected and unthreatened. Such vision automatically unlocks the feelings of compassion and respect. Yes, I think we can learn compassion.

How big is your heart?

Is compassion alive and well?



Charles Hogg is Director of Brahma Kumaris Raj Yoga Meditation Centres in Australia



“
Compassion by its very nature is a mix of love, respect, empathy, and good will, so the feeling of pain would instantly remove the compassion.”

The Transforming Power of Beauty



Fr Ronald Rolheiser illustrates how all beauty serves to help us see the beauty of who we are.

Few things in this life have the raw power of beauty. What's beautiful stuns us, holds us, draws us to itself, awakens us and transforms us. Beauty enchants. Drawn by its power, we stretch beyond ourselves and grasp for more light and love. It is no accident that Confucius, perhaps the greatest educational expert of all-time, based his whole system of thought on the power of beauty. In Christian thought, there have always been theologies of beauty, though rarely have they been utilised sufficiently. Most recently, Hans Urs von Balthasar has articulated such a theology, a 'theological aesthetics'. Beauty, he feels, is the key to everything, including our journey towards God and each other. How does beauty work? According to Von Balthasar, anything beautiful has a character of grace to it. Beauty disturbs us, catches us, entraps us. It does not let us be indifferent, but is

inherently provocative. It makes us deal with it. But, unlike violence, which also disturbs and provokes, beauty challenges precisely what is mean, ugly, violent and base. In beauty there is always an invitation.

What does it invite us to do? It invites us to wonder that such a thing should exist. Implicit in all wonder is a search, however dark and inchoate, for the source of what is making us wonder. To see something beautiful is to have one's horizon lifted, to strain one's eyes to see something further. To stare at something beautiful is to be turned away from self (the opposite of sin). In the face of beauty we begin spontaneously to look for the ultimate source of all beauty. In contemplating beauty, we search for God, pure and simple. Beauty therefore has a summoning power, an attesting quality. The language it speaks is as elemental as a heart attack. It chooses us, we don't choose

it, any more than we choose a heart attack. We know this from personal experience, beauty comes upon us as a command, an imperative, as a moral demand. To refuse beauty is to refuse what is best within us. To wilfully despoil beauty is to put a knife to one's own soul. In this sense, even when we don't consciously relate it to its ultimate source, beauty still works to expand us, to turn us outward, to make us more moral.

It does this by reminding us, in a deliciously palatable way, that everything second best is really second best because there is something beyond it, that is indeed first best. In doing this, beauty reminds us too, that it is not good to be alone, that living in sovereign aloneness and being lord to oneself, is also something second best.

And why is beauty so powerful? What gives it such power to enchant? Why does it so stun and haunt us? Why is it that, despite sin, violence, self-absorption, third-degree tiredness, and plain stupidity, we can still fall, as Von Balthasar so beautifully puts it, into 'aesthetic arrest'?

For Von Balthasar, as for Scripture, the answer lies in the fact that, first of all, at the deepest level of our beings, we already know beauty and resonate sympathetically with it because we are ourselves beautiful. In the depth of our souls we carry an icon of the One who is Beautiful. WE have within us the image and likeness of God, the source of all beauty.

The Imago Dei, that deep virginal spot within us, that place where hands indinitely more gentle than our own once caressed us before we were born, where our souls were kissed before birth, where all that is most precious in us dwells, where the fire of love still burns, and where ultimately we judge everything as to its love and truth; in that place, we feel a "vibration

sympathique' in the face of beauty. Beauty rouses dormant divinity within us. It stirs the soul where it is more tender.

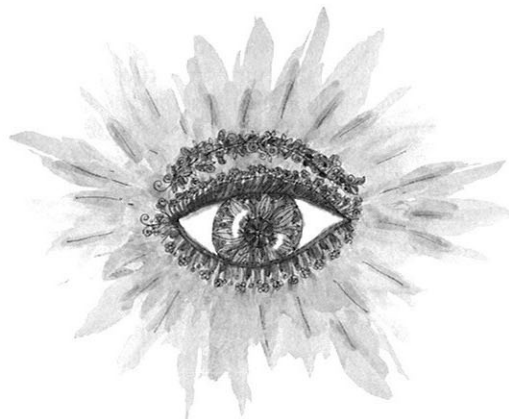
In essence, what beauty does is kiss the soul in that same place where it still remembers, in some dark manner, having been kissed long ago, when it was still naked - before birth, before sin, before lost innocence, before being wounded, before tiredness, before shame and before being buried under so much suspicion and callousness. Beauty awakens the soul by mirroring it. In beauty, the soul sees itself, it recognises kin.

Beauty then, has an immense power to transform us, to call us back from woundedness, tiredness and sin to health, enthusiasm and gratitude. All beauty - be it the beauty of nature, the masterpiece of an artist, the stunning grace of the human body at the peak of its bloom, or the more abstract, though no less real, radiance of virtue and truth - is equipped to do this. Beauty, then, should be honoured. Like love, it softens the heart and invites one out of oneself. Moreover, perhaps even more so than love, it is what reminds us, as Merton once said, that we are "all walking around shining like the sun".



First published in the Catholic Herald.

“ In essence, what beauty does is kiss the soul in that same place where it still remembers. ”



Dying to be THIN



Jillian Sawers breaks down the myths surrounding diet and beauty and how to break free from the fear of food

In a recent study of high school girls 53% were unhappy with their bodies by age thirteen and by the age of eighteen 78% were dissatisfied. The United Kingdom now has 3.5 million anorexics or bulimics (95 % of them female), with 6,000 new cases yearly. According to the women's press, at least 50% of British women suffer from disordered eating. Dr Charles Murkovsky, an eating diseases specialist of Gracie Square Hospital in New York City, says that 20% of American college women binge and purge on a regular basis. Other statistics show that out of ten young middle class women, two will be anorexic, six will be bulimic, only two will be well. That means the norm is to suffer some form of eating disease. 40% to 50% of anorexics never recover completely while 5% to 15% of hospitalised anorexics die in treatment, giving the disease one of the highest fatality rates for mental illness.

In our adolescence we are warned of the dangers of taking drugs; doctors' surgeries are full of posters and leaflets giving detailed accounts of the signs, symptoms and dangers of drug addiction. Yet it seems that the diseases of compulsive eating, bulimia and anorexia, are even more widespread and starting at increasingly young ages, can haunt an individual through much of their life. There is no way of measuring the damage to the self-esteem, health, success and happiness of millions of people.

The Beauty Myth

It is no coincidence that the number of people affected by some kind of eating disorder is rising sharply and running in parallel to the increase in *beauty pornography*. You may not have heard that term, but may have become increasingly

aware of its presence. Remember, not that long ago, when the covers of women's magazines were decorated with the face of one or another pretty model. Suddenly, it seems, the norm has become not just the upper body of the model, but very often the model is topless. Just yesterday I was flicking through a magazine in a waiting room, and wondered what product a young model was being used to promote. In all seven of the pictures there she was almost totally naked.

What was she promoting? In her milestone book, *The Beauty Myth*, Naomi Wolf captured the essence of the most powerful illusion which has pervaded modern society – if you are not beautiful you cannot be successful or happy. The beauty myth traps women in a cycle of self-hatred and self-imposed limitations brought on by the daily consumption of hundreds of images of impossibly beautiful, thin and seemingly happy successful young women. The myth tells us that we too can 'have it all' if only we invest enough time, energy, will-power and, of course, money into achieving it. Each and every beauty product within that magazine was associated with slim, attractive, naked female forms. For 'she' represents the dreams of beauty for millions of women, and the dreams of millions in revenue for the manufacturers of beauty products, diets, plastic surgery and exercise equipment.

There is little point in fighting the irresponsibility of advertisers and manufacturers, for they themselves know not what they do. Their evasions of the issue can be heard in their clichéd claim 'We are only selling what woman really want'. But in our search for self-esteem and a real sense of identity and purpose in life, we need to acknowledge the powerful influence of the



media in shaping our consciousness, desires and behaviour. Perhaps this is the first step in the healing process.

A journey through a substantial museum or art gallery will reveal a wide range of beauty norms, according to culture and time period. Within the 20th Century alone, we have seen the popularity of the boy-like figure of the 20's, the voluptuous Marilyn Monroe ideal of the 50's, followed by the pre-pubescent ideal of Twiggy in the 60's. The goal posts keep shifting. But it seems thinness is here to stay. This is a goal which takes more than an application of make-up and new hair-do to achieve.



Public Enemy Number One - The Diet!

Enter stage left - the Diet! When someone embarks on a diet, it is not as simple as restricting food intake, losing weight, maintaining weight. When we enter this mysterious world of dieting we enter into a dream, a promise, maintained by an elaborate set of rituals.

The dieters begin to invest their mental energy in a battle against themselves to attain a weight, which they consciously or subconsciously feel will bring them the confidence, style, love, success and acceptance they desire. A battle that most never win. Statistics reveal that 97% regain the weight lost from dieting, plus some more. Of course we would never conclude that the diet doesn't work, only that the dieter is suffering from severe lack of self-control or will-power. Just try harder. Yet there are many reasons why diets will never work, and why, if we are serious about regaining healthy eating habits, we need to say a long over due goodbye to calorie counting, raw carrots and scales.

As soon as someone decides to start restricting their food intake to lose weight, powerful psychological and physiological forces come into play. Naomi Wolf recounts a fascinating experiment at the University of Minnesota. Thirty-six volunteers were placed on an extended low-calorie diet and the psychological and physical effects were carefully documented. The control group were young and healthy, showing high levels of confidence, strength, emotional stability and good intellectual ability. They began a six month period in which their food intake was reduced by half - a typical weight reduction technique for women.

Before too long the group began to exhibit classic symptoms of food disorders: collecting

recipes, hoarding food, emotional disturbance, binges, vomiting and self-reproach. Some were terrified to go outside the experiment environment, in case they were tempted by foods they had agreed not to eat. Interestingly all the volunteers were men, and they were responding in a perfectly predictable, understandable manner.



The Rebel Within

Firstly the body is magnificently equipped to avoid starvation, and at the first signs of impending famine, will slow down the metabolism in order to store fat longer. After some time, the appetite will increase dramatically in order to prompt the food consumption needed to sustain life. Thus the dieter has to work harder and harder against the body's natural mechanisms in order to lose and maintain weight loss.

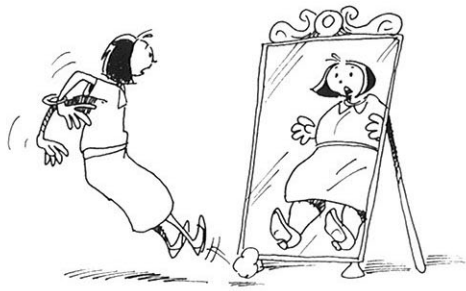
On a psychological level also, I can only ignore my appetite, in order to attain the acceptable ideal, for a restricted period of time. Eventually a wonderful psychological magic takes place. The rebel within me, which tires of conforming, which wants to be accepted for who I really am, not an imposed ideal, begins to wreak havoc with my best laid plans for slimming down. Like a child needs a deeper motive to be good, rather than just fear or reward from the parents to avoid the bad, my deeper inner self rebels against the shallowness of my motivation. It will no longer put up with starvation to look good for the world. It stands its ground, and you head for the fridge.

Normally, heading back to food, doesn't mean adjusting back to normal eating habits, more often it's a binge, followed by another retribution diet, binge, diet, binge. When you tell someone they can't have something which is in front of them, it produces an unnaturally strong desire for that thing. This is why a dieting mentality produces food obsessions, and eventually when the will is overcome, bingeing. Every time a diet is resumed, it becomes harder to lose weight, because the metabolism becomes less and less efficient.

Although the futility of dieting may be obvious, it's not so easy to renounce its powerful

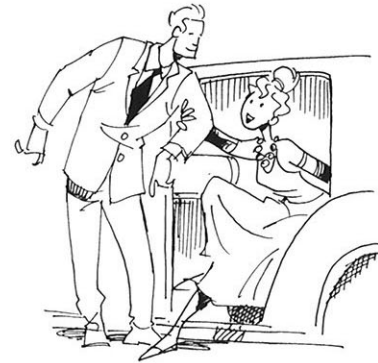


“ As soon as someone decides to start restricting their food intake to lose weight, powerful psychological and physiological forces come into play. ”



till you are slim then you will never be slim and you will never start living.

Avoid reading women's magazines for a while. They only trigger comparisons, low self-esteem and yet another diet.



“ Eventually we have to heal negative eating patterns by replacing them with good ones. ”

lure. For years it has held within it the promise of a bright future, and an avoidance of present pains. Although diets have kept us in a pattern of being in tight control and then completely out of control, we fear that if we were to give up trying to control ourselves, then we would be out of control forever, and who knows how fat we might become as a result.

Letting go of the diet

It is important to keep in mind that eventually, once your mind and body are convinced that deprivation doesn't lie around the next corner, they will begin to relax and find their own natural rhythm. So the first step is to give yourself full permission to eat and enjoy whatever food you desire. If the very thought strikes fear into your heart, then this is definitely the advice for you. The longer we fear food, the longer it will control us. We have to face that fear by keeping a wide range of foods available to us all the time, more than we could eat in one or even two sittings. This helps convince our mind that the food isn't going to run out, so you don't need to eat everything while you still can. If this still sounds illogical, think of the last time you binged on chocolate or ice cream. Did you eat half a bar, fold the wrapper over neatly and return it to the cupboard for a later date. More than likely you finished the whole thing, plus anything else sweet you could find. Now imagine you are faced with a cupboard so full that you could never finish it, at some point you would have to say, "Enough!". And you could, for you know that it will still be there later. You may at first find yourself eating huge amounts of food, but eventually you will begin to say enough, much more frequently and sooner. If you find your bingeing doesn't start to diminish after quite a long period, it may be that you are treating this new approach as yet another diet, and if it doesn't work, you will go back on a 'real diet'. If this is the case, your subconscious won't believe that famine is not around the corner, and it will still want to feast just in case.

It is thoroughly recommended that you throw or at least pack away your scales, so that you don't panic and rush back to the comfort of a diet, or equally important, if you do begin to lose weight, it is fatal to base your happiness on that. You need to break free from having your happiness dictated by those little numbers on the machine.

It is also important that you start doing all those things you dream of doing when you reach your perfect dress size. Whether swimming, wearing nice clothes, applying for a new job or creating new relationships, if you postpone living

Eating to overcome over-eating.

Obviously you can't expect to eat everything in sight and lose weight. But the first scary step in the process of healing is to start accepting your body as it is now, understanding the reasons behind your inability to lose weight, and to ease up on yourself. To relax at last.

Eventually we have to heal negative eating patterns by replacing them with good ones. This involves listening carefully internally to distinguish whether the urge to eat is a healthy physical hunger or a spiritual, emotional or mental hunger. It can take some practice to make the distinction clearly, because for those for whom hunger is often the last reason for eating, the signal for genuine hunger can be very subtle. Once you have recognised that your body needs food, you need to ask your intuition what would satisfy the hunger. Lists of special foods and calorie requirements have often put us out of touch with our body's own incredible wisdom for knowing what it actually needs. If we don't satisfy that need, we may eat much more than we require in order to fulfil it. The act of respecting hunger, rather than denying or suppressing it, and then eating what is required, is a great act of self-love. The pleasure of eating from a real appetite and eating what the body really requires, contains a care and sweetness which eventually makes the mechanical, addictive eating experience, where one doesn't even taste the food whilst eating, seem an empty experience in comparison.

Rules for eating

- 1) Forget the rules: at least the rules that had you counting every morsel, and feeling guilty for breaking them.
- 2) Check to see whether you are really hungry.
- 3) If hungry, ask yourself, what you really feel like eating.
- 4) If you realise you are not hungry, but you still want to eat, acknowledge you are comfort eating, and ask yourself what you would really like to eat.
- 5) Make an occasion out of the meal, enjoy each mouthful.
- 6) If you do comfort eat, don't feel guilty afterwards.

7) Try and discover what triggered the need to comfort eat and see if you can find a more appropriate way of dealing with it in the future.

Facing the feelings

There are numerous triggers which can send a compulsive eater to the fridge. Loneliness, boredom, excitement, celebrations, nervousness, rejection, and so on. We can misuse eating to block out these unpleasant feeling in two ways. First, while eating, our occupied mind is given a break from feeling the feelings. And second, after the binge, I can then occupy my mind with bad feelings towards myself, and the weight I am gaining. The original fear or problem which was concerning me has now been transferred to my eating and weight problem. And I feel if only I could have victory over my weight, everything in my life would be perfect. People are often disappointed upon losing weight, to find that their lives haven't improved greatly. As part of the healing of negative eating patterns, it is vital that we become more sensitive and sympathetic to the state of our emotions. Keeping a diary of our emotions and eating patterns can be useful for this, as can observing our feelings at different times with different people. For instance visits back to old family homes can trigger old feelings and eating patterns because of unresolved anxiety or memories around our childhood or parents. Breathing deeply, consciously relaxing and eating slowly can help us face rather than run from feelings.

Satisfying spiritual hunger

Ultimately, overcoming overeating is a process for which we need to draw deeply on our inner stock of patience and self-love. Instead of putting a dummy, in the form of food, in our mouths, we must keep asking ourselves, what is the real need, what do I really want? The desire to overeat is simply our inner child crying out for some quality attention. That quality attention can involve asking our inner self questions such as, "How am I feeling? What do I want? Will food give me what I want? Is this emotional or physical hunger? What does the soul need? What do I the soul need to experience or express?"

The search to satisfy this real inner hunger is a spiritual one and the hidden blessing of any addiction is that it ultimately forces us to rediscover our inner self, our true identity and our true inner beauty. This is especially pertinent to eating disorders because of its obsessiveness with body image and food sensation.

The practice of meditation is vital in learning to love and understand ones self and ultimately transform negative conditioning. One of the discoveries that one makes in meditation is the difference between the spiritual 'I', the inner being, and the body which I inhabit, rather like a costume. Instead of needing external beauty to make me feel valuable; I experience my real inner beauty and strength, and develop a stronger sense of self worth. I find myself maintaining my body out of a sense of love and responsibility for myself, rather than using the body to seek attention and satisfaction. Meditation can also help us discover a

deeper sense of our purpose in life, freeing us from more mundane concerns and worries.

Writing affirmations based on the concept of the spiritual self, loving and caring for the physical body, can work wonders, reprogramming old subconsciousness thought patterns with minimal effort. You can write them, speak them or do both simultaneously. I would suggest twenty-five in the morning and twenty-five in the evening - experiment for yourself. The following affirmations are some of my favourites.

- I have a healthy, vibrant body which I treat respectfully
- I treat my precious body with love and care
- I am a contented soul who treats my body with gentleness and respect
- I am a goddess residing in my sacred temple with dignity and peace

Long term success

The journey back to physical, emotional, mental and spiritual wellbeing is a lifelong one, and a great test of patience for those of us addicted to the crash-diet experience. As a survival kit, you may like to keep the following reminders handy.

What can help? Understanding that we aren't abnormal or crazy, only compulsive. Finding new ways to express ourselves. Giving up sugar - yes, sugar is an addictive substance, and giving it up can often reduce bingeing by 90%! Learning more about the interaction between food, the body and emotions. Learning new ways to nurture ourselves that don't involve eating. Moderate exercise. Wearing comfortable clothes which you feel good in. Developing a support system for yourself. Keeping a daily diary. Doing affirmations daily and meditating regularly.

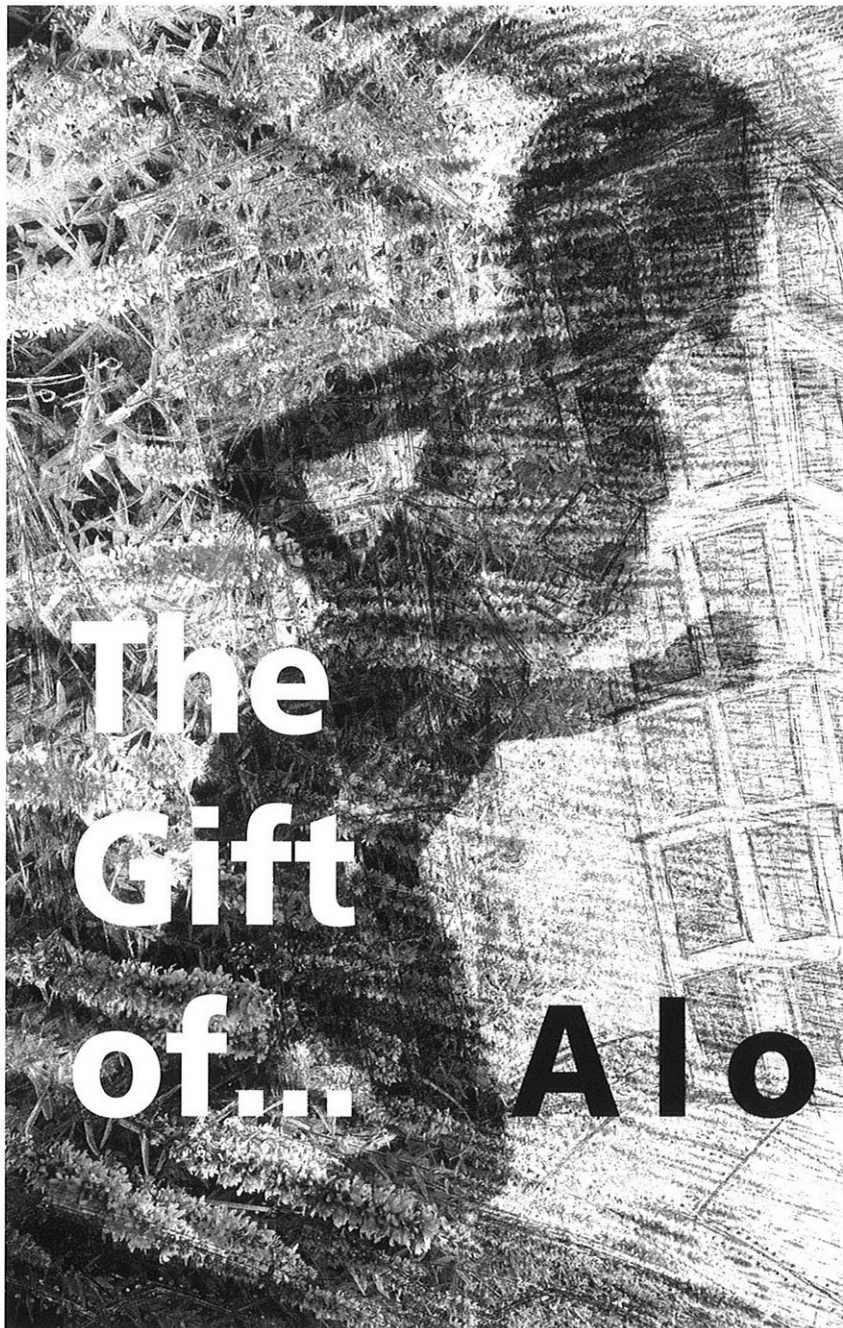
What doesn't help? Going to doctors, therapists and counsellors who aren't specialised in the area of eating disorders. Dieting, vomiting, diet pills, drinks, laxatives. Worrying constantly about your weight or food. Weighing yourself. Reading the monthly glossies. And giving yourself a hard time about anything!



Jillian Sawers is a facilitator, coach, trainer and writer, assisting organisations in Europe and Asia to bring out the best in people.



“...the hidden blessing of any addiction is that it ultimately forces us to rediscover our inner self, our true identity and our true inner beauty.”



**Rachel Flower
recalls times
of loneliness
and some of
the most
important
insights it
gave her into
herself.**

*"In the middle of the journey of my life
I found myself in a dark wood.
For I had lost the path."*
Dante

Dark silken waters. The moon far away and unsmiling. A ripple as my hand breaks the surface. The hollow sound of my breath. No reflection. Stars and moon lost in the meeting of breeze and water, broken shards. Nothing below my feet. Hands grasp at empty wetness, slipping through fingers. Turning, turning, and the ache of not knowing who to turn to. Is anyone there?...one there?... there? A million miles from another heart.. No warmth in the dark. A hollow sits in my mind like a cannon ball. Like the thunder that threatens in the clouds. They don't care. No-one cares. Perhaps even I don't care. Where is that light?

It promised. Reaching in a void of black. Nothing. Where are those hands of light to soothe away the pain?

They are hidden in the silence.
What silence?
You know it. Can you remember?
Perhaps
Good.
But nothing comes
Good.
I am breathing
Good idea.
And I feel it lightly descend, like a kingly gown.
I retract a little. I do not deserve it. You still want to give after all that?
Silence. And the hands are no longer hidden.

Is that how it feels? Of course this is just one person's experience. Yours will be different. But however we look at it, loneliness is not pleasant. I have visited that place and I certainly didn't want to stay. Some time afterwards I tried to write about it, but from a safe distance. From my scientist's arm chair, sipping coffee, comfortable retrospect through a glass screen. And thank goodness for my dearest friends who said Rachel, "You are hiding". "Moi?" I said "Hiding?" They nodded, "It's nice" they said, "but you are not close to your writing – it's a report." I had to agree. "Perhaps it is too painful to write about with feeling", they said. Well, they had a point.

I sat. I pondered. And finally I revisited, and said "Pen, it's your job now. Off you go. If I try to control you, you drag your feet. So go on now.

I won't hold you up". And off it went. That water experience was real. Real water, real moon. A low point in my life where my heart felt as shattered as the moon's reflection. A feeling of loss and confusion. Doubt. Who am I? Where do I belong? Who can understand me? Only hollowness echoed back. The feeling was prompted by the loss of someone in my life, but that was just the smallest trigger. What emerged from within was the pent-up pain of years, lives probably, of similar experiences. All jammed in my psyche like some bloated jack-in-the-box and choosing now to spring forth. I guess I was too tired to hold the lid down any more. Exhausted from years of people pleasing and performing for others. Over time I had constructed intricate webs of connections, clever words, sympathetic gestures, and even a supply of jokes for emergencies. Anything to stop me falling through the cracks of a life that wasn't as together as I was prepared to admit. I moved fast and thought fast, always managing to dance myself clear of that hollow. But one day it caught me by surprise. Hello, it said. And I recoiled in fear. Leave me alone.
Aah, but that's just it. You are alone. How does it feel?

Scary.
 What are you afraid of?
 Being alone.
 How can you be afraid of what you already are?
 Good point.
 So you still want to run?
 I'm too tired.
 Surrender then?
 Does that mean I've lost?
 No, it means you've let go.
 How do I let go.
 We're talking aren't we? That's a start.
 Oh.

Just that first step of acceptance and a peace lightly descended so quietly. It was like being held in light. And in that moment of surrender there was the sense of connection. Perhaps I was connecting with the lonely part of others, connecting with being human. And there was a presence too; God, or a higher power, whatever the name. Someone was there. And I walked out of that lake different. I had begun to understand the fundamental difference between aloneness and loneliness. To me it was like passing through the terrifying feeling of abandonment to find a light on the other side. Moving from "lone 'l'-ness" into "All-oneness". Lone-I-ness is all about separation between me and everything else. Like this poem:

I'm lonely.
 How? Are there stars above you?
 Yes.
 Does the moon rest in the night sky lighting the ocean?
 Yes, but it is not enough.
 What is enough?
 Enough is a condition of fullness.
 And how does one get 'enough'?
 I don't know.
 Then you will never know enough.
 I will when I see it.
 And have you seen it?
 Once, maybe twice.
 What happened when you had 'enough'?
 It went away. I cursed it for coming and I cursed it for leaving.
 Then why would enough return to you?
 Because I am lonely.
 How do you know you are lonely?
 Can't you see what is missing?
 No I cannot. I only see enough.
 Then you have lost your compass. You are settling for less.
 Am I? What is less?
 Less is the edge of my heart that yearns for another.
 Another?
 Yes, another.
 And will another be enough?
 I would like to think so.
 Has it ever been enough in the past?
 No.
 Then why would it be enough in the present?
 I don't know.
 What you are saying makes no sense.
 And you don't make any sense to me either.
 Why do I even bother talking to

you? You've just disrupted my loneliness.
 Sorry.

By Scott Allen

The person in this poem is unable to see what he has. The quiet knowing presence who is questioning is the 'another' that this soul is searching for, but the searcher is unable to see past his loneliness into that one's eyes. He is standing on the edge of himself, neither fully in nor fully out. So he has neither seen the true fullness of the self or of another. Hence there is a yearning to be filled from outside. His cry echoes off inner walls of a prison of his own design, the illusion of that prison wall - an image of separation - ultimately turns away those who wish to be close. Self-fulfilling prophesy. And this is the essence of loneliness - alienation, not from others, but from myself. When I cannot accept myself as I am, I will expect everyone else to feel the same about me. I will then reject them before they have a chance to reject me and all I am left with is an echoing hollow.

I think now of the songs we hear so often that emphasise the fear of separation. I can't live if living is without you, I need your love, you are everything..... the power is given away to some other person who maybe someday is not there for me. It is a hard truth to face. I think of people running off the dingy bars to blur the pain in a haze of drink. I think of square-eyed families whose greatest comfort is the black box in the corner which never stops talking and never answers back. The perfect hiding place.

'All-oneness' is different. Instead of hollow I think of fullness - a flourishing garden in my inner space, lush and alive. It is a celebration of the beauty within that has always been there. Only when I forget it does the lone-I-ness creep in like the shadow of a cloud. All-oneness is about enjoying that silent inner space completely alone, and then ironically, that is when I am able to deeply connect with others. Because I am centred. Seeing myself as I am, not as a reflection in others eyes, but my own beauty, I will be able to connect with the beauty in others. I'll see their garden.

But how do I move from lone-I to all-one. Well there are three tools I have found invaluable along the way: first **awareness** - that fluid observer state where I can watch myself through the day. What triggers my hurt? What triggers my love? What negative aspects of the past dominate the present? What strengths have carried me through the hard times? Answering these questions as I move along is an aspect of awareness.

Second, I need **courage**. Sometimes I may not like the answers I find, or I may simply be in the midst of pain. Courage is when I can allow that to move through me, unhampered. Not resisting. Being with it, watching and aware. It takes courage to address what is not OK in my heart.

“ All-oneness is about enjoying that silent inner space completely alone, and then ironically, that is when I am able to deeply connect with others. ”

“
**... I peered
 through the
 hole and
 suddenly I
 was face to
 face with the
 truth. What
 could be
 more
 powerful
 than that?**”

There are times when I have doubted my ability to care for others and was unable to find the compassion I felt I should have had. But what I have learnt to do is accept that and say, “Rachel, it’s OK if you don’t care. I will still love you.” And the irony is that is when I began not only to care, but to love. Facing my doubt, and being compassionate towards myself allowed me to see that in me and so I was then able to share it with others. So the third tool for me is gentleness. A quiet acceptance of where I am at. Not judging myself or others, but simply dealing with it, quietly. Softly. Then even a broken heart can be lived through. As author John Welwood writes: “When we feel the pain of this contradiction between the perfect love in our heart and the obstacles to its complete realisation in earthly form, it breaks the heart – wide open. But this is not so bad. Not so bad at all.when we feel raw and tender we are in touch with the very core of who we are.”

When I use all three tools, I am then nourishing my inner life and tending to my garden. In my life I have found such things as quiet country walks, writing, song and other creative endeavours, as well as meditation and time spent with cherished friends help bring me back to my centre and add to the beauty of my inner garden. Meditation in particular. For me it has been Raja Yoga Meditation that has sustained me over the years, but we each will find our own path. In meditation there is a special gift

that comes, and that is a relationship with God. It is an intimate relationship without judgement or fear. Simply love. But to listen to that one’s whisper I must step back inside and be alone from the people and possessions and worries of the world. In that connection the word lonely has no meaning. I am All-one.

But the question then comes, must one pass through the pain of lone-I-ness in order to reach all-oneness? Perhaps not everyone. But many. For me it came because I insisted in stepping outside of my inner garden to please others. I placed my centre of being between me and them when I didn’t need to. I could have stayed in my

garden and been much more effective, but I forgot that sometimes, and then if their smile turned upside down and they stepped away, I fell into the hollow. Another mistake was putting my centre of being between me and external success. The novel that would make people clutch their hearts and sigh. The talk that would inspire a standing ovation so furious I’d float up to the ceiling. Of course sharing beauty is not wrong. But the motive behind it makes all the difference. Because I derived my identity from the reactions of others towards me, then, well, the hollow awaited.

However, this was actually a very powerful place to be.

A hole? Surely not. But oh, the gift of swirling disillusionment. When what I thought was real – security from money, relationships, clever words, health, image – shattered like a stained glass window in an earthquake, I peered through the hole and suddenly I was face to face with the truth. What could be more powerful than that? The truth being that I cannot control what happens outside me. I cannot make someone smile, or cry or clap. I cannot make someone love me. The only thing I have control over – when I allow myself the privilege – is my attitude, and then my words and my actions.

In the process I came to truly understand the laws of nature. My nature - how I feel about things from deep inside - and not blindly following group thinking. This is not to say that there isn’t power in a gathering. There is. There’s a joy and fulfillment that comes in pooling our skills, sharing ideas or meditating together. But if I allow the group identity to invade my space, it may tramp over the vulnerable shoots of my intuition and my finest ideas are nipped in the bud. My connection with God – the true spiritual gardener - also becomes more of a label than a real and intimate relationship - a kind of God amulet to hang around my neck. But there’s no real power because it’s just a cheap imitation - like a poster on the wall. Only when I can be truly alone while in a group, not as a rebellion, not through dislike, but as a quiet stepping back into myself, then, ironically, I will be most able to work well with others. Allowing myself to be myself, I’ll pay the same respect to others’ inner permaculture. That’s when real connection happens.

So should you ever find yourself in a dark wood, or a dark lake, just remember that all-one is only one thought away. And that thought is ‘acceptance’. The love that then flows is the gift of alone.



Rachel Flower is a writer, facilitator and teacher based in Changmai, Thailand where she runs a Meditation Centre.



A Generous Attitude

George Mavroudis highlights the fundamental importance of creating right attitude if we are to achieve successful outcomes.

I believe that authentic human nature is a happy, where we are able to contribute positively to our surrounding environment in one way or another. I think it is a fundamental human characteristic to be generous. However, to express this generosity at all times and not just when it is convenient or when it benefits us, requires a deep sense of inner security; a security that doesn't derive from any social status or bank account or particular relationship, for then it cannot be permanent.



If our sense of security is based on anything external, then there will also be fear mixed in that safety. People who draw their sense of security from such sources depend on and are tied to them. Their life is influenced by whatever happens to their support systems. Such people will suffer. If others get a better share, receive recognition or achieve success, they feel as if something has been denied or taken away from them.

They feel threatened. They cannot enjoy the success of other people as they are accustomed to basing their success on being superior in their environment. The more we focus on the values and principles of generosity, share our success, and celebrate others' success the more our own lives are enriched.

Being inspired by others' success means we learn from their successes rather than compete against them.

Some years ago I went through a difficult phase of self-rejection and complete lack of self-respect. It was a time when I didn't care at all about the consequences of my choices, although I knew they would not be the best. At that time, some friends kept believing in me, kept encouraging me by showing their love and understanding of what I was going through. It was impossible then to trust myself, but I could trust them because they were living the highest principle of love, that of genuine respect. The generosity of their unbroken faith and their compassion for my well-being helped me tremendously to gradually shift my consciousness towards a new upward spiral in my life. I truly discovered the value of friendship.

People with this kind of generous attitude don't hesitate to show their good feelings, to praise someone genuinely, to show the other person with appropriate words and manners that they are valuable. Because their security comes from their deeply held values and principles, they can express their goodness freely and without the fear that they might be taken advantage of.

Generous individuals are able to forgive both themselves and others for they understand the life-supporting principle of non-violence. That's why they never judge others, or themselves, no matter how far

reaching their mistakes may have been. They never waste their precious energy in complaining about yesterday, nor do they sit and just dream about their future. They learn how to make maximum use of their present opportunities, understand their past mistakes, and plan carefully for the future. This art of being a student of life enables them to adapt easily and be flexible in ever-changing circumstances. Their honest wish to help is sometimes apparent through their humour, even when facing adverse situations. They are willing to accept and correct their mistakes, before they become a burden on their conscience.

Such people know how to distinguish the person from the problem. This ability helps them to offer solutions instead of creating more problems. They concentrate their energy on common interests, instead of fighting for a position or possession. Others gradually discover their authentic honesty and are inspired to co-operate with them.

Those who think in a generous way, know how to serve quietly. Serving others' true needs is one of the greatest pleasures in life. Just think back in your life for a moment. What were the circumstances when you experienced the greatest happiness and joy? Was it during times when you received something precious from your loved ones? Or was it during times when you yourself gave something valuable to another person which meant a lot to them? I believe most of us would opt for the latter. Time and again, I have seen that this is indeed the innate nature of every individual – it's just that the conditions to express this nature have become a rare phenomenon.

When we have the intention of serving others – in whatever form required at that moment – and if we do it without any selfish interest for a return, our inner sense of security and contentment increases. This in turn leads us to be even more generous minded.

When we have an attitude of learning from whatever happens to us, we are able to remain open, using the different opportunities with which we are presented. Our sense of security – emotional, psychological and financial – is

“ Such people know how to distinguish the person from the problem. This ability helps them to offer solutions instead of creating more problems. ”

then tied to our ability to acquire knowledge and to be creative, rather than on some relationship or our professional situation. Those who know how to increase their value, take the initiative and apply practical solutions. When learning stops, dependency on people and situations increases and then we don't easily dare to risk anything. We then become hyper-protective and enter the golden cage of our comfort zones where 'deadly security' reigns supreme. Deadly, because our creative imagination is killed, personal development shuts down and generosity is impossible.

A Creative Attitude

Individuals who are willing to expand their horizons of understanding and success are open to new opportunities, knowing that these will often come from people and places unexpectedly. They are aware of the influence that genetic, historical and environmental forces have in the developmental process of people, communities, organisations, and societies, but they don't allow themselves to be limited by these factors. They are aware of the paralysing effect that results from blaming and complaining and so they are very careful not to waste their precious energy in this. No problem catches them by surprise. They are creative, focusing their attention only on the aspects they can change.

They are understanding and tolerant of the mistakes of others. They never participate in sustaining a 'blame culture' so prevalent in today's organisation, and then continuously focus on their own responsibility.

By blaming others we lose the right to and the freedom of choice, thus we feel compelled to do things that are even contrary to our beliefs. By blaming someone we give that person power over us. We empower their weakness and in fact we develop the same weaknesses without even realising. Then we either find or create proof in order to support our accusations. Again this blocks our creativity and increases our mental and emotional bondage, bringing the available choices down to zero level. The result is a

continuous reactivity towards one thing or the other.

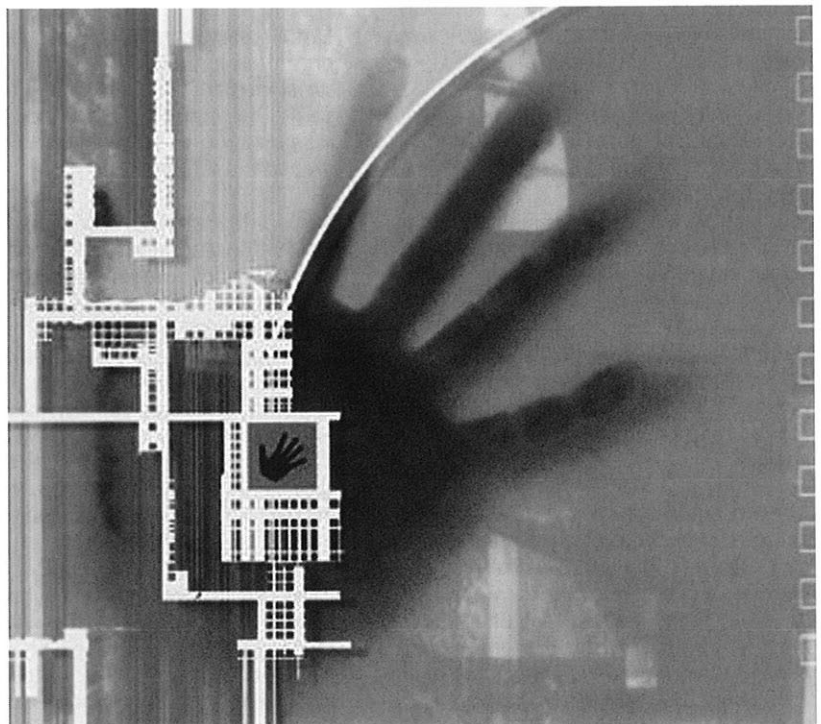
Choosing and reacting are very different from each other. Choosing means we are no longer the victim of situations or people; we are able to decide consciously how best to respond to them. Realising that we have both the right and the power to choose the quality of our response, we gain authority over ourselves, over our emotions and habits. We cease to think of ourselves as being powerless or subservient to certain people or situations. At any given moment we have this choice; we can decide to act or to react, to stay as we are or to improve.

To have a creative attitude means to focus on the person and not the product, on improving interpersonal relationships rather than achieving some position. It means to focus more on our values than on action plans and goals. The more we exercise our freedom to choose our response, the more that freedom keeps on increasing, creating vast possibilities for a successful and mutually rewarding co-existence.



George Mavroudis is author of The Art of Leadership - Timeless Principles for Total Quality. Based in Athens, he is also experienced in running various Self Management and leadership seminars both in Greece and abroad.

“ By blaming others we lose the right to and the freedom of choice, thus we feel compelled to do things that are even contrary to our beliefs. ”



BANISHING BURNOUT

Burnout seems to be an occupational hazard for those working in caring professions. Constantly dealing with traumatic situations makes social workers particularly susceptible. Helping people to cope during vulnerable periods of their lives brings with it many rewards, but social workers need to do this without damaging themselves with excessive stress.

John McConnell recalls his close encounter with burnout.

Burnout creeps up slowly, gradually draining your energy until the feeling of being on emotional overload becomes intolerable. Even small things that you usually take in your stride can send the mind screeching in pain. If you don't respond to the initial warning signals, you may find yourself waking up one day unable to cope with the thought of even turning on a light switch, or making a cup of tea. When burnout puts you into complete shutdown mode it can take many months to repair the damage.

After dealing with other people's crises for over twenty years, firstly as an assistant prison governor and then as a social worker, I found myself literally paralysed by burnout. One Friday evening, after a particularly stressful week at work, I went to the supermarket and found myself unable to get out of the car. I thought I had had a stroke. My body felt so heavy, as if it was encased in lead. That was the start of six months off work.

For the first few days I could do little else than sleep. I felt completely drained of energy on all levels. After a series of tests, which proved negative, the doctor concluded that I was suffering from exhaustion and that the only solution was complete rest. The road to recovery was long and challenging.

I tried various alternative therapies, including acupuncture, massage, homoeopathy and counselling. These provided some relief but did not get to the heart of the problem. Thinking that a bit of relaxation would help, I enrolled on a free meditation course. As I began to practice some of the reflective exercises learned on the course, I experienced, for the first time in many years, a deeper part of myself, which I found to be both powerful and positive. Gradually, I felt more energised and started to feel alive again.

I began to reflect on my life in a more detached way and eventually came to the conclusion that the root cause of much of my stress and eventual burnout was a lack of self-esteem. I realised that I had spent most of my life trying to please other people, often at the expense of my own well-being, as a way of getting love and

approval. Through meditation I learned how to generate feelings of self worth independent of successes and failures at work and home and I began to feel a new kind of inner strength.

Eight years later I feel that the daily practice of meditation has generated higher levels of motivation, creative energy and an ability to ride through difficult times. I'm happier now than at any time in my life and I'm able to say 'no' when necessary, without feeling fearful or guilty. Two years ago I took early retirement and now lecture on personal growth issues, drawing on my own journey of transformation.

Many people are frightened to look deeply inside themselves, yet with a little self-understanding, they could take a lot of the pain out of life's crises and failures. We all have an innate reservoir of peace, love and wisdom within, which can give us the power to deal with anything. All we have to do is access it and nourish and protect ourselves from stress. I feel that everyone should be taught these skills. With the right support and training there is no need for anyone to go through the burnout experience.

Last November, I was part of a team that organised a 'Peace of Mind' retreat for social workers. The aim was to teach the skills of contemplation and stress management to 60 social workers from around the country.

Barbara Muhammad, who works in child protection and attended the weekend, shared the following experience with me, "As social workers we have a tendency to focus too much on others. We forget that it is important to spend some time reflecting on ourselves, so that we can improve. When I asked myself why I came into social work, I came to the conclusion that one of the reasons was to avoid looking at my own problems. We often neglect our own needs. We need to know how to look at ourselves. Now I am more aware of my own values and where they come from. I don't think this is being self-absorbed in an unhealthy way - but rather being able to look at both the positive and negative sides of my personality so that I can understand how

to improve myself. I now look after my own needs and it's made me feel more confident about myself. Practising meditation has made me more effective at work and able to handle things better. Of course, I can still feel angry and frustrated at times but I am not taking on other people's emotions as I used to."

Modupe Kepu, a senior social worker in fostering, was experiencing very high stress levels when she attended the retreat. "It was very timely for me. I was at a crisis point in my professional life. I didn't think I could cope any more with the level of stress I was experiencing - I was wondering if it was time for me to get out.

"In one sense the things being taught were quite familiar to me because I used to practise meditation to centre myself and overcome my anxiety about doing 'duty'. The retreat got me back to that calm state of mind and helped me over a very stressful period in my life. I find that I am now able to hold on to the capacity to go 'within'. I have always tried to be positive but I wasn't calm on the inside. Now I am operating on a different level - with a sense of detachment, not in a cold way, but with more love, which I think is the key. You just can't help people in crises unless you are relating to them on a deeper level - nothing gets through if you deal with them only on a superficial level."

There is obviously too much pressure on social services to be able to provide the level of personal supervision that social workers need in order to remain healthy and stress-free. We have to take responsibility for looking after ourselves. Taking time out and nurturing the inner self through meditation and other reflective practices is definitely the way forward. I wish I had found out about it years ago. It would have saved me a lot of pain and struggle in both my personal and professional life.



John McConnell is a trainer and facilitator who conducts meditation and self-development courses in the UK and abroad.

The Eight Powers

Power over others is force.
Power over the self is wisdom.
Therefore, the traveller chooses carefully,
And considers everything in the light
Of the Lord of Light.

The first power is to focus,
To pack up that which has gone
And leave aside that which is to come.
Thus the sage reclaims control of his mind.

Deep in consciousness of the soul,
The sage plants the roots of his mind.
Like a tree that can bend with the wind,
The Sage tolerates everything
And remains unshaken.
This is the second power.

No door is shut by the Lord of Love.
Following The Teacher,
The sage accommodates all differences,
Never allowing them
To make a difference.
This is the third power.

Tricks and illusions are everywhere
And a deluge of words can drown the path,
The sage discriminates,
Finding the diamond
Among the counterfeit.
And the fourth of the powers is his.

Seeing his own actions
As clearly as he sees his brother's,
The sage never lets desire
Influence decision.
Accurate judgement
Is the fifth of the powers.

Even the wise traveller is beset by obstacles.
The sage faces the boulder on the road
And the weakness within
With the same courage.
Facing with courage
Is the sixth of the powers.

Creating alliance,
The sage helps his companions.
Two can do what one cannot.
Co-operating in all things,
He give honour to his companions.
To co-operate is the seventh power.

When folly begins, thieves rule
The sage, unaffected, withdraws.
To withdraw with no blame is wisdom.
This is the eighth of the great powers.

From the *TAO of the Traveller* by Barbara Bossert Ramsay.



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The Beautiful Interview

I had a dream I had an interview with God.

"Come in," God said to me, "So, you would like to interview Me?"

"If you have the time," I said.

God smiled and said: "My time is called eternity and there is enough to do everything; what questions do you have in mind to ask me?"

"What's the one thing that surprises you most about mankind?"

God answered: "That they get bored of being children, are in a rush to grow up, and then long to be children again. That they lose their health to make money and then lose their money to restore their health. That by thinking anxiously about the future, they forget the present, such that they live neither for the present nor the future. That they live as if they will never die, and they die as if they had never lived..."

God's hands took mine and we were silent.

After a long period, I said, "May I ask you another question?"

"As a Parent, what would you ask your children to do?"

God replied with a smile: "To learn that they cannot make anyone love them. What they can do is to let themselves be loved. To learn that it takes years to build trust, and a few seconds to destroy it. To learn that what is most valuable is not what they have in their lives, but who they have in their lives. To learn that it is not good to compare themselves to others. There will always be others better or worse than they are. To learn that a rich person is not one who has the most, but is one who needs the least.

To learn that they should control their attitudes, otherwise their attitudes will control them.

To learn that it only takes a few seconds to open profound wounds in persons we love, and that it takes many years to heal them. To learn that there are persons that love them dearly, but simply do not know how to show their feelings.

To learn that money can buy everything but happiness. To learn that while at times they may be entitled to be upset, that does not give them the right to upset those around them. To learn that it is not always enough that they be forgiven by others, but that they forgive themselves. To learn that they are masters of what they keep to themselves and slaves of what they say. To learn that they shall reap what they plant; if they plant gossip they will harvest intrigues, if they plant love they will harvest happiness. To learn that true happiness is not to achieve their goals but to learn to be satisfied with what they already achieved, or die from envy and jealousy of what they lack. To learn that two people can look at the same thing and see something totally different. To learn that those who are honest with themselves without considering the consequences go far in life. To learn that by trying to hold on to loved ones, they very quickly push them away; and by letting go of those they love, they will be side by side forever. To learn that even though the word "love" has many different meanings, it loses value when it is overstated."

Author Unknown

