

Serving your personal journey toward enlightenment...

Our soul intention for this e-newsletter is to create a positive, uplifting, inspiring and spirit-filled message (in amongst the conventionally-perceived journalism practiced today). We extend this offering to you and hope, if only for a moment in time, we provide a hint of another reality that is there for your embracing. Enjoy! You are invited to share this e-newsletter with those family, friends, colleagues and acquaintances you think may be interested.

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If you have a newsworthy item that you would like added to the e-newsletter, please forward your submission to rmeagher@servingyourjourney.com.

SPIRITUAL GUIDANCE OFFERINGS:

1. Personal Story of Spiritual Lessons

In the summer of 2013, Richard Harvey and I embarked on a journey to develop and launch an online training program for Sacred Attention Therapy (SAT). After an initial series of videoconference calls, we established the training was intended for 3 audiences:

- therapists – psychotherapists, counselors, and other healing practitioners
- people who want to train to become SAT therapists
- seekers who wish to practice SAT for their own personal growth and spiritual development

In earnest we began our collaboration. Richard started writing the lectures and supporting documents; in parallel he recorded the lectures. I turned my attention to figuring out the technology end of the equation: What platform would we host the training on? How would students be enrolled? What would the student experience look like? Etc. In parallel, I served as a second eye for the lectures and supporting documents.

The process was daunting. Month after month Richard toiled over the lecture material and supporting documents. I would make a discovery and progress in one area of the technology equation, only to be set back with the realization of the challenges, shortcomings, and/or glitches with the approach being considered. There were times when the entire process seemed out of reach.

But we persisted and in January 2015, SAT online training, Level 1, was launched. Since that time students from around the world have applied and enrolled in this progressive, radical, and innovative psycho-spiritual psychotherapeutic training program.

Very soon after Level 1 was launched, Richard and I talked about developing Level 2 of the training program.

Four years later, with many of the same challenges we faced in Level 1 training development and production, Level 2 of SAT Online Training has been launched. Level 2 has a distinctly different look and feel. The content is very different, but a natural extension of Level 1 training, and the lectures themselves have a very different look and feel to them.

When Richard sent me the final written material for the Level 2 course, he expressed great joy that this Level of the training had been completed. Four years of hard work had come to conclusion—it had ended. I smiled along with Richard at his, at our, sense of accomplishment. Indeed, there was a great sense of accomplishment knowing that all our hard work had finally come to fruition.

For me, however, there was an overwhelming sense that this journey, with SAT Online Training, Level 2, had only just begun. Yes, the course material was completed, developed, packaged, and launched; but now the journey of sharing this progressive, radical, and innovative psycho-spiritual psychotherapeutic training program with the world would begin.



This ending and beginning with SAT Online Training, Level 2, got me thinking about how we treat endings and beginnings in our lives. How do we deal with endings? Do we resist endings? Do we run away? Do we loathe endings? Or do we embrace endings? Do we celebrate endings? And what about beginnings? How do we treat beginnings? Are they reason or cause for joy? Concern? Fear? Of course the answer to any of these questions may differ, depending on the situation. But, in general, how do you treat or deal with beginnings and endings?

Birth and Death

Is there any more poignant metaphor for beginnings and endings than the societal metaphor of life and death. Conventional wisdom has us being born to start our life, and dying to end our life. It was not until my 30s that I questioned this story of birth and death.

I can't remember exactly where I heard the following, but it was either on a radio or TV show many years ago. The host of the radio or TV show was sharing that many of the great faith and spiritual traditions share the common pedagogy that when we die, as our soul leaves this realm, we pass through a dark tunnel but we see a light at the end of the tunnel. Many spiritual and faith traditions indoctrinate their faithful to "go to the light" upon their passage to the mythological heaven. The host of the show then shared their ponderings about what it must be like for a newborn child to pass through the birth canal. The newborn child may experience a dark tunnel but see or sense a light at the end of the tunnel. The host of the TV show asked if it was possible that the process of death as we commonly know it was merely a passage way from one life, one ending, to a rebirth or new beginning?



If this be so, is there really an ending or beginning? I have heard it said that death is not the end of life and birth is not the beginning. Life always *was*, always *is*, and *will always be*.

Is it possible that death and birth, endings and beginnings, are the natural flow of never-ending life? What happens when we examine these matters from our mind versus our heart? When we open up our heart center, do death and birth allow us to see endings and beginnings differently?



In love, gratitude, compassion and forgiveness...

Rev. Robert Meagher

2. Poem

Loving

May your loving
 be like your breathing,
Smooth and easy,
 free flowing,
 effortless,
 continual,
 with no interruptions,
Breathing in God's limitless Love
And breathing out
 the boundless love
 that is in your heart.

~ Gerald G. Jampolsky

3. Quote or Question

You cannot be lonely if you like the person you're alone with. ~ Wayne Dyer

CONTRIBUTING SPIRITUAL GUIDES AND TEACHERS:

Spiritual Guidance is honored to collaborate with other Spiritual Guides and Teachers to serve your personal journey toward enlightenment. If you would like to be a contributing Spiritual Guide and Teacher to this e-newsletter, please contact Spiritual Guidance (our contact information is at the very bottom of this e-newsletter).

4. Regiena Heringa – Notes from the Light – January 2019

Spiritual Warmth

Imagine that every particle of light which lies inside each cell of your body exudes a warmth which spreads throughout your body from the top of your head to the bottom of your feet. Let it spread throughout your form. Feel your brain cells also being warmed up by this light. Enjoy this warmth flooding your form. Notice how you begin to relax in your head and in all other parts of your physical form.



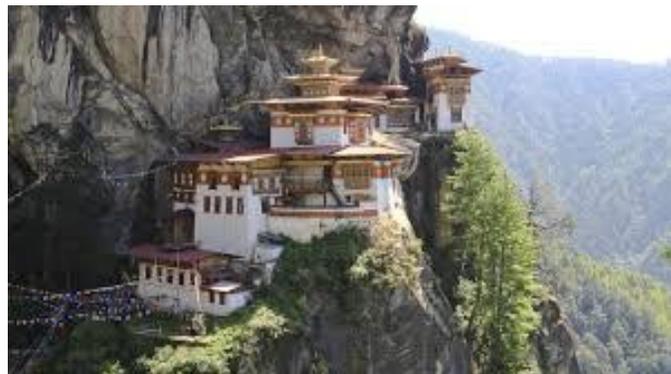
This is the feeling you have when you let go of an overly busy and perturbed emotional and mental environment.

In your world, we observe that agitation is presently infiltrating many of your societies. This agitation is due to the never-ending stimulus of your physical body. We witness in your world an increased hyperactivity throughout your nervous system—especially your the brain.

Among other functions, the nervous system and its attributes ensure the safety and healthy workings of the body, and promotes awareness. If the nervous system is over stimulated its balance is lost. It has severed the connection between the divine root—the inner spirit—and its outer expression: Living every day with reverence.

How can you find balance?

All creatures in your world build homes for themselves, whether it be in the ground, in the waters or elsewhere. There is an appropriate dwelling place for all, including humankind. Hence, we ask you to contemplate the following: Where is your spiritual home? How do you know you are in your “spiritual nest”?



When you are in your spiritual home, you sense an overflowing warmth, expansion and peace which fills you up. You feel lovingly directed; you sense kindness. You hold a deep knowing that you are an intricate part of a great assembly of souls all expressing love and encouragement. You sense that your serene, loving inner life of your soul is radiating the Creator’s Light to all life. You feel spiritual warmth.

There is no boundary to this spiritual warmth. Its radiance passes through all objects and all thought. We, in other worlds and dimensions, capture your loving radiance as you capture ours.

Kindly remember that when your minds and hearts are quiet and open, you perceive our friendship and guidance as we feel yours, for you, too, guide us. Let us then continue together to share in this fine spiritual warmth which flows infinitely throughout the universe.



ABOUT THE SPIRITUAL GUIDE AND TEACHER: Regiena Heringa is a spiritual teacher, counselor and messenger and co-founder of the Institute for Spiritual Unfoldment and Interworld Studies (ISUIS). Through her writings, meditations groups, teaching, music and painting, and in concert with those beings of higher vibrational dimensions, Regiena facilitates the expansion of mind and heart in all who wish to participate in the creation of the sacred new world. For more information, kindly visit ISUIS at www.nextagemission.com or write Regiena at rheringa@bell.net.

OTHER GIFTS AND E-NEWSWORTHY ITEMS:

5. Good News Of The Day

The stories below are reprinted from www.dailygood.org.

Each year, beginning in the fall, a group of third-year architecture students from Auburn University take up residence in a small rural Alabama town to begin building a house. In the winter, when a new semester begins, they are replaced at the Newbern, Alabama, project site by another cohort of 16 students who finish up the job and prepare the house for its new occupants. The 20K Home Project began 13 years ago as a challenge to architecture students at Auburn to build a \$20,000 house, with \$12,000 in material and \$8,000 for labor. The idea was to create "the perfect house" for needy families in rural areas where dwellings are often substandard and where affordable building can be a logistical challenge. <http://www.dailygood.org/story/2153/where-homework-means-building-affordable-housing-deonna-anderson/> **Be The Change:** Make someone feel at home today.

A book fell out of a bookcase, fell all the way down the stairs -- not just any book, but a book that held a letter Mother Teresa had written to Rosalie Giffoniello six years earlier. Rosalie had a question: "Can I volunteer at one of your orphanages? Are there special needs children I could help?" Mother Teresa had written back, but Rosalie wasn't quite ready. She stuck the letter in a book. Six years later she was in bed wondering, "What should I do this summer?" That's when she heard a book fall down the stairs. It was the one that held Mother Teresa's letter: "Come to India." Giffoniello's life changed at that moment. It's an amazing story... <http://www.conversations.org/story.php?sid=583> **Be The Change:** Have you ever felt your destiny beckoning to you? What are you being called to at this time in your life?

Brian Peterson didn't know what he had in common with Matt Faris when he went out of his way to meet his Santa Ana, Calif., neighbor. Every day, Peterson would pass by Faris, who has been homeless for more than a decade. But it took some guts, Peterson admits, to finally walk up to him. It was during that first conversation that they discovered they shared the pursuit of art. And Peterson, a car designer who hadn't picked up a paintbrush in eight years, found inspiration in Faris. Read on to see how these two former strangers ignited the inner artist in each other. <http://www.dailygood.org/more.php?n=7533> **Be The Change:** Is there someone you have been walking by without noticing? Today, give them your attention.

Raul Baez spent twelve years in prison for armed robbery. While incarcerated, he found God and Christianity and became determined to help others who had also lost their way at some point. He decided to create WITO (We Innovatively Transform Ourselves), a nonprofit organization named after his son. WITO helps inmates make good decisions regarding personal finance and character development before they re-enter the world as free people. This program works, as demonstrated by the recidivism rates for those who graduate versus the New York state average. 67 percent or two-thirds of all New York inmates wind up back in the prison system - yet only 28 percent of those who graduate from Baez's WITO program return. Baez dropped out of school in the seventh grade and was a drug addict for twenty-five years. "One thing it taught me was that you start where you're at, with what you got, and you start now", he says about his life experiences. His strength and willingness to give back are an inspiration to many. And his message of hope resonates with people from all walks of life. <http://www.dailygood.org/story/2020/the-reformed-prisoner-who-is-paying-it-forward-thomas-shomaker/> **Be The Change:** There are many ways to support people in prison. Here are seven ways. <http://www.dailygood.org/more.php?n=7405a>

We cross many thresholds of partings in life; sometimes as the one leaving and sometimes as the one staying behind. Often, the farewell that must be expressed is to some emotion or aspect of ourselves we need to release in order to move forward. Pause for a moment and consider a farewell you are facing. Then open your heart and experience this soulful many-layered story of how to approach partings with grace and gratitude.

<http://www.dailygood.org/story/2114/farewell-badger-tesa-silvestre/> **Be The Change:** Share this beautiful lesson in gratitude and goodbye with someone you know who is facing a difficult farewell in their life.

We get to meet a lot of amazing, powerful leaders in our work here at Conscious Company and yet some people stand out even more from that rarified group. Lynne Twist is one of those standouts. She's a rare combination of driven and playful; flexible, yet clear. She brings a laser-sharp focus to living her values. She's relentless in her pursuit of changing the dream of modern society, and it's not all talk -- she's authentic about living it day to day. She sees the core worth of every person she's with, whether they're a billionaire or a poor orphan (and she's spent plenty of time with each). If you're with her, she's with you, and she wants to know you." Read on for an interview with Lynne Twist, where she shares about living a life of commitment, how she started the Pachamama Alliance, the wisdom of the Achuar people, on being a conscious leader, and how facing burnout is an invitation to connect deeply with Source. <http://www.dailygood.org/story/2154/the-extra-ordinarily-committed-life-of-lynne-twist-rachel-zurer-and-meghan-french-dunbar/> **Be The Change:** Take a moment this week to consider if there's a way for you to develop a commitment in your life to a cause that is much bigger than personal project(s). Write about it in your journal. And try and recall it when there's a need to rise above some 'small', ego-driven concerns in your life.

Getting access to education for children in rural communities is a problem faced by countries across the world. In India, there is a program launched by the government in 1975 focused on bringing healthcare, education, and nutrition to rural communities through an anganwadi, or 'courtyard shelter.' Anganwadis are vital to these populations, pulling children young enough to attend preschool from helping their families by working in the fields. Providing a foothold into education means these children can go on to attend primary and secondary school, get good jobs, study at universities, and give back to their families. In the southern Indian state of Maharashtra, one woman has changed the lives of hundreds by selflessly opening a no-charge anganwadi out of her own home. <http://www.dailygood.org/story/1924/for-11-years-she-taught-250-kids-for-free-sanket-jain/> **Be The Change:** Sushila made a difference in the lives of others by donating resources she already had to hand. Find one resource you already have - time, space, an ability or skill, etc. - and find some way to share it with your local community through volunteerism.

The creators of the film "Another World" assert that it will change the way you see your world. This documentary is about "mankind's journey to discover its true force and identity...It is a quest through science and consciousness, individual and planetary, exploring our relationships with ourselves, the world around us, and the universe as a whole." The filmmakers urge us to become "active, conscious agents of life, creating a better and brighter future for the present and future generations." Watch the film trailer here to learn more. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PYORE3RH-G4> **Be The Change:** Today, notice your thoughts. Do you tend to hang on the negative things that happened during the day, or the positive?

Since prehistoric hunters had to work together in order to survive, people have had to learn how to share both the workload and the harvest, and the problems and the joys. Through the centuries, traditions have formed and complexities have grown. But the health of all community depends on how we treat each other. This article explores eight worldviews and the practices they offer. Each can help us stay wholehearted, authentic, and in true relationship to life and each other. <http://www.dailygood.org/story/2157/8-world-views-and-practices-by-mark-nepo-mark-nepo/> **Be The Change:** Consider these eight world views: to repair the connections, to water our common roots, to face a life of compassion, to stay in honest conversation, to welcome other views, to honor our uniqueness and commonness, to create a sense of belonging, and to bear witness to each other? These are not concepts but living tools by which tribes and cultures have sustained human growth on Earth. How can you make good use of these tools today?

When confronted with fear, the brain will seek relief in the form of old coping habits if left to its own devices. However, there are things we can do to help it change course. If we set the stage for courage, our awareness of what happens to us becomes our greatest ally. "The more you interrupt the old fear-based habits and replace fear-based responses with responses to boost courage, the more you create a 'courage habit.' By living your life with courage, you'll be more likely to make the changes that will lead to greater fulfillment -- whether that's embarking on a new relationship or job, or helping to save the world." In this article from Greater Good, five tips for changes in your life that will make you aware of how you experience fear, and support courage. <http://www.dailygood.org/story/2158/how-to-live-a-more-courageous-life-kate-swoboda/> **Be The Change:** Intentionally do something that causes fear and notice where you feel it in your body.

Many of us like to consider the impact we make as a "footprint" we leave behind. But what if instead of a footprint, we imagined our actions leaving a wake? In this article, Andy Smallman explores how the metaphor of a boat in the water can be applied to our daily decisions and interpersonal exchanges. Just as a boat creates waves that affect the vessels around it, so too do our words and actions influence the unfolding of our days and the relationships with those whom we encounter. "Among the things I like about the wake image is that a wake is strongest when it's new and close, and it comes in contact with lots of things as time passes," Smallman writes. "In this way it is significant both right away AND in the future, the form of significance just being different." <http://www.dailygood.org/story/2156/consider-your-wake-andy-smallman/> **Be The Change:** Challenge yourself to do three things this week that will leave a positive wake. Share your thoughts and ideas in the comments section below!

The Earth needs both physical and spiritual attention and awareness, our acts and prayers, our hands and hearts. Life is a self-sustaining organic whole of which we are a part, and once we reconnect with this whole we can find a different way to live -- one that is not based upon a need for continual distraction and the illusions of material fulfillment, but rather a way to live that is sustaining for the whole. Sufi mystic, Llewellyn Vaughan-Lee, reflects on Pope Francis' 2016 encyclical calling us all to love and care for the sacred life that sustains us, just as it loves and protects us. <http://www.dailygood.org/story/2165/pope-francis-encyclical-hearing-the-cry-of-the-earth-llewellyn-vaughan-lee/> **Be The Change:** Go outside today and wake up to the wonder of the web of life we call Earth. Then, spend the rest of the day doing all you do as an act of service, placing the world as a living being within your heart.

In this call for prayer, Avrol Looking Horse requests that all religious and spiritual leaders come together for the Earth. The inciting incident was the Gulf Oil spill in 2010, but the petition for global prayer holds even more true today. Avrol asks that we unite spiritually, All Nations, All Faiths, One Prayer. <http://www.dailygood.org/story/2168/a-great-urgency-to-all-world-and-spiritual-leaders-avrol-looking-horse/> **Be The Change:** Find a prayer that speaks to you or create one of your own, then include a prayer for the earth in your daily meditation/prayers. <http://www.dailygood.org/more.php?n=7845a>

The darkest capacities of humans to hurt fellow humans and destroy the natural world offer us the challenge of shifting our consciousness to discover what humanity can achieve through awareness, to create something alive and dynamic instead. Two organizations, Rising Women Rising World and FemmeQ have identified five of the outstanding qualities of feminine intelligence --available to men as to women -- that could enable us to achieve tangible long-lasting results through awareness. <http://www.dailygood.org/story/2169/dealing-with-the-darkness-of-what-humans-do-to-humans-scilla-elworthy/> **Be The Change:** What qualities could serve you as you take a stand for what you believe in without allowing your convictions to escalate the violence and misunderstanding rampant everywhere? The Elders -- a group of experienced international statesmen and women devoted to enabling world leaders to make wiser decisions, could help.

The jagged boulders at the bottom of the snow-filled gully weren't fully covered by the snow. They lay in a jumble, piled there by the receding glacier from the last ice age. There was plenty of time to fully regard them as he accelerated towards them, approaching some terminal velocity, down the ice chute into which he'd been unceremoniously pitched, headlong. Thus begins Rick Farrel's account of what, by most measures, would

have been his last experience on earth. That it wasn't is something of a miracle. At the end, he knew he was a blood brother with the snow that would melt and flow into the sea

<http://www.conversations.org/story.php?sid=586> **Be The Change:** Have you ever experienced the perfect clarity that often appears in moments of real crisis? What do you make of it?

Okagesama is the awareness that what is inside the walls of your house or under the skin of your body or any aspect of your life and experience are elements that cannot be seen. They are in the shadows and in order to see them, we have to look very deeply. Gregg Krech writes that we have to see with more than our eyes. There are unseen forces in our lives that make them possible. When we reflect on this and try to identify all the unseen forces that make a thing or an experience possible, we discover that it is endless. We discover that what is in the shadows doesn't mean it doesn't exist, but that once we bring the light of awareness to it, we often find that it is love. <http://www.dailygood.org/story/2150/okagesama-gregg-krech/> **Be The Change:** For an entire day, choose a simple activity you perform in your day, such as opening a door, and practice being fully aware of all the elements that cannot be seen in that activity each time you do it.

<http://www.dailygood.org/more.php?n=7868a>

The first Karma Kitchen opened in Berkley, CA in 2007. It began as an experiment of a "gift economy". An economic system where goods and services are gifted - with no strings attached!

What a culture shift!! This model puts people in the position to receive kindness from strangers, inviting us to see from a different perspective. This is such a beautiful exploration of change in our behavior of consumption to one of contribution, from our perception of lack to one of abundance and community.

<http://www.dailygood.org/story/2151/grateful-changemakers-karma-kitchen-the-gratefulness-team/> **Be The Change:** What is something you can do to exercise your generosity muscles? Perhaps the harder exercise - how can you open up to more readily receive?

In a time of uncertainty and increasing grief, suffering, aggression and violence, Margaret Wheatley proposes we release our hope of an outcome, walk without a vision of the future, and let hopelessness be our companion. In our insecurity, self-doubt, and groundlessness, we can orient our soul, spirit, and heart to transcend the experienced world and anchor ourselves in faith. The value, rightness, and truth of our work with other people will allow us to persevere. We can hold grief and love in the same heart and be consoled and strengthened by those with us on the journey. Hopelessness liberates us from fear, from results, and from outcomes so we can do what feels right with clarity and energy. <http://www.dailygood.org/story/2171/finding-hope-in-hopelessness-margaret-wheatley/> **Be The Change:** Reach out to the people with you on your journey and offer consolation and strength to them. <http://www.dailygood.org/more.php?n=7865a>

World renowned photographer, Yann Arthus-Bertrand, released "Home" on World Environment Day, June 5, 2009. Shot in 54 countries and 120 locations over 217 days, "Home" is almost entirely composed of aerial footage showing how everything on earth is interconnected. Though the visually stunning images inspire a sense of awe, wonder, and appreciation for our home planet, this film was produced to awaken a collective conscience and responsibility. "Home" poses the prospect that unless we take responsible action to protect the earth's resources, we risk losing the only home we may ever have.

<http://www.karmatube.org/videos.php?id=2241> **Be The Change:** Director Yann Arthus-Bertrand made this film with the intention that it be freely available to all without restriction. Watch the full movie online!

Martin Winiecki of the Tamera Peace Research & Education Center in Portugal, writes that our present culture maintains a "mental and spiritual firewall...that hinders us from experiencing our interconnectedness with other beings." He invites us into "a world of full contact, resonance, and communication," by going through three stages of unlearning, beginning with a revolution in consciousness and ending with an unlearning process that needs community, considering that "we are relational interdependent beings."

<http://www.dailygood.org/story/2159/unlearning-together-martin-winiecki/> **Be The Change:** Winiecki says we can discover "a world outside our projections" when we practice unlearning. Try it for yourself, experimenting with his three stages, then share your discoveries in discussion with your community of family, friends, or a group you belong to.

6. The New And Ancient Story of Interbeing

Reprinted from www.awakin.org.

--by *Charles Eisenstein* (Dec 03, 2018)

Why does the sun shine? A random result of coalescing gases igniting nuclear fusion? Or is it in order to give its light and warmth to Life? Why does the rain fall? Is it the senseless product of blind chemical processes of evaporation and condensation? Or is it to water life? Why do you seek to pour forth your song? Is it to show off your genetic fitness to attract a mate, or is it to contribute to a more beautiful world? We may fear those first answers but it is the second that carries the ring of truth.

Every culture, as far as I know, has something that I call a Story of the World. That story is a weave of myths, meanings, narratives, words, symbols, rituals, and agreements that together define the world. That story tells us who we are, how to be a man or a woman, what is important and valuable, what is real, what is sacred, what humanity's role and purpose is on earth.



The world's dominant culture, the one called modern, has a story of the world too. I call it the story of separation. It is the story that holds us as separate individuals and holds humanity separate from nature. Here, giving does not come naturally. In fact, that story says our default nature is selfishness, down to the genetic level. If I'm separate from you, then more for me is less for you.

In the Story of Separation, trust does not come naturally either. The world is our adversary, full of other competing separate individuals, human and otherwise, whom we must overcome to have a good life –weeds, germs, the Russians, whatever. Beyond that, the forces of nature are adversaries too, because they are utterly random, and the whole universe tends toward entropy. There is no intelligence or purpose outside of ourselves. Therefore, to establish a comfortable human habitation in the world, we must dominate and control these forces, insulate ourselves from them, and harness them to our purposes. That's what the Story of Separation says.

Where in that story is there room for gratitude? Where is there room for gift? In the Story of Separation you basically have to rise above human nature, rise above the way of the world, to be selfless, generous, or altruistic. Becoming a good person, then, involves a sort of conquest, a conquest of self. It is the same domination of nature, this time turned inward.

Now I have to say, this story is quickly becoming obsolete. Even its scientific dimension in genetics, physics, and biology are crumbling. In complexity theory, we understand that order can emerge spontaneously out of chaos, without an external organizing force. In ecology, we understand that the wellbeing of one is inseparable from the wellbeing of all. So let me talk about gift, generosity, and gratitude from the perspective of another story, a new and ancient story I like to call Interbeing.

In the story of Interbeing, life is a gift. The world and everything in it is a gift. We did not earn our lives. We did not earn the sun; it is not thanks to our hard efforts that it shines. We did not earn the ability of plants to grow. We did not earn water. We did not earn our conception nor our breath. Our hearts beat and our livers metabolize all on their own. Life is a gift.

7. Three Stages of Perceiving Impermanence

Reprinted from www.awakin.org.

--by *Shinzen Young* (Dec 10, 2018)

Impermanence is just appreciating the normal changing-ness of each experience at deeper levels of poignancy. One way to think about this is in terms of three aspects of impermanence: the trivial, the harsh, and the blissful.

At first, impermanence may present itself in a kind of trivial way. For example, you are meditating, and you start feeling an itch. You get preoccupied with it for a while. Then something distracts you, and when you come back, the itch is gone. You didn't actually feel it go, you are just aware that something previously present is now absent. Your attention was broken, but you still noticed that something changed. This level of understanding impermanence is based on a lack of continuous concentration. A deeper appreciation of impermanence comes about through continuous concentration.



As your concentration skills grow, and you are able to focus on things more continuously without being distracted, you begin to appreciate how things continuously change. But continuous change does not necessarily imply smooth change. At this stage, your experience of change may be abrupt, jagged, perhaps even harsh. For example, you are watching a pain in your leg, and you notice that it is pounding, twisting, stabbing, shooting, crushing, or exploding. Now, these are very abrupt and uncomfortable modes of movement, but they are movement nonetheless. They are ways in which the pain sensation is changing. It seems like somebody has stuck a knife in your leg and is twisting it to the right, to the left, jabbing it in, pulling it out. It is harsh, it is abrupt, it is jagged, but it represents a continuous contact with changing-ness. This doesn't happen only with painful experiences. The same can happen with intense pleasure.

Eventually, your concentration and equanimity skills mature to the point where your experience of change is not only continuous, but smooth as well. A softening takes place. The impermanence becomes fluid, soothing, bubbly, more like an effortless breathing in and out. This is because your focus is like a high-resolution monitor or a high-definition TV screen, and you are able to perceive subtler movements with clarity. To make a techie metaphor, it's as if you have increased the sampling rate or bandwidth of your change detector. You can't force this to happen, but as you are paying attention and developing an acceptance of the harsher kinds of impermanence, they break up into gentler kinds of impermanence—stately undulations, effervescence, effortless spread, and collapse. When this happens, the impermanence starts to comfort you, it becomes like a massage.

At this point, we are on the edge of an important transition, because now we can yield to the flow and let it "meditate us." The perception "I am meditating" fades into the background and is replaced by the perception that "impermanence is meditating me."

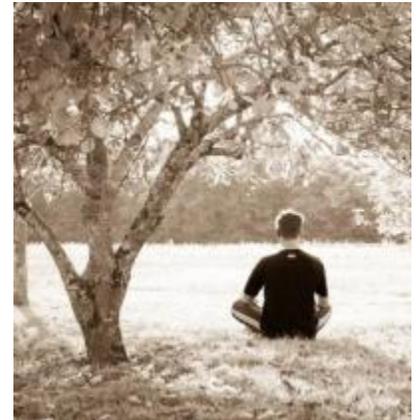
8. How Observation Changes Relationships

Reprinted from www.awakin.org.

—by **Vimala Thakar** (Dec 17, 2018)

When we sit in silence what do we do? We sit and observe the voluntary and involuntary activities of the body and mind. Slowly the voluntary activities come to an end, but the involuntary activities we have inherited from birth, from our family, religion, race, nationality -which fill the mind – go on, and we sit and observe their unfoldment.

Since we are used to working all the time we may find it difficult at first to sit quiet, or the body may fall asleep due to accumulated fatigue. If it happens it is desirable to rest the body for a few days until it is fresh again. While you sit in silence, thoughts will arise, as the mind has been working for 24 hours. The thoughts cannot be suppressed nor can they be thrown away anywhere, you can only watch them, not naming them as good or bad. Then you are free from the roles of an experiencer and an actor, you enter into the state of an observer of non-reactional attention.



As soon as the mind begins moving and says: “I like” or “I dislike” what it sees, there is a disturbance, a burdening of the mind and the role of the observer is lost and you are once more immersed into the roles of an experiencer and actor. If you do not react to the thoughts you are observing, if they no longer have the power to elicit any reaction from you then they will subside of their own accord.

We have to extend this attitude of observation in relationships. Once the observer state is awakened it changes relationships. It is a tremendous energy that is awakened. When observation becomes a continuous state throughout the day, then:

- (1) There is no self-deception. We do not hide anything from ourselves. There is nothing left as subconscious or unconscious it being all revealed in observation. There is now only the conscious level.
- (2) We stop deceiving others or presenting a different image of ourselves to others. The seeing of what is, without justification or condemnation shatters the image. We now have the courage to live and be what we are.
- (3) We become aware of all that is happening within us, of the different emotions arising within us, for example, if we begin to get angry we are aware of it and so the grip of anger loosens its hold over us.
- (4) We recognize and admit our mistakes; asking for forgiveness immediately, thus freeing the mind from the burden of residue.
- (5) Through observation thoughts subside, hence the strain and pressure they cause on the neurological and chemical systems are also lifted. It is this tension that brings about anti-social behavior.
- (6) Pain and pleasure are not taken further than the present moment; thus no grudges or attachments are formed. The art of living is to live completely in the moment, not carrying any residue over to next incident, person or day.

9. Who Is My Neighbor?

Reprinted from www.awakin.org.

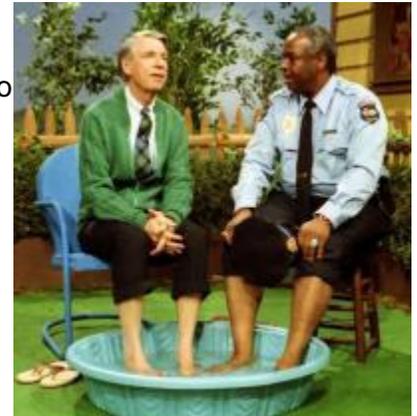
–by **Ivan Illich** (Dec 24, 2018)

Some thirty years ago, I went into sermons from the early third century into the nineteenth century dealing with this story of the Samaritan, and I found out that most preachers, when they comment on that passage, comment on it in order to show how we ought to behave towards our neighbor, when in fact this is the opposite of what Jesus, who tells that story of the Samaritan, wanted to point out.

The Pharisees came to ask Him, “Master, Teacher, tell us who is my neighbor?” They didn’t ask him, how does one behave to one’s neighbor? They asked him, point blank, the question: Who is the guy whom you call neighbor?

And he, as a story, told them a man was going down to Jericho, fell among robbers, was beaten up and left wounded. A teacher goes by, a priest goes by, sees him and walks on. And then an outsider comes along, the traditional enemy, and turns to the wounded man, as an internal turning, and picks him up, takes him into his arms and brings him to the inn. So he answers them, “My neighbor is whom I decide, not whom I have to choose.”

There is no way of categorizing who my neighbor ought to be. [...] The Master told them who your neighbor is is not determined by your birth, by your condition, by the language which you speak, by the *ethnos*, which means really the mode of walking which has become proper to you, but by you. You can recognize the other (hu)man who is out of bounds culturally, who is foreign linguistically, who – you can say by providence or by pure chance – is the one who lies somewhere along your road in the grass and create the supreme form of relatedness which is not given by creation but created by you.



10. Got A Problem with Pests? Call the Quack Squad

Reprinted from www.KarmaTube.org.

Most people know that pesticides are not only harmful for the environment, but they are also harmful to human beings. However, it can be difficult to come up with an ecological way of dealing with various pests in fields and gardens. A vineyard in South Africa is using Indian Runner ducks to take care of the pests that plague their plants in a natural way. The 1,071 ducks work on 50 square meters of farm land each day, eating the snails that destroy the crops. The farm puts on a “duck parade” every day before they go to work in the vineyards.

<http://www.karmatube.org/videos.php?id=7789>

11. 'Leftover Women' Take Over Market

Reprinted from www.KarmaTube.org.

In China, a woman who is unmarried by age 25 is considered a "leftover woman." She feels like an outsider, and in a culture with great respect for parents, she may feel like a failure. A group of such women went to the Marriage Market and put up large photos of themselves, and messages like "don't give up love for suitability" or expressing the wish not to marry. Their fundamental message is "Don't let pressure dictate your future."
<http://www.karmatube.org/videos.php?id=8284>

HEART AND SOUL ADVERTISEMENTS:

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12. Sacred Attention Therapy

Sacred Attention Therapy (SAT) references the etymological meaning of therapy: "attending to soul". SAT is a new paradigm of psychological and spiritual growth and development and is based on Richard Harvey's ground-breaking approach to depth psychotherapy, and on his 3-stage model of human awakening (<http://www.therapyandspirituality.com/>). This new paradigm of therapy / counselling is an approach that takes into account the ego-based individual and the desire of the individual to grow spiritually. SAT recognizes the fundamental, true, spiritual nature of humanity and the intense longing for the truth about our real, divine state. SAT involves listening with the whole self to the soul of the other. This is what therapy should always be, or at least always aim at, because this is the profound depth of healing and reverence which two gathered together in search of truth can bring about. For more information about SAT, visit these websites:

<http://www.servingyourjourney.com/Sacred-Attention-Therapy.html>

Sessions can be offered in person, by phone, or via Skype. For more information about booking appointments, please visit <http://www.servingyourjourney.com/Booking-Appointments.html>. To schedule an appointment, please contact me by phone (613-204-0299) or email (rmeagher@servingyourjourney.com).

13. A Course in Miracles Global Community Centre

Spiritual Guidance is honored to host the 'A Course in Miracles (ACIM) Global Community Centre.' This Centre is a meeting place for ACIM students and teachers from around the world to access coaching counselling, therapy, study and discussion groups, courses, a community café for you to communicate with other students and teachers, and helpful resources and links. Visit the ACIM Global Community Centre at <http://www.servingyourjourney.com/ACIM.html>.

Spiritual Guidance

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In love, gratitude, compassion and forgiveness...

Rev. Robert Meagher

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