

Practical Tips for Peaceful Living

(Volume I ... Mar 2008 – Jan 2013)



*... a collection of brief commentaries
on the meaning of real Peace, and
the making of a Peace-filled Life*

via Scaughdt
an (i)am publication

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“Every moment of every day, it is you and you alone who decides what you believe and how you act on those beliefs. It is you and you alone who chooses who you become ... And no matter what you have learned in your past, and no matter what is happening to you in your Here&Now, you always get a second chance -- in every second anew.” ~ unknown

"Do more than belong: participate. Do more than care: serve. Do more than believe: practice. Do more than be fair: be kind. Do more than forgive: have compassion. Do more than dream: DO." ~ inspired by William Arthur Ward



“No matter how many seminars you attend or how many books you read or how many sermons you hear, the quality of your life always boils down to truly making the most of each day you are alive. We humans tend to separate the mystical and the mundane; tend to divide the beautiful from the banal – to parse the numinous from the normal. And yet none of things are meant to be separate or divided or parsed. Rather they are -- in each & every instant of our lives -- meant to be joined as One.”

~ inspired by Dalton Roberts

An Introduction to what Follows

Being a Peace Pilgrim, it almost goes without saying that quite a few of my thoughts & writings from the past eleven+ years have to do with illuminating the profound “Inner Peace” that can be experienced by all those choosing to live the Way of selfless Kindness. Of course, it also almost goes without saying that this Way is more a practical manner of living than it is an abstract measure of philosophy or reason ...

And thus it makes significant sense that many of the aforementioned writings ended up describing several of the practical methods we humans can use to make real Peace a real Reality in our everyday lives (as opposed to a mere theory or a mere hope or a mere fantasy).

This is the first volume of my Blog’s collection of those written thoughts. May they inspire you to bring real, deep-seated Peace into the lives of others – and thereby rediscover that same Bliss in your own.

(Let it be so.)

Scaughdt
(June 2015)



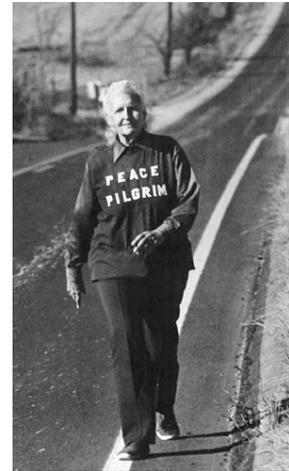
*“Out there, beyond all ideas of wrongdoing
and rightdoing, there is a field of Love ...
... Go on ahead; I’ll meet you there.”
~ inspired by Rumi*

*“Peace cannot be kept by force;
it can only be achieved by understanding.”
~ Albert Einstein*

*“Darkness cannot drive out darkness:
only light can do that.
Hate cannot drive out hate:
only Love can do that.”
~ Martin Luther King, Jr.*

How to survive as a Pilgrim (03/05/2008)

For starters here is some advice I gave a Friend on living life as a mendicant Peace Pilgrim (eating when offered food, and resting when offered shelter); advice that is just as applicable to those many who choose not to do so as it is to those few who do ... EnJOY!



First and foremost, avoid worrying about *finding sustenance* ... Even in the most arid of climates, where there are people, there is food — and that food is abundant. In addition, I have found that the more faithfully and humbly and sincerely you intend to be Kind to others and relieve *their* burdens, the more you are freely given sustenance along your Way. Some days it will seem difficult, and yet that is exactly what makes this Lifestyle so powerful — *and*, food always shows up. People are innately Kind and, in our severely fear-plagued culture, they are also “starved” for easy opportunities to do good deeds. You will provide them with that very opportunity, and many of them will literally jump at the chance to shower you with blessings ...



And here is an “advanced tip”: going along and purposefully not asking for sustenance inevitably allows even more to come to you than you could ever have imagined — as long as you are humbly silent for the benefit of others, not to receive more in return from them. Just do your good deeds *for others* (not for food or money) and wait for them to offer you your fare, all the while being fully prepared to receive nothing ... Choose to repeatedly remember the Truth that it is the selfless Giver who gains the most in any exchange. Choose to repeatedly remember that it is an honor to give to others — especially when nothing comes in return. It is this frequency that cares for the other without caring at all for reciprocation, that allows the floodgates of Universal Abundance to rain upon you in surprising ways.

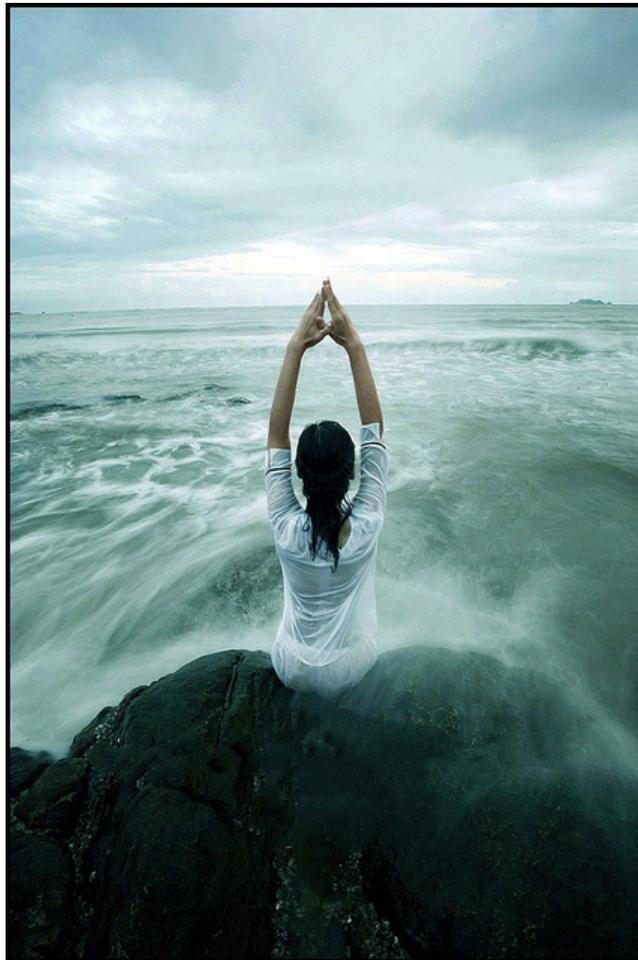
Secondly, avoid worrying about *finding shelter*... You will become astounded not only at how comfortably you learn to sleep outdoors, but how often you will be invited to rest at another’s Home – in a spare bed, or on their porch, or on a sofa. As far as rain is concerned, simply find shelter (a thick-leaved tree works remarkably well). And if no shelter is to be had, then revel in the rain!



And here is an “advanced tip”: if you walk “with the seasons” (north in the summer and south in the winter), there should never really be a problem with the truly uncomfortable scenario of “cold and wet”. And yet if you do find yourself in an extremely uncomfortable situation, choose to remember the Truth that it is in precisely such times that acts of service for others are most potent.

Thirdly and finally, especially *avoid worrying about “danger”*, as what you fear inevitably comes to you ... As long as you keep focusing on the innate Wonders and Beauties that allWays surround you (including and especially the Beauty of *every* human Soul you encounter), “evil” will literally fear your loving frequency and look elsewhere for its desired victim. It really is that simple. And if you happen to be in an impure state of mind and do attract one of those confused Souls, remember that deep within every such person is literally a “Golden Core” of Goodness. It is in those moments that you will be blessed with the opportunity of reminding those folks of that very Goodness by looking at their aggressiveness with compassion as opposed to fear.

After all, they are simply suffering from an intense psycho-spiritual illness, and worthy of just as much compassion and love as any cancer patient. Remember as well that you are surrounded by Good Souls like yourself; people who would like nothing better than to come to your aid in time of need — remember this, and much more often than not it will be so.



On visualizing vibrantly (03/27/2008)

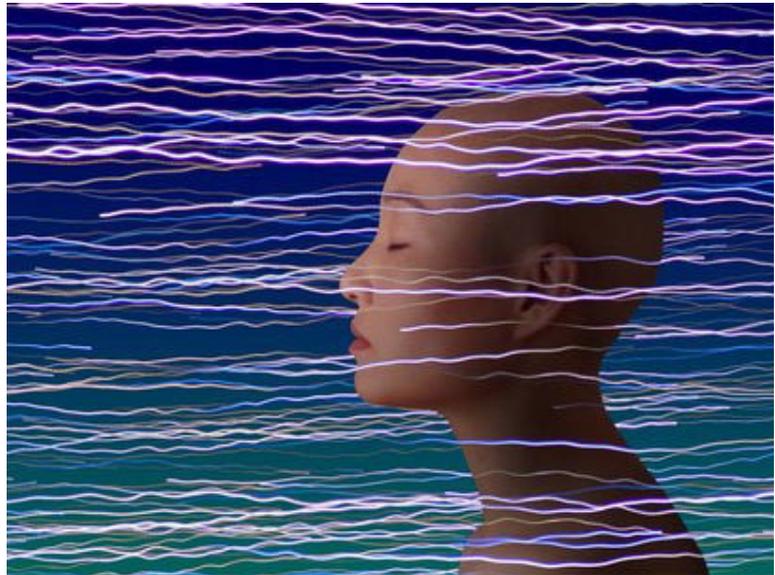
Remember while you are attempting to “manifest” another’s healing (or are praying for anyone to “get better”) to do so while visualizing a person who cheerfully *wants* to return to a Place of Peace & Wholeness ... Remember as well that it is possibly in the best interest of the Universe (and possibly in the subject’s best interest as well) to remain for a time in dis-ease. Only by consciously remaining completely humble in this manner can you access the full Power of the Cosmos ...

It is also important to see yourSelf sending the same Light to and through him or her, letting It flow of Its own accord (for “the Highest Good”, not only your own personal wishes related thereto) and allowing *It* to do the healing (not you or the visualization itself) ...

And most importantly, back this up thereafter by being radically Kind to the subject of the healing — as often and in as many ways as possible ... Forgive them for what they have done in the past ... Accept them unconditionally (even as they continue to suffer in the present) ... And then Respect their chosen Life-Paths as ‘right’ for their immediate future ...

Remember that you cannot truly help another without purely Loving them at the same time — and remember that you cannot purely Love another without unconditionally affirming their True Self (regardless of what their ego-selves might be doing or might have done) ...

And if your persistent, active, unconditional Love does not bring about the positive change you desire, remember that this is OK as well ... Simply go forth and use the other’s self-centered choices to inspire *you* to Live differently in your own life ... In this way, you can honor their Life and emPower others without having to futilely “push the river” of trying to change them at all.



On Self-Love (05/03/2008)

The ego-based belief that you need to harbor ‘love’ before giving any to others is possibly the most destructive myth of the human mind ... As long as you are focusing on getting enough of this tenuous ‘love’ for yourself, you cannot give *any* truly powerful Love to anyone else. Besides, the ego is never satisfied with it’s own level of ‘being loved’; allWays wanting just a bit more ...

I realize that selflessness’ is a scary concept, and yet I have repeatedly experienced it to be a True one ... Indeed, the only way I have found to have a potent, positive influence on others’ lives is to radically Care for them — especially in those moments when ‘nothing is coming back’. It is in these times that you come to understand the most amazing of Truths about Life: You **need absolutely no Love from any external source to be Happy and Content!**

You (along with the rest of the Universe) are composed of the same essence as Love itself — You breathe Love, eat Love, think using Love and ARE Love!!! I realize that this concept might sound a bit ‘foofy’, and yet its ‘foofiness’ does not keep it from being completely and powerfully True. Of course, you will only be able to experience this Truth in your Life if & when you decide to courageously and *repeatedly* apply it in those very moments when you least want to do so ...

AND, the Universe Loves you regardless ... AND I Love you regardless ... AND the True-Selves of others Love you regardless ... This Truth is the greatest Gift I have to Give, and it is so rarely received (both because it’s so frightening and because we’ve been incorrectly taught that it’s ‘dangerous’). I can’t convince you it’s True for You, and I wouldn’t rob you of the Faith required to see for yourself even if I could. You will have constant opportunities given to you to engage this Truth and experience It for yourSelf for as long as you live ...



So, relax and smile ... Be at Peace in this Moment and know that you can live this True Love whenever you wish (or never if you wish!). It is my only wish that you find whatever level of Peace is Right for you, and then that you maintain that perfect Joy for the rest of your Life.

It’s an amazingly difficult road, to be sure (it still is for Me as well, and I’ve been walking this Beautiful Path for several years now!) — and yet it’s difficulty is what makes it so Wonder-full in those moments we choose to courageously Walk It ... EnJOY!

On powerful prayer (08/08/2008)

Praying powerfully is really a simple affair — as long as you are willing to shift your motivations from self-centered to selfless ones ...

Initially, every potent prayer commences with an professing of sincere Gratitude for life — *regardless of what happens as a result of the prayer.*

Secondly, it is important that you remain acutely conscious of the content of your prayer, as well as the act of praying itself. You should feel as though you are literally talking to God — as though He is sitting next to you (for indeed, He/She/It is!).

Finally, the prayer itself is guaranteed to be truly success-full only when it is openly done *not* to satisfy your own personal goals or desires or wishes (regardless of how noble they might be), but rather solely to assist the Source (God) in fulfilling *its* greater Will — a Will that is per se beyond the capabilities of your human imagination ...

It is this intense humility that sends an equally intense frequency from your mind-body — a beam of energy that is of a frequency that the Source can and will use to fulfill its ultimate aim: to bring Harmony to the Cosmos.

In prayer it
is better to
have a heart
without
words than
words
without a
heart.



How to See
(12/27/2008)

One method you can use to **SEE deeper** into the objective nature of your Reality is to pause briefly with your eyes closed

Then, envision all matter as being composed of gossamer-thin lines of energy woven between seas of light-pearls (atoms)

Now open your eyes and choose to see the same all around you.

As Krishnamurti once noted, in this manner you can now “Watch nature without thought.”

Peace.



On letting Go (01/01/2009)

“We cannot see things in perspective until we cease to clutch them to our own bosom. When we let go of them we begin to appreciate them as they really are. Only then can we begin to see God in them.” ~ Thomas Merton

Once you realize that what folks call “God” (or Allah, or Buddha, or Chi, or Prana, or Spirit) is the fundamental essence of everything (certainly all beings that are sentient), you realize as well that letting go of all attachments becomes absolutely unnecessary ... After all, once you realize this Truth, you realize simultaneously that there is nothing to let go *of*! You come to instantly realize that every being, regardless of its possible or potential behaviors to the contrary, is innately perfect, and you come to see that every situation, regardless of any circumstances that seem to be contrary, is just as flawless.

Please note that this comprehension is **not** a call to apathy. Quite the contrary — it is a call to radically Care for others, regardless of their arrogant or ignorant beliefs &/or regardless of their aggressive or self-centered actions. It is a call to be radically Grateful for every moment, regardless of how it affects you individually. It is a call to Care for others, without caring at all about how they are acting towards you. Only then can you effectuate real shifts in consciousness ... Only then can you enliven real enhancements of environmental harmony ... Only then can you begin to see “God”.



On responding to “evil” (01/17/2009)

What to do with “evil” and how to respond to “evil people” are hot topics these days in certain circles, and while I have absolutely no hope or desire of changing anyone’s mind on this volatile issue, I have learned a few Truths over the past several years that it would be wise to at least consider ...

Truth #01) Being kind to oppressive forces (“evil”), does not require tolerating malicious behaviors. Indeed, I never respond with mere “tolerance” to cruelty. Rather, I respond with active Love; standing courageously in the way of those doing the killing while forgiving them their past transgressions. As “evil” actions do not come from an innate evil nature, but rather a lack of such unconditional Acceptance, this response is the only one that can ever prove to be truly effective.

Truth #02) Non-violence is not passive ... It is active. It never waits to try a “less violent approach if time allows”, but instead engages evil with powerfully Loving actions; *immediately* & courageously.

Truth #03) Despite common notions to the contrary, it is impossible to effectively “take up the cause” of a victim of violence by using violence. Such responses only serve to encourage those enemies to re-inflict their violent deeds elsewhere upon others.

Truth #04) God’s compassion is Real. It exists within each of us *because* we experience pain and injustice in life. We have all been given the ability to transcend our animalian, instinctive reactions to evil deeds (e.g. eye-for-an-eye, “self-defense”, preemptive strikes, “just wars”). Because we have a functional neo-cortex, we can all choose to transcend those primitive, emotional reactions and respond *consciously* instead — with acts of courageous compassion (e.g. forgiveness, kindness, empathy).

In essence, pain will happen in life, and yet that pain is also the source of pure Bliss for all beings who have the courage to act as facets of The ONE (via *acts of courageously* pacifist understanding), as opposed to being mere protectors of themselves, their friends & family, or their own tribe(s) ... It may be “reasonable” or “rational” or “just” to attack an enemy who has attacked us, and yet such a choice always leads to our sense of enmity becoming entrenched and our sense of suffering becoming intensified. And, on a practical level, it encourages our enemies to defend themselves and grow even stronger.



Indeed, my Mission is not to convince anyone that I am Right, but merely to re-awaken that 1% of 1% of humanity who will join me in becoming a “critical mass” — a sub-culture that will finally allow our species to avoid the plummet into the next Dark Ages ... Will you help me aid The Cause?

[pictured: John Lewis & former Klansman Elwin Wilson hug 48 years after Lewis beat Wilson for trying to enter a “whites only” waiting room.]

How to LOVE (02/07/2009)

Some poignant advice on how best to Love during this lifetime:

***Avoid striving to love a particular “whom” — *just LOVE* ...** The more we primarily focus on caring for those in our “friends and family”, the more readily we slip into apathy &/or indifference when coming into contact with the other 99.9% of the population.

***Avoid getting caught up & avoid pushing away ...** Love is not about enmeshing in the self of the other; nor is it about establishing an emotional perimeter of “prudence” (see “healthy boundaries”) around your heart. Love simply Cares-all-out in the moment, for only that moment — and then It seeks to repeat this effort in all moments next.

***Avoid waiting for a “better moment” or a “better partner” ...** Love exists only in the present moment. Love always acts *NOW* — and we must do the same if we are to experience it. Regardless of whom we are with or what they require, just do it!

***Avoid analysis, comparison, & all forms of negative thinking ...** Love does not require perfection to be exuded. Indeed, it is for those who are “imperfect” that Love does the most good. See the positive worth in the person next to you and find a way to care for the Essence *beyond their behaviors*.

***Avoid all personal desires & hopes ...** Love is not given in order to make people happier. If others choose to receive your Love and thereby feel more at ease, that’s great — and yet that is not why Love is given. *Love is given to give It* — period.

***Avoid trying to “fix” others ...** Accept people as they allReady are. Love does not care for others in order to “change them for the better”. Love cares for others to extend them compassion for their suffering &/or to bring them joy — period.

***Before Loving, pause to forgive self and others ...** Love is neutered when tainted by underlying thoughts of blame or regret. Cleanse yourself of both before Caring for another.

***Minimize the distance between yourSelf and others ...** In the beginning, it can be helpful to imagine how you would treat a person if you knew they only had a few hours to live — Do so, and then act accordingly.

This is the way to Love ...
This is the Way of Peace.



On suffering (02/17/2009)



The suffering we experience in life comes not from our pain but rather from our struggles to “get better” (or “attain success”, or “arrive at our goal”). The answer to that suffering, then, lies not in finding better ways to “get healthy” or “be happy”, but rather in accepting that where we allReady are *is* our SUMMIT — that in every moment, we have truly Arrived ...

With this mindset, there is nothing left to accomplish or realize. We are Alive and there is only **BE** — to **BE** Humble, to **BE** Appreciative and to **BE** Generous (generally in that order) ... In the Moments we make such selfless choices (and that is all they are; choices that require no effort or preparation), we Know only JOY and are truly Power-full in all the we then **DO** ...



This is what it means to “Let Go and Let God” — the God mentioned being not some external force to placate or obey, but rather our own Soul’s guidance to simply follow ... For this truly Divine Essence only wants to enliven Love, and it is literally impossible for anyone to be sad or angry or frightened while selflessly serving others – while being Love.

And as such, this is our true “path of repentance”; our true re-turning to the innate Divinity that comprises who we all truly Are ... And once we engage this Way, there are no more mountains to climb; merely paths thereupon to enJOY ... No more goals to attain; merely generous actions leading directly thereto.

Amen ... Let it be so.

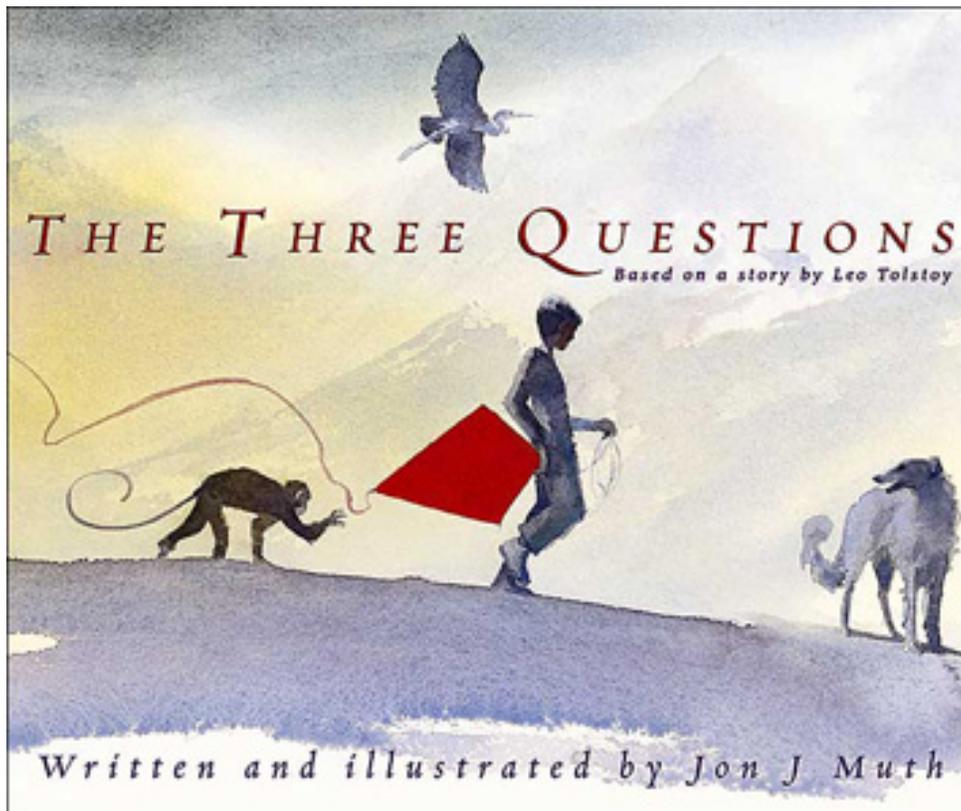
On discovering Purpose
(03/04/2009)

There is a great book called “The Three Questions” by Jon J. Muth.

It’s technically a “children’s book”, and yet could just as easily occupy a space on every adult’s nightstand. In short, Muth (who is essentially putting Tolstoy’s work of the same name into parable form for children) notes that the “Right thing to Do” is allWays a service that lessens the burden(s) of another, that is performed for the person(s) in your closest physical proximity, and that is done in the present moment.

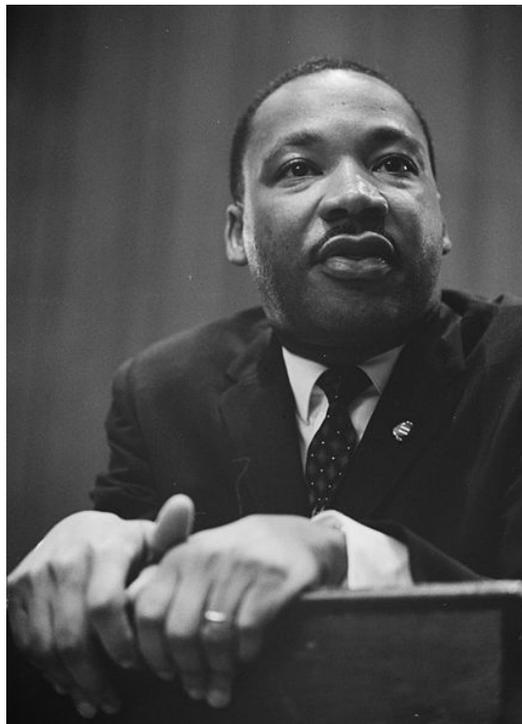
I’m not so sure of my own “Life Mission” these days, and yet when I simplify things and humble my ego, it is allWays easy to find a Soul “in need” very nearby for whom something Good can be Done.

Then, I just go Do it ...
... and this becomes my Purpose.



The Peace of Purpose
(03/14/2009)

*“What is to give great light
must willfully endure great burning.”
~ inspired by Victor Frankl*



“Everybody can be great, because everybody can serve. You don't have to have a college degree to serve. You don't have to make your subject and your verb agree to serve. You don't have to know about Plato and Aristotle to serve... You only need a heart full of grace, a soul generated by Love.” ~ Martin Luther King, Jr

on perceiving Reality (04/29/2009)

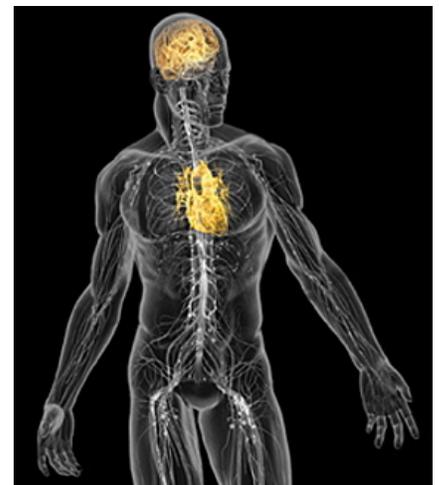
None of us can use only our rational minds and hope to accurately “know” or perceive the nature of our objective Reality. As such, in order to utilize all the information our senses constantly provide, we must be willing to recognize the four additional, far more subtle senses of perception available to us, and then engage their “advice” on less objective levels – what some call “hunch”, and others call Faith – and then discern Truth from the results of those courageous choices ... That having been said, here is what I do “know” about those four additional “non-primary” senses...

The 6th Sense -- Intuition: Intuition, as far as I know, is our ability to take the totality of information we are sensing in any given moment, transpose it upon what similar information has meant in past experiences, and thereby gain a “feel” for what the immediate future will probably bring. This is what some folks call



“hunch” or “gut feeling” ... In addition, some physicists are proposing that the Universe is holographic – meaning that any part of it always reflects the entirety of its whole. If this is true, then intuition is simply a more concrete understanding – a “knowing” – of our role in the “Bigger Picture”; a knowing that allows us to feel “the best course” of action even if we do not have more tangible evidence in support of that choice via the five “primary senses” of sight, sound, touch, taste or smell.

The 7th Sense – Limbic Resonance: This is where we find the latest science related to the human “Heart Brain” (search Joseph Chilton Pearce and/or “Heart Math” for more info) ... In essence, what this research is showing is that, as highly developed higher mammals, we humans can innately sense the emotional State of Being of any other “highly developed being” in our immediate vicinity. This sense is activated and gives us this information continually, regardless of whether or not we have any more tangible evidence of the particular state of mind being sensed – We don’t have to communicate with the subject in any way. simply focus on them, and “Know”.



The 8th Sense – EM Resonance: This where the Wisdom embedded in the ancient art of Feng Shui can be applied ... In essence, no matter where we are, our personal frequency (primarily an electro-magnetic emission, though other more subtle energies are probably co-emitted as well) is mingling with the frequencies emitted by all other entities in our vicinity (both those animate and those inanimate). These emissions interact with one another and then bounce back to us as frequencies that are either “harmonious” or “discordant”. If most of them resonate harmoniously with one another, we feel a sense of “ease” in that particular location — if not, we feel a deep, often unexplainable sense of profound, gnawing dis-ease; a desire to be in a different space because “something just isn’t right” ...



The 9th Sense – Conscient Resonance: The final human sense relates to the innate Moral Compass that constantly guides us both from within (the conscience) and without (external, synchronistic “beacons ” of witnessed “good” or “evil”) ... Somehow, this Compass -- in conjunction with our neocortex -- has the capability and the drive to continually encourage us to behave contrary to the primal, self-centered instincts of the reptile brain. It subtly and constantly “whispers” to us; encouraging us to behave compassionately towards others and to orient our actions on helping the collective as opposed to helping only ourselves ...



That about sums it up ... These are the senses that, when combined with the more pragmatic “evidence” provided by the five “primary senses”, help to provide us with a more accurate portrayal of the Universe in which we live ...

Use them wisely; use them well.

What you Desire
(04/30/2009)

*“Uncover what you long for,
& you will re-discover who you are.”
~ Phil Cousineau*

Alter what you long for,
& you will shift who you are becoming ...

Release what you long for,
& you Become who you've always been.

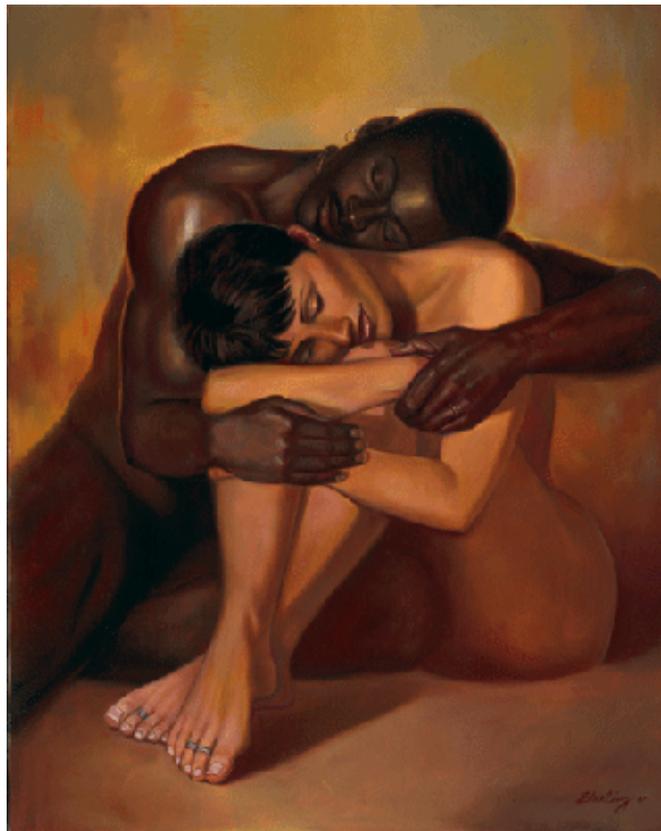


On Compassion (05/01/2009)

Hildegard von Bingen said that compassion is the combination of “celebration” (which implies humility) and “justice-making” (which implies forgiveness), and there is great Wisdom to be gained from this definition ... For only when we humbly place ourselves in another person’s situation, do we begin to truly Care for them. And only when we maintain that level of humility, is it then possible to deeply accept whatever that person might be doing — even if those actions are harming us in some way.

And yet, to be truly *viable*, Compassion must become **more** ... To be truly viable, Compassions must also come from an awareness that is interactive. To have pure Compassion for another, we must humble ourselves enough to accept them unconditionally, we must empathize with their pain, **and** we must then be motivated to actively & selflessly attempt to alleviate the same...

This – and this alone – is real Compassion.



("Tenderness" by Sterling Brown)

on Gratitude (05/04/2009)

The story is told about a woman Zen Master named Sono who taught one very simple method of enlightenment. She advised everyone who came to her to adopt an affirmation to be said many times a day, under all conditions ... And that affirmation was, “Thank you for everything ... I have no complaint whatsoever.”

Many people from all arenas of life came to Sono for healing. Some were in physical pain; others were emotionally distraught; others had financial troubles; some were seeking soul liberation. No matter what their distress or what question they asked her, her response was the same: “Thank you for everything ... I have no complaint whatsoever.”

Some people went away disappointed; others grew angry; others tried to argue with her. Yet some people took her suggestion to heart and began to practice it. Tradition tells that everyone who practiced Sono’s mantra found peace and healing ... “Thank you for everything ... I have no complaint whatsoever.”

My friend Lisa, a young woman in her late 30’s, informed one day that a year previously she had been diagnosed with a brain disorder that had progressed to the point that it required immediate surgery. The surgery was done, a steel plate was inserted in her head, and her doctor keeps her under close observation ... Privately I told Lisa that I was sorry she had gone through this whole ordeal. “Oh, don’t be sorry,” she told me emphatically. “I’m not sorry at all. This was one of the best things that has ever happened to me. It really got me to appreciate my life and relationships ... I wouldn’t trade the experience if I could.”

Thank you for everything ... I have no complaint whatsoever.

Can you imagine what your life would be like if you simply dropped your complaints? It’s quite the radical proposition, since most of us have been programmed to question, analyze, and criticize everything we see. But then we end up questioning, analyzing, and criticizing both ourselves & our lives ... And as such we miss out on Joy, the only true measure of Success ...



Thank you for everything ... I have no complaint whatsoever.

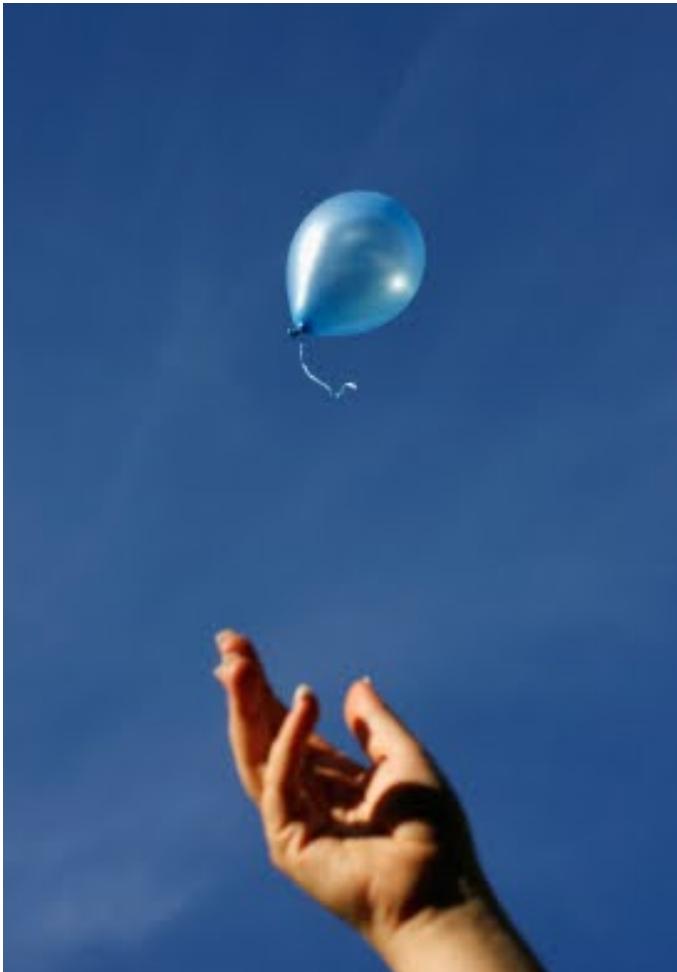
(~ inspired by Alan Cohen)

On helping others (06/15/2009)

Oftentimes, the only way we can truly help another person is to simply to let them go; to accept that the path they have currently chosen is the necessary one for their lives at that point in time. And this is often especially true in those times when we most wish for them to follow a less painful (or a “better”) way ...

Recently, a very good friend of mine chose to walk “the deadly way” of superficial pleasure and self-centered “living”, and I initially wished for her to return to a path of selfless Kindness; the only path I have personally found to bring any measure of deep-seated Happiness ...

And yet, after deeply worrying about her for a time (futilely, I might add), I eventually chose to simply Love her — to respect her choices as the only ones that she would eventually “hear”; as the only ones that will ultimately lead her back to the Road of Peace.



Initially this was a difficult choice for me to make, and yet as I persisted in doing so – the more I let her go *while* still Caring about her & for her, I found that my Love for her actually deepened.

And even though she continues along her “darker road” even to this day, I know that my newly chosen *unconditional* Love for her — a Love without any hopes or expectations; a Love for her that will continue whether she ever returns to a life of Kindness or not — is doing far more Good for her than my previous worries and wishes ever did.

Choosing wisely
(07/28/2009)

We have been given the power to destroy beauty ...
... or to co-create the Beauty-full.

We have been given the power to merely “do” (drone through life) ...
... or to consciously Be (enlivening or Living).

We have been given the power to inflict discord & violence...
... or enhance Harmony & Peace.

We have been given the power to choose anger or sadness ...
... or be Joy-full in Gratitude.

The formers are facets of our primal, instinctual ego, while the latter are all facets of our higher, spiritual Self. The formers pave a path that is easy and broad – a road trodden by many, while the latter blaze a Way that is challenging and narrow – walked by the courageous few. There is allWays a choice as to which of these routes we will choose & which we will therefore embody ...

... Choose wisely!



On consciousness & Oneness (07/29/2009)

“We are made up of consciousness, so we are one. Not that we are THE One, but we exist completely within The One.” ~ Shoshanna Feist

I don't really write or speak too much with folks about the “Big Mystery Themes” (e.g. God, Heaven, consciousness etc.) if for no other reason than **A**) I don't have access to objective Truth, **B**) no one else has access to objective Truth either & **C**) focusing our energies on knowing the unknowable siphons energies away that we could be using to get out there and Love somebody!

Still, I offer a thought or two on the subject:

It seems that we are not only made of the same stuff as “The All” (i.e. condensed Light), but also that we don't have any *real* separation from anything that we falsely perceive to be “out there” (see quantum physics) ... At the same time, we have been “placed” into fleshly “machines” of highly condensed Light (called “bodies”) and imbued with a consciousness that is aware of this containment. This consciousness then perceives us as each being independently separate from the external All.

Whether or not this theory is accurate, *it is very important* for the following reason: the Universe constantly seeks the highest state of Harmony within itself, **and** this highest state is most profoundly furthered via active Love exchanged between two sub-facets of that Whole ... And for such a Love to be viable, it is critical that the sub-facets *believe* themselves to be separate from each other. When you tack on the fact that all biological organisms are equipped with a very powerful survival mechanism which constantly encourages them each to *avoid* powerful Love (i.e. take care of his or herself first), then you have a system whereby any such Loving act that is chosen is immeasurably powerful — precisely *because* it is so difficult to embody. And it is the conscious “awareness” of every sentient being — especially the belief that we are each separate from all others — that makes this all possible.

For you to make all this practical, simply choose each day to pause and remind yourself that you are an innate part of one Whole, choose to look around for others around you who are suffering and who do not realize this fact, and then choose to extend active Love to those beings — preferably in a manner that prevents you from receiving any tangible benefit in return ...



This is The Way to not only comprehend Oneness mentally, but to **experience it** physically. And in all the moments when this is done, you are allowed to feel the pure Bliss of that Oneness (i.e. enter “The Kingdom of Heaven”).

Freedom from Addictions (07/30/2009)

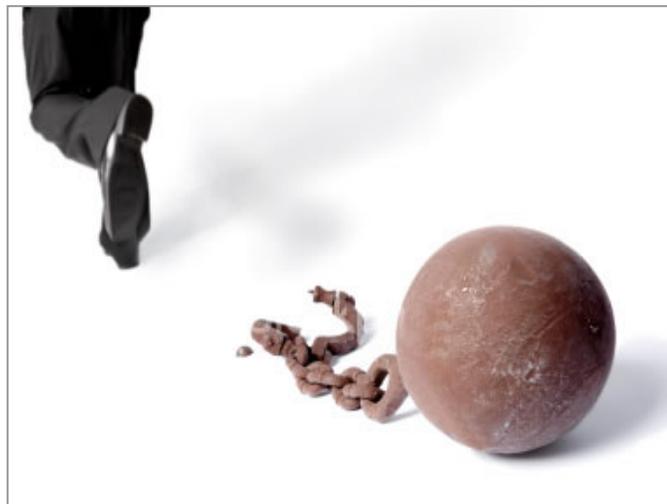
In freeing ourselves from any addiction, the first step is admitting that we have one. The even bigger step is then for that person to recognize that the addiction is not something to fight, but rather something to *employ*. And while only experiencing this first-hand will enable you to truly understand it, remember while you do so that ***your Journey is not a continuum***. You do not have to “get better” or “get well” or even “get sober” — trying to do so only makes your ego stronger; gives it yet another weapon to employ in its attempts to dominate your Soul-Self (a.k.a. your conscience).

And yet, if you ***live life gently, one moment at a time***, your ego will provide less and less resistance, and you will be able to more easily replace self-centered addictions with selfless acts of caring.

It sounds simple, and yet I know firsthand that it isn't! Just take it all one moment at a time, though, and your True Self will see you through. Keep telling your addiction that you might have succumbed to it in the past and that you might succumb to it in the future, and yet *in this moment* (and only for that moment) you will *not* succumb — you will instead use its power to make any replacement-activity you choose a powerful one. And then all that remains is to repeat this act of courageous defiance in as many of your subsequent moments as possible ...

Feeling the urge to drink a pot of coffee? Pause and consciously drink a *powerful* cup of herbal tea instead — one cup at a time ... Feeling the urge to gossip about another? Pause and consciously issue a *powerful* compliment to them instead — one phrase at a time ... Feeling the urge to have a drink? Pause and consciously go for a *powerful* run — one step at a time.

Some have said (and I have verified it to be True, at least for myself) that any behavior consciously engaged for 29 days becomes a new habit. 29 days — one day at a time — one hour at a time — one moment at a time. And if you slip, *forgive yourself immediately and get right back to it!* ... And if you diligently persist with this method, your Freedom is assured.



Finding Meaning in Living (08/09/2009)

Ahhh yes — the tried and tested methods to finding Meaning in our lives (tried and tested, by the way, by hundreds of people over several thousands of years) all hinge on our courage to pause in any given instant and **choose differently**; either “passively” — by choosing a different mindset from the one that is causing us pain, or actively — by going forth into our lives and choosing a different set of activities than those causing our discomfort.

Because it is more difficult, the active alternative tends to bring us a much deeper sense of Peace than the relatively “passive” one (though consciously choosing to sit and be intensely & consciously grateful for life in those moments when we are depressed is no easy task either).

Fortunately, while radically altering our daily routines (&/or our activities &/or even our jobs) is the most effective way to do this, it is not necessary to radically alter your life to know this Truth. It is enough to either do the same activities as before *with a different underlying intention* (i.e. go to work not to “make ends meet”, but rather to enable your ability to give to others), or do the same activities as before and — during your “free time” — *add* selfless activities to your day (i.e. volunteering in your community on a regular basis).

Admittedly, it is quite difficult to go back to a job (or a relationship, or an activity) that is causing us stress and do so with a fresh mentality. For this reason, I personally chose to “attack” this problem in a manner two-fold: first, I make sure to pause every hour on the hour for 30 seconds in order to close my eyes and evince a heart-felt blast of Gratitude to God (or “the Universe”, or even random happenstance) for my life — and second, I set out in my “free time” every day to do at least one kind, selfless Good Deed for another. This could be picking up garbage on the street, smiling at strangers, sitting down for five minutes to speak



with a homeless person, or anything else along similar lines. As I did so, I came to learn that, while very worthwhile, it is not necessary to work in a soup kitchen or lead a civil rights march or do any other “magnificent” deed to find Contentment in this life ... We simply need to set forth every day and Do what Good there is to be done ... That’s it — It was (and it still is) that simple.

Fighting the “establishment” (08/11/2009)

While I am aware of the fraud that exists in our government, I am even more aware of the *fact* that each and every one of us can live outside the parameters of this charade — that each and every one of us can forget about trying to “fix things” and can instead focus moment-to-moment on what we can do to help others be Happier. This doesn’t take much in our “screwed up world” ... *and* it is allWays effective when we do so.

Of course, to do so, we must first detach from the comfort of the familiar — especially the comfort many of us have found (or still find) in railing against the insipid culture (see “the government”) that is attempting to enslave us. Fighting against society’s conventions (or criticizing them) does not work — for what is attacked will always defend itself and become stronger ... And yet we *can* live “in but not of”; we *can* let the government (and even the majority of folks around us) do what they wish while gently ignoring their unpleasant behaviors; we *can* cease worrying about “fighting injustice” and set about actively Caring for those in need instead.

And make no mistake, my Friend: YOU ALREADY MAKE A DIFFERENCE! Indeed, it is tempting to just give up and get mad — and believe me, that is what “the establishment” wants folks like you to do ... But you don’t have to help their cause. You *can* choose to be a beacon of Light in the darkness. You *can* choose in each moment to shine forth Joy through sorrow, Gratitude through lack &/or Wonderment through “the normal” ... And most potent of all, you *can* simply be Kind to those treating you most poorly.

This is Psychology 101 — and even though we have not been taught so in school, **It Works!** Maybe you will only brighten one other life while doing so, and yet that lone success will prove to be more than worth the effort. Of course, if you don’t decide to do so, this is your right. And yet always remember that, up until your dying breath, you too will always have the opportunity to be an *effective* Force for Good.



on choosing Sides
(08/21/009)

To those looking to either identify a “true guide” or denigrate a “false prophet”, I would offer the following:

There is no quicker way to “get lost” in life than to focus on the finger pointing at the moon as opposed to the moon itself. In doing so, some end up revering the finger and missing the glorious beauty of the moon entirely (e.g. blind followers of any religion, including the “religion” of “facts” & the “religion” of reason) ... Of course, those who denigrate that finger (or focus solely on its “warts”/flaws) end up missing out on that same Beauty as well.

So let’s get away from arguing over who is “right” or “wrong”; who is a “charlatan” or who is a “truth-sayer” — and just get out there and test it all for ourselves. For when we do, it will become clear to us soon enough that selflessly Kind, non-dualistic *living* is the only road that will bring us the deeper Peace for which we long.



Saving your Self (09/03/2009)

There is a common problem faced by all beginners on “The Way” -- for all those belonging steadfastly to any religion or immersing themselves in any spiritual practice for the first time. For by far the majority of them it seems, their personal beliefs about “salvation” tend to get in the way of their re-discovery of a real & actual Heaven — their personal ideas about “morality” keep them from engaging life’s moments with real & actual Virtue — their personal preconceptions about “peace” (a.k.a. comfort) and “joy” (a.k.a. pleasure) keep them from attaining a state of Being that is truly Peace-full & Joyous.

At some point, however, most of these “seekers” finally engage the Ultimate Gift that has been continually presented to them since their conception: namely, the ability to consciously choose to live each moment of their lives as if it were both their first and their last — with the Wonderment of a child *and* the Gratitude of a sage ... And how do they do so? Simply enough -- by engaging their lives with acts of purposeful, selfless Kindness.

And yet how can this be true? After all, we all do “nice things” for others almost every day, and yet most of us don’t experience such pure Bliss when we do so ... So what is different about this Ultimate Gift?

*“I’ve spent a Lifetime looking in the mirror,
and yet have never Seen my Self.”
~ Pastor Dan Lewis*

Well, the only difference happens to be a **HUGE** one, and it rests in both the intention that founds our “good deeds”, as well as the intensity of attentiveness we exude while making them ... You see, it is not enough for us to merely “do good” in order to get a reward of Paradise; it is not enough for us to merely “do good” because we are obligated to do so by law, and it is not enough for us to merely “do good” in order to gain the approval of others ... No, to obtain the Bliss of ONENess -- to obtain a deep & lasting Salvation, we must Do Good simply to Do Good.

*We must choose to be kind solely for the benefit of the other.

*We must choose to act in order to relieve the other's burden or further their Joy, regardless of what happens to us or for us as a result.

*We must remove ourselves -- our fears & our desires -- completely from the picture, and we must do so consciously, both before we act *and* while we are acting; both before we serve *and* while we are serving.

And if we do so, then any deed we engage thereafter will be a selflessly Kind one -- and will bring the very Bliss of which I speak.

*“The process is irrelevant ...
It is the moment that matters.”
~ Pastor Dan Lewis*

Now in order for you yourself to experience what I am talking about, there are two methods that I have personally experienced to be empirically effective ... **The first method** is a simple one -- simply act with Kindness; as irrationally and as anonymously as possible. This is the “express lane” to Peace, and it never fails ... **The second method** takes a bit longer, but can be equally powerful. It requires us to focus within; to cleanse the self-centered mind-set that has kept us from experiencing true Peace in the past. And it does so by first pausing in silence, then by thinking on one of our “enemies”, then by remembering what they did to harm us, then by mentally forgiving them for that trespass, and then by *going forth* to do an anonymous act of Kindness for them. The sheer irrationality & courage of such a radically Loving Deed will rattle your ego enough to give you the glimpse of Bliss that has been obscured by your previous life steeped in desire &/or fear.

*“We must confuse our ego-selves
in order to Communicate with God.”
~ Pastor Dan Lewis*

And that about sums it up ...

This is the smooth Road to a Meaning-full Life.

This is the direct Path to real Happiness ...

This is the Peace-full Way.



*“The Kingdom of
Heaven is not coming
at some point in the
future with things that
can be observed ... for
the Kingdom of
Heaven is already both
within and all around
you.” ~ Jesus Christ
(Luke 17:20-21)*

On taming the Ego (09/07/2009)

So many who contact me are struggling with the apparent invincibility of the ego — feeling that the struggle is a hopeless one; that no matter how hard they try or what methods they use, their behaviors will inevitably return to self-centered habits and selfish choices. Quite a few folks have even told me that they have therefore decided to give up and give in to the demands and desires of the ego. After all, they note, "we're only human", and "life needs balance, right?"

So if you happen to be one of these lovely people, it is important to re-awaken to the Truth that -- even it is essentially true that the ego cannot be conquered, we do *not* have to let it rule our lives by copping out and "respecting" it (which is just another neat way of saying that we cave-in to its selfish desires and self-centered fears).

No, my Friends, as is so often the case in those times when we convince ourselves that no good choice is available, there *is* an alternative, the alternative of which all the "Masters" speak — the alternative available to every sentient being on the planet -- the alternative I myself have been living. It is a Way that works for those courageous enough to try it (instead of merely talk about trying it or wish they could try it) ... And this alternative is the Way of Oneness.

On this particular path, every time we are tempted to do something solely for ourselves (or condemn another person, or attack an "opponent", or hate an "enemy"), we have the additional option of pausing and forgiving, we have the option of being purposefully kind and compassionate instead.

Admittedly, if we choose to do so as a means of "self-defense" against evil (or to "wake the other up", or because we have been taught that we "should be nice to mean people", or merely because "nothing else is working"), then our false-Kindness will not work -- and we will indeed become additional victims to our perpetrator's impurity, and experience pain & discomfort as a result.

AND YET, here too there is a third alternative -- one in which we choose to be Kind to the other not to crush our own ego, but rather as an ally of the same. And if we choose this option, we become truly powerful indeed — and experience the deepest Peace that a Human Being can know as a "reward".

And now you might be wondering: How can I do so? How can I engage my own ego -- my greatest enemy -- as an ally? Well, this technique all starts with gratitude — thanking the ego for keeping us alive during childhood, thanking the ego for keeping our species alive while our neo-cortex was evolving, thanking the ego for providing such powerful temptations to us and "reasoning" why we should be occasionally selfish ...

And once the ego has been so thanked, once you make it clear to it that you are not trying to destroy it, but are merely trying for one, present moment, to act as a Human Being instead of a self-centered animal — once this is done consciously, then the ego will briefly recede and allow you to act courageously as an agent of the Whole.

And know, my Friends, that every time you do so, you further the Harmony of the Universe -- and that every time you do not, you sow another seed of discord and pain for yourself and for others ... And know as well that every moment of your life is a new & completely independent opportunity to effectuate one or the other of these alternatives.

I myself make lots of self-centered mistakes each day, and yet when I do so I make it a practice to forgive myself and my ego, to thank it for the reasons noted above, and then to set out anew to be a Force for Good (as opposed to merely a force for my own “good”) in the moment that follows ...

And it is these moments of re-turn that bring me the Bliss of which I speak — a Bliss that is available to every sentient being in the Universe (including yourSelf) in every moment of its Life!

So won't you, even for just one instant, forgive one of the “damaged ones” you see? ... Won't you, just for one second, pause and look to do an anonymous kind deed for another?

If enough of us string enough of these selfless moments of “radical Kindness” together, the World will literally be Reborn. Fortunately, we don't need a majority to succeed, but we *do* need a significant minority — and I don't have nearly enough such “Compassion Warriors” yet ...

... So won't you join me today?



On truly Good parenting (01/07/2010)

There seems to be lots of talk these days about “America’s youth” — how young people in this country seem to be steeped in superficial pleasures and seem to show an acute lack of respect for others.

Well, first of all, I have experienced a very different picture of America’s youth. I have seen young people planting gardens, cleaning up graffiti, helping elderly neighbors, and tutoring their peers. I have seen young people taking a stand against crime and war and drugs (including cigarette abuse) and callousness — noble stands that many adults are still refusing to take. I have seen that young people in this society *do* Care and that they are already making a positive difference. I have been inspired by many of them ...

And what of the youth who are indeed immersed in the world of violence and drug-abuse and social apathy? ... How can we reach them and offer them a way back into a life that is meaning-full and filled with Joy?

Dalton Roberts made a bold statement in this regard that resonates with great Truth: “Nothing will cut through a child’s fears and doubts like seeing a parent [or mentor] in the throes of deep, passionate reverence and awe.” — How true! And yet how do we show the youth in our communities this reverence? How do we evince this awe? ... Rest assured that it goes far beyond the confines of any particular religion. True reverence and awe for life is shown in those moments when you least want to be Kind to another, and yet you choose to be Kind to them anyway; when you least want to Forgive, and yet you Forgive anyway; when you least want to help, and you help willingly anyway.

And *this* is what it means to be a “Good Parent”. After all, children do not listen to what we say — They listen to what we **DO**.

Dalton’s own grandmother might have summed it up best when she said: “The best way to teach young people respect for their elders is to treat young people with respect.” ... Let us all resolve to go forth today and be a beacon of Kindness to our young people — by treating them with Kindness!



On effectuating Change (01/08/2010)

“What we need in the world today is not more ideas, not more blue prints, not bigger and better leaders, but rather Goodwill, Affection, Love and Kindness. Love is the only solution ... The individual is what the world is, and without transformation of the individual there can be no transformation in the world.”
~ Murdo MacDonald-Bayne

Indeed, this is True – we must transform ourselves in order to transform our **relationships**; for our world consists of a mass of interrelationships -- nothing more, nothing less. And to alter the way our world functions, we must have the courage to alter the foundation of that world ... And the foundation of that reality is how we choose to interact with those around us.

So the question is posed: will you continue to react emotionally to those who offend you, thereby perpetuating the conflict-based reality that we have co-created? Or will you join the tens of thousands men and women around the world who are already making the courageous choice to act a different way (and thereby build a different world)? If you choose the latter, then here is how you shall commence: When offended, have the courage to forgive ... When robbed, have the courage to give ... When attacked, have the courage to respond with Kindness.

My Friends, our species stands on the brink of its demise, and all the behaviors and beliefs and mentalities we have tried up to now have failed ... Selfless Caring is the only alternative we have yet to employ.

So come join us today ... Come show the strength to live as a true Human Being ... Come show the strength to Care for those who are “least deserving” ... Come show the strength to “be Kind when least inclined”.



On deflecting lust (02/03/2010)

I will freely admit that lust was a major challenge for me during my younger days; that instead of desiring a partnership of mutual support or yearning for a friendship united in service to my community, I regularly lusted for the physical pleasure of sexual release and the emotional salve of being “in love”. And in like form, the women in my life tended to lust as well – striving to “have me for themselves” in traditional, committed partnerships; essentially desiring more to be loved by me than to give real Love.

And all this was normal & natural – all of it was “part of the program” for almost every human being alive today; indeed, for almost every human being who has ever lived.

And yet, despite the seemingly overwhelming nature of our innate physical & emotional desires, it *is* possible to defuse such dysfunctions and come to know true LOVE ... Here are a few ways how:

One option that is always available (though admittedly the weakest option) is to lovingly remove yourself from all such relationships. Indeed, if another is determined to try and seduce you for his (or her) own pleasures, then ultimately this choice must be made. And if you do so, remember to consciously do so **for their benefit**, not out of any concern for your own energies and not for your own “protection”. Doing so will keep your own vibration at a relatively “high” level and provide them with some small Awakening even as you depart.

On another level entirely is the alternative ... It is possible to powerfully aid the deeper Awakening to Self of the other by *remaining with them* and repeatedly re-minding them that mere “romantic love” is not an option, even though your unconditional Love still *is*. Doing so requires a potent giving of energy & focus on your part, and yet is an invaluable service for the “luster”. Indeed, if you can persist in such Giving, your partner will inevitably eventually have to either A) leave you alone and find a “lust outlet” elsewhere, or B) awaken to the unconditional, selfless, Divine Love you are offering by reciprocating it in kind. I have engaged this latter option a number of times, and it has allWays proven to be spiritually emPowering for all involved.

Of course, once you engage either option openly and persistently for any length of time, you will find that “lusters” in your life appear with less and less frequency ... a dynamic which will bring you a great measure of enhanced solace in its own right.

In conclusion, to free yourself from the shackles of lust, consider the following Truth:

Consciously setting your physical desires aside ...



... allows a true Appreciation for Life to blossom ...

... and thereby real LOVE in your life to bloom.



on real Repentance
(04/06/2010)

“I am sorry ... Please forgive me ... Thank you ... I Love you. “

This mantra is really zooming around these days – often under the guise of a traditional Hawaiian teaching called “Ho’oponopono”, (though this is actually **not** an accurate representation of that ancient wisdom – at least according to the Kahunas I knew while living on the Big Island of Hawaii back in 2003-2005).

Regardless of where it comes from, I think that “Good Stuff” is good stuff, and allWays somehow effectuates Good Stuff ... Of course, to make this particular Good Stuff really *powerful* Good Stuff, it might be wise to completely eliminate the conditional and dysfunctional “please forgive me” from the equation.

Any time we attach to a particular outcome, we neutralize our ability to Love purely in the moments we are waiting for the same. It’s a very sophisticated, codependent ego-trap that can be avoided by simply remembering to Care for others — while not giving a damn (literally) about what comes back as a result ... This “Caring without caring” is a true Life-opener and has always brought the “Good Fruit” of pure Peace into my own immediate surroundings whenever I have practiced it.

As such, consider shifting this mantra to the following infinitely more powerful alternative: “Thank you ... I apologize ... I Love You” ...

... and then ***act accordingly!***



The myth of Manifestation (06/10/2010)

“Do you want to experience financial abundance, to live in joy, to know peace, to receive and give love, to fulfill a dream? All of these things are part of our potential and they are all waiting for us to choose them.”

This quote from Jennifer Hoffman reflects a popular belief of many self-professed “life-coaches”; the idea that material &/or emotional “abundance” can be “manifested” by anyone who chooses to harness the power of the “Law of Attraction”. And while I respectfully refuse to debate the validity of such a theory, I *would* like to illuminate some of the profound consequences that always accompany such a self-centered mentality ...

While it may be true that “our entire existence is nothing more than a stream of potential, awaiting our energy and action to direct it” (again, Ms. Hoffman), attempting to harness that potential for personal benefit only serves to entrench one’s desire (and also one’s fears) — which is the primary source of all suffering. Unless it is used to further the Joy of others, financial abundance brings only fleeting and superficial pleasure. Similarly, all forms of power or status or influence only bring inner Peace when used to bring Peace to others. And real Love only brings Harmony when we are giving it to others — never when we are yearning for it ourselves.

As such, there is another way of acting upon the theory of “manifestation”; a way that smoothly aligns the manifestor with his or her surroundings — a way that brings Peace as opposed to pain. And this way is the way of Purposeful Selflessness ... In essence, when in pain seek to alleviate others’ pain; when tired seek to build others up; when lonely seek to give others Love; when sad seek to bring others Joy; and when afraid seek to inspire others to acts of courageous Kindness.



Indeed, this is the only “battle” we can ever win — when we choose to shift the focus of our desires and our dreams and our hopes from manifesting personal benefit to enhancing the quality of Living for others.

That is all ... literally.

Rethinking priorities (09/16/2010)

The money required to provide adequate food, water, education, health & housing for everyone in the world at this time has been estimated to be around \$17 billion a year ... about as much as the world spends on weapons *every 2 weeks* ... Of course, if one thing has become clear over the past 200+ years, it is that Americans will not be able to do anything about this warped reality. Their government (& others with it) exists primarily to further its own survival, and this in large part means arms sales.

And yet, even though we cannot do anything *politically* to amend this gross injustice, we *can* do quite a bit *individually*. Indeed, every time we are tempted to lash out in anger towards another person, we have the opportunity to pause and respond with compassionate kindness instead. And every time this is done, an incredibly powerful ripple flows outward through the collective psyche of the entire neighborhood in which it occurs. And the only reason we haven't witnessed the powerfully positive effects of this Truth is that so few of us are having the courage to enliven it.

My Friends, as a species we are rapidly approaching a global catastrophe, and it is our aggression (& even our apathy) towards our enemies that is hurling us headlong into that pit ... So won't you join me in being a part of the solution, as opposed to part of the problem?

Be Kind when least inclined — and do so today!



On fear & worship (09/19/2010)

John Wesley, the founder of the United Methodist Church, once commented on the dogmatic beliefs of one of his conservative contemporaries by stating, “That man’s God is my Devil.” And while it is certainly not in harmony with the teachings of Jesus Christ to utter condemnatory remarks about those who oppose us (“Love your enemies” ~ Matthew 5:44), it *IS* important to “listen with your gut” when attending to the spiritual beliefs of another. In essence, if it “feels wrong” when you hear it, pay closer attention and figure out why.

I think Dalton Roberts summed it up quite well when he said, “Never believe anything about God that offends your inner being. Never believe anything about God that would offend the sensibilities of a child.” My Friends, we have not been given a neo-cortex and a conscience to let them sit idly by while we fearfully follow another person’s religious ramblings. Indeed, we must use those gifts or they will recede into impotence.

And how can we best do so? Well, not with our words or our thoughts, but with our actions ... In truth, John Wesley made another powerful statement with regards to worship & fear when he said, “Set yourself on fire and they will come from miles around to watch you burn.” Here, what at first seems to be a disturbing call to masochistic self-immolation actually contains a powerful metaphoric Truth: that we must be willing to courageously walk our own unique spiritual path in order to thereby have a powerful effect on others.

In essence, what the ego thinks about worship ...



... and what the Soul feels about worship ...



... are two *very* different concepts.

In conclusion, every Soul’s path is a journey back to Oneness — the state of being that every person can experience in the moments he or she chooses to “be Kind when least inclined”; when he or she chooses to actively care for another when she or he least wants to do so. This requires facing fears consciously and worshipping uniquely, and both of these require great Courage ...

So be both **BOLD** & unique in your reverence!



What are you Doing? (12/30/2010)

You may have lived for 20 years, or you may have lived for 80. Regardless, it is time to ask yourself: What have you really done with your life? ...

Avoid dismissing the question by believing that you're going to fulfill your Life Purpose later in this life or more fully in the next one. As far as your current existence is concerned, there is only *this* lifetime — there is only *this* present moment — there is only what you have done *intertwined with* what you are currently doing.

You've been given a truly vast treasure: your conscious awareness — this extraordinary thing we call Life. And in this Life there is sorrow, pleasure, and loneliness — as well as guilt, shame and all the tortures of fear ... And yet there is also the amazingness of raw Beauty, the Joy of pure Love and the Power of unfettered Choice.

You've have been given them all and you have experienced them all — both the pains and pleasures; the challenges and the blessings. And still the question remains: what have you *Done* with it all? ... Please consider this question earnestly and please consider it *Now*.

It's very important to ask this question, and even more important to courageously answer it. And when you do so, answer not to the speaker of that query, but rather answer to your Self. A glorious life was given to you, the most precious thing in the world, and yet what have you really done? Have you distorted it with your preconceptions, tortured it with your arrogance, and torn it to pieces with your self-centeredness? ... Of course you have! You've succumbed to your fears of Love and have divided that which is innately Whole ...

As a consequence, either via active participation or passive apathy, you have enabled the brutalities of violence, destruction and hatred to continue to wrack this planet with pain.

Where was your Love when you were challenged by anger? Where was your Forgiveness when you were wronged by the confused? Where was your Compassion when you witnessed the suffering of the fearful?

So when you sit down right now and earnestly ask yourself what you have truly **Done** with your life — if you are at all sensitive, you might have tears in your eyes. And yet, understand that you'll shed those tears because you're thinking of the past and what you might have done. Tears are self pity — so don't shed tears!

No, when you ask that question, don't go to bed with sorrow because you have "done nothing" and your life has been a "waste". For the question is asked in *this* present moment, and its answer lies only in the present as well — not in tomorrow or in the past. This means that you are only asking yourself what you are doing **NOW** with this priceless Life that has been given you ... Now, not tomorrow.

And when you answer this question honestly — with your actions more than your thoughts or words; with your Soul more than your self-centered ego, then you will rediscover what Love truly is. And what you have not done with your life up to now, as well as what you are planning for your future, will no longer matter ... Indeed, the only important question in Life will then become:

What am I DOING Now?

At that moment you will feel your power & your purpose. And at that moment you will go forth and find the deep-seated Peace that only comes from acting accordingly.

(~ inspired by Krishnamurti)



the Art of Juggling
(03/09/2011)

It seems like there is just too much to do. It seems like each & every day I find myself juggling so many tasks — tasks that are all designed to help others in some way — tasks that I feel are all Important to “get done”.

Well, I stopped long enough today to realize that you probably know exactly what I am talking about — I stopped long enough to realize that maybe this “too much to do” syndrome is an innate part of our human programming. Maybe we are designed to “do — Do — DO” because our primitive brains believe that simply “doing anything productive” is what keeps us alive — is what protects us from imminent danger — is what prepares us to survive if it ever “hits the fan” — or is simply what a “responsible person” does.

Well, today I woke up to another Truth — one that I think also applies to all of you just as well as it does to me – ad that Truth is this:

It is OK to pause sometimes and look around in awe.

I read this quote earlier, which helped me to put it all in perspective –
“Juggling is dropping things.....in style” ~ unknown

In other words, everything is **not** going to get done to your satisfaction. Some things will have to be “dropped”. *And* it is OK for you to do the dropping Purpose-fully. It is OK to let the “to do” list sit for awhile and *just BE* — just *consciously* soak up the amazing Beauty that surrounds you in every moment of your life.

To get the full effect of what I’m talking about, you will have to *do so right now* — so go ahead ... Take a few minutes to engage the following three Steps:

Step 01) Stop what you are currently doing ...

Step 02) Get up and go outside (or look out a window) ... and

Step 03) Take a deep breath while you *let the Beauty of your Life soak in.*

Stick to this conscious “Appreciation-break” for a few minutes – and remember to smile while doing so ...

Of course, if you find yourself slipping into a deep Gratitude for simply being alive (like I do), the smile will come on its own.

And while you are doing so, remember to avoid worrying about your “to do” list – It’s still right there where you left it, and everything of any true importance will still get done when it needs to get done. And remember that what is *truly* Important is that we regularly Appreciate our lives while they are flying by ... because we will indeed never pass this way again!

And thereafter, as you then head back into your everyday life and its almost constant “juggling act”, pause every now & then to focus on these two tips:

Tip #01: Remember that, “The trick to juggling is determining which balls are made of rubber and which are made of glass.” ~ unknown

Tip #2: And then remember that almost everything on your to do list is “made of rubber”, & *every* encounter with *every* human being you encounter is “made of glass”!

*So, let’s remember to regularly pause,
... and then let’s remember to be CARE-full while we do so!*



Being Kind to your Dorothy's
(03/17/2011)

During my second month of college, one of my professors gave a pop quiz. I was a conscientious student and had breezed through the questions until I read the last one:

“What is the first name of the woman who cleans this building?”

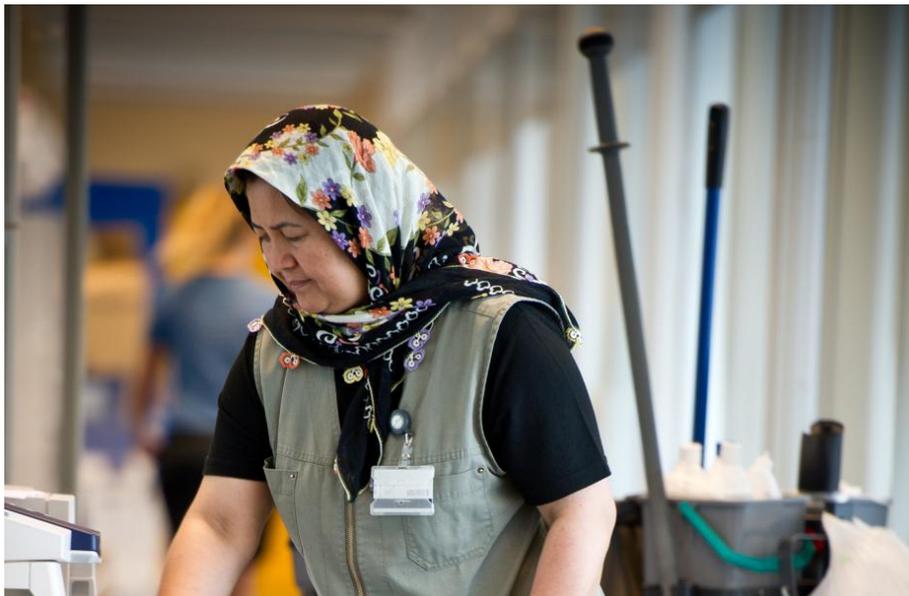
Surely this was some kind of joke. I had seen the woman in question several times. She was tall, dark-haired and in her 50's, but how in the world was I supposed to know her name? I handed in my paper, leaving the last question blank.

Just before class ended, one student asked if the last question would count toward our quiz grade.

“Absolutely,” said the professor. “Over the course of our lives, we meet many people. Every one of them is significant. They each deserve your attention and your care, even if all you do is smile at them, say hello, and ask them their name.”

I still remember that lesson to this today, and I still remember the name of the cleaning woman too ...

... It was Dorothy.
(unknown)



A Prayer for ALL
(04/05/2011)

*“And when LOVE speaks, the voice of all the gods
makes Heaven drowsy with the harmony.”
~ William Shakespeare*

Father, just for today,
let me be willing to be willing.

Just for today, let me remember
the Divine within myself,
... by actualizing a Love unconditional
for all things living.

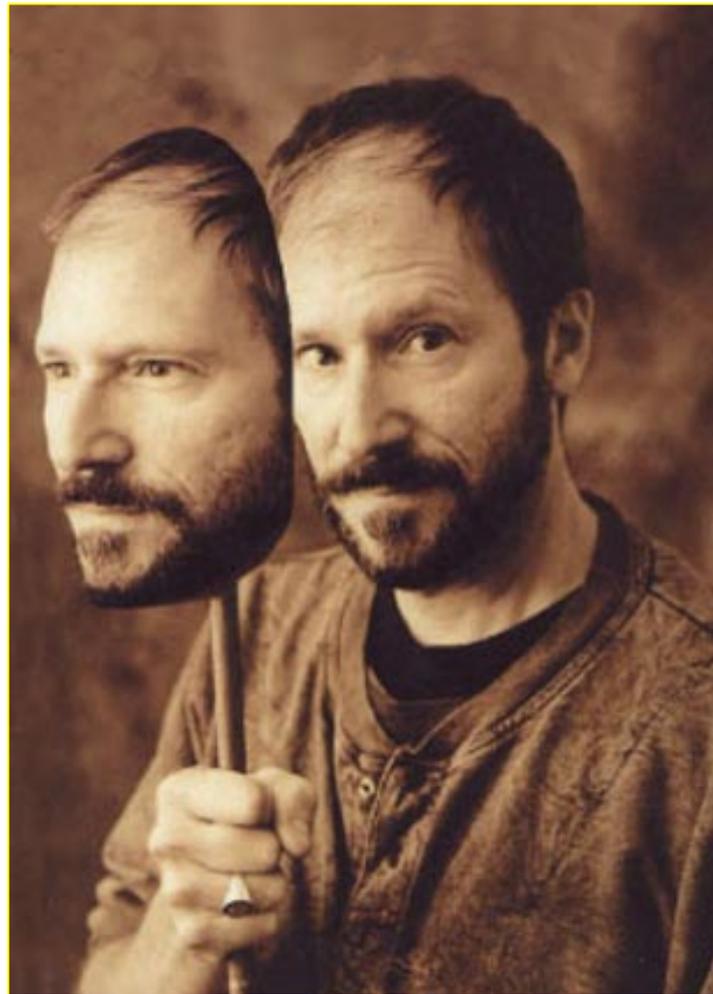
Essentially, Father, just for today,
... let me be the kind of person
my dog thinks I am.



The self & the Self (06/09/2011)

Much has been made of “showing yourself respect”, and there is indeed an ego that longs for “the best”; longs for “the good life” – and indeed, such a “good life” truly is a wonderful thing to strive for & it truly is a beautiful thing to know.

AND there is another **Self** within us ... And to give to *this* truer SELF, we must align ourselves and our desires quite differently – for to Respect *this* SELF we must give our Forgiveness to Loved ones, we must give our Kindness to strangers, and we must give our Hearts to our enemies.



What Forgiveness means (07/16/2011)

This message was inspired by a mistake I made. It is not important to relay exactly what my error was, nor is it important to know the impact it had on others (though I am very thankful that no one was seriously harmed by my miscue). I am also not seeking personal reconciliation from anyone for the harm I did — not only have I already forgiven myself for my unintentional “sin”, but folks are actually blaming another person for my mistake (despite my protests to the contrary). And it is this misplaced blame that has caused me the most pain, that has actually led to this correspondence — the following few words on criticism, condemnation and forgiveness ...

I could start by reminding you all that each & every one of us has engaged in behaviors that have seriously harmed others at one time or another ... 99.9% of us have done so unintentionally, and yet done so we have. It is the nature of the human journey to be tempted to ignore others or lash out in fear or hoard in selfishness, and to thereby harm them in the process. We have all done so at one time or another, and it is patently hypocritical to condemn another for doing the same — even if their “crime” seems “worse” than our own.

I could also encourage you all to look to those situations where we criticize others, and pause long enough to remember that we could very well have made the very same mistakes “but for the grace God”. This is not a call to condone the other’s mistakes or excuse those hurtful choices, but rather provides us all with a simple remembrance of a simple Truth: that each one of us has a unique set of challenges to “do good” &/or temptations to “do bad” based upon our unique genetic make-ups and our unique upbringings.

In this sense, our compassion for the other comes not from saying “I could have made *that* mistake”, but rather from admitting that, if we were placed in such a situation with the same personal psyche of the “perpetrator”, we could very easily have made a *similar* one. This doesn’t justify the other’s error, of course, but it does dampen our condemnation of the same — a condemnation that is as ineffective as it is arrogant, and as arrogant as it is misplaced.

I could focus on the afore-mentioned Truths here — but I won’t ... Indeed, it is my intention to get away from discussing the moral tenants of “letting those without sin cast the first stone” & “removing the beam from our own eye before pulling the mote from our brother’s”.

Instead, I wish to speak of **practicality** — namely, what happens when we criticize & condemn, and what alternatives we have to doing so. And the point I wish to make is a very simple one: when you criticize another for their mistakes, *you are actually powerfully **encouraging** them to repeat those errors!* You are doing so on a subconscious level, yes, and yet that level is by far the more potent one. Indeed, if another makes a mistake and you judge him/her negatively, their self-esteem is wounded as a result, and they are that much more likely to repeat their error in the future ... This is not rocket-science — this is basic human psychology ... And so we are left with the all-important question: If you truly want the other to stop making a particular mistake, why do you condemn them and thereby encourage him or her to repeat the same?

This is not to say that you are to stop using others' mistakes to help you discern what is right or wrong action for yourself. Discernment is valuable — it is *condemnation* that perpetuates our crises. It is one thing to mention to another that their actions have caused pain and to announce your desire that those actions cease. It is quite another thing to condemn the person doing those deeds by labeling them as “bad” or “irresponsible” or “dishonest” or “evil”.

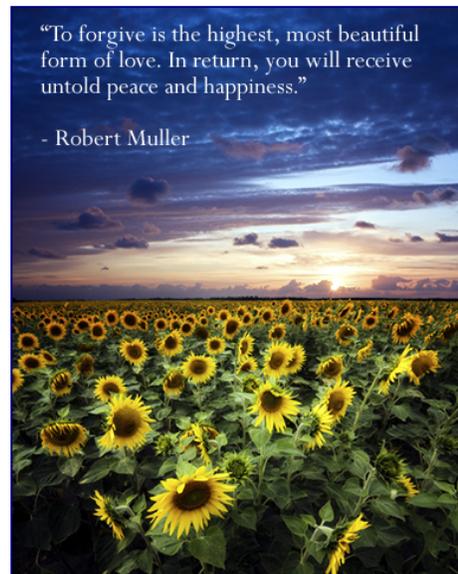
And this is where the practical alternative comes into play — the alternative of “radical forgiveness”. This option recognizes that a mistake was indeed made — a mistake that caused you or another harm, and then it immediately forgives the perpetrator of that harm — affirming your belief that he or she will not make the same mistake again, and affirming your unconditional love for them *as a person* whether they do so again or not. Ironically, it is this unconditional affirmation of the other's innate worth as a Human Being that tends to prevent the “bad” behavior from resurfacing, and that drastically diminishes your suffering even if the mistake is repeated in the future.

In closing then, I wish to let you all know that I apologize for any harms I might have caused to any of you (indirectly or directly) — even as I now affirm my unconditional Love for each of you by forgiving you all the pains any of you might have caused me (indirectly or directly) ...

As such, you are now even more free to go forth today and remake your lives as the radically Kind beings you innately are ...

your Friend unconditionally,

Scaughdt



The Time is NOW
(09/24/2011)

There is so much pain & sorrow in our world; so much graphic injustice & suffering – it can sometimes overwhelm. It can sometimes get to be too much; so much that we turn away from all things “wrong” and turn instead to things “fun” & “entertaining” ...

... Fair enough.

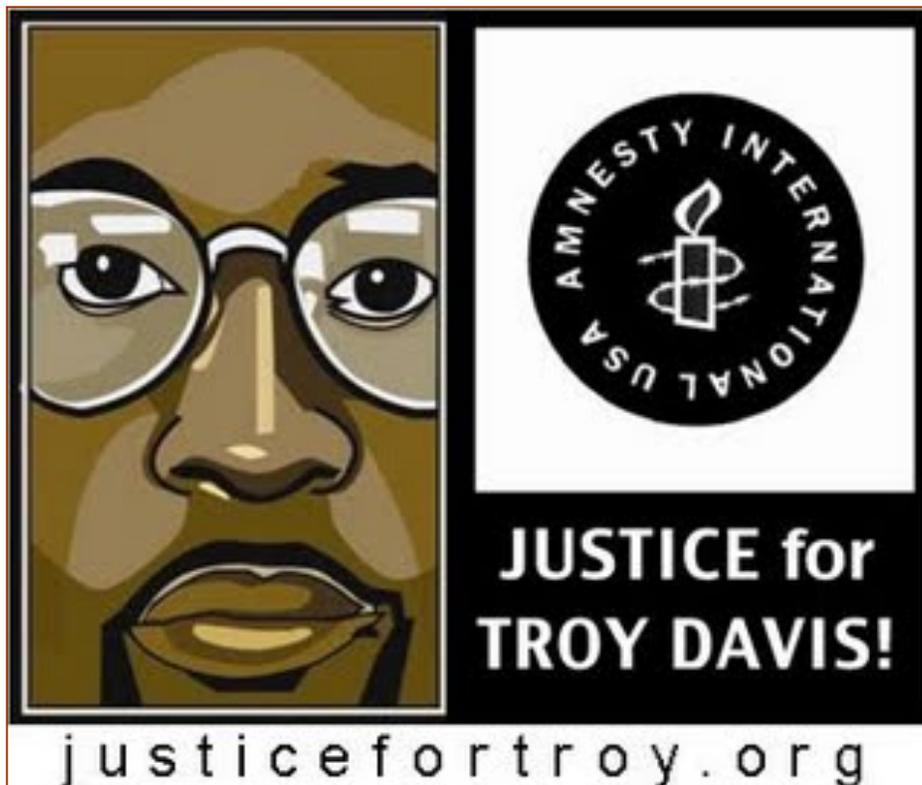
And yet there is a time to turn back and face the world’s wrongs with bravery; to take a silent-yet-present stand for Love; to let the “powers that be” remember that they are NOT the ones in control — We Are.

That time is today — That time is now.

Go forth today and protest injustice by doing one silent act of Kindness for a stranger ...

Do it today ...

Do it for Troy Davis.



The Power of HOW
(10/21/2011)

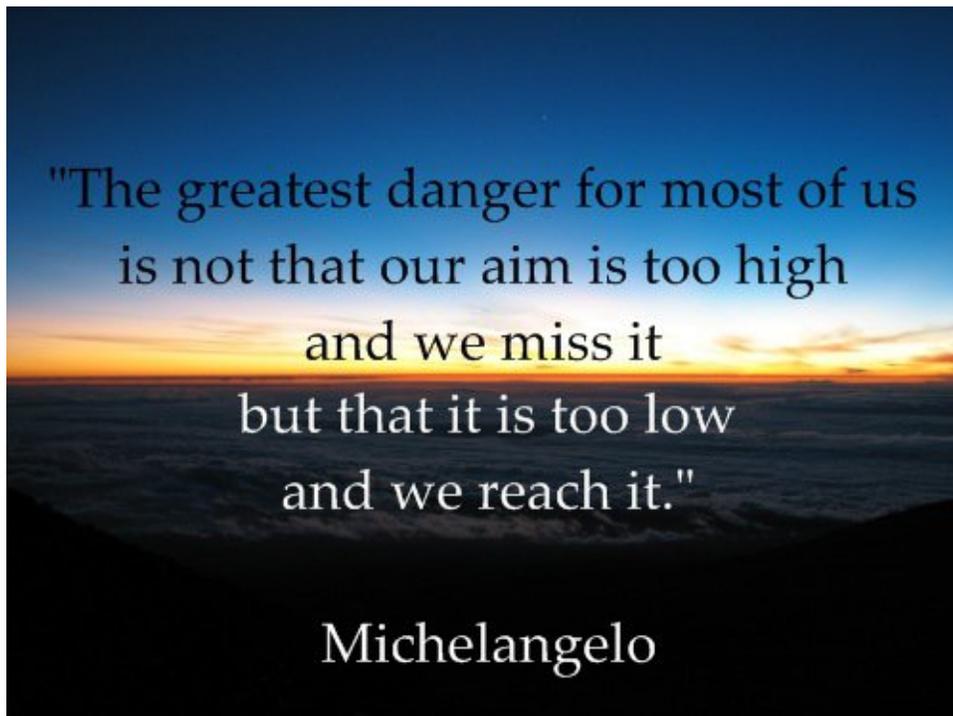
Eckhart Tolle's "The Power of Now" (along with his other related works) has developed quite the following of late, and I do not wish to denounce anything he has to say at this time. Indeed, remembering how to pause and consciously enter the Here&Now is a crucial step towards attaining a state of being that is both powerful and joyous ...

... & yet ***IT IS ONLY THE FIRST STEP*** along that Path.

Indeed, in order to find true Joy in life, such a purposeful pause must be immediately followed by an *ACT* of courageous Kindness — a Caring deed done solely for the benefit of another.

My Friends, we are not here to live the longest, most pleasurable lives for ourselves ... We are not here to attain our greatest degree of "personal growth" ... We are not even here to find "Inner Peace" or to "become enlightened".

We have been given this life to live it to its true FULLEST ... We are here to Love others; especially in those times when it is most difficult to do so.



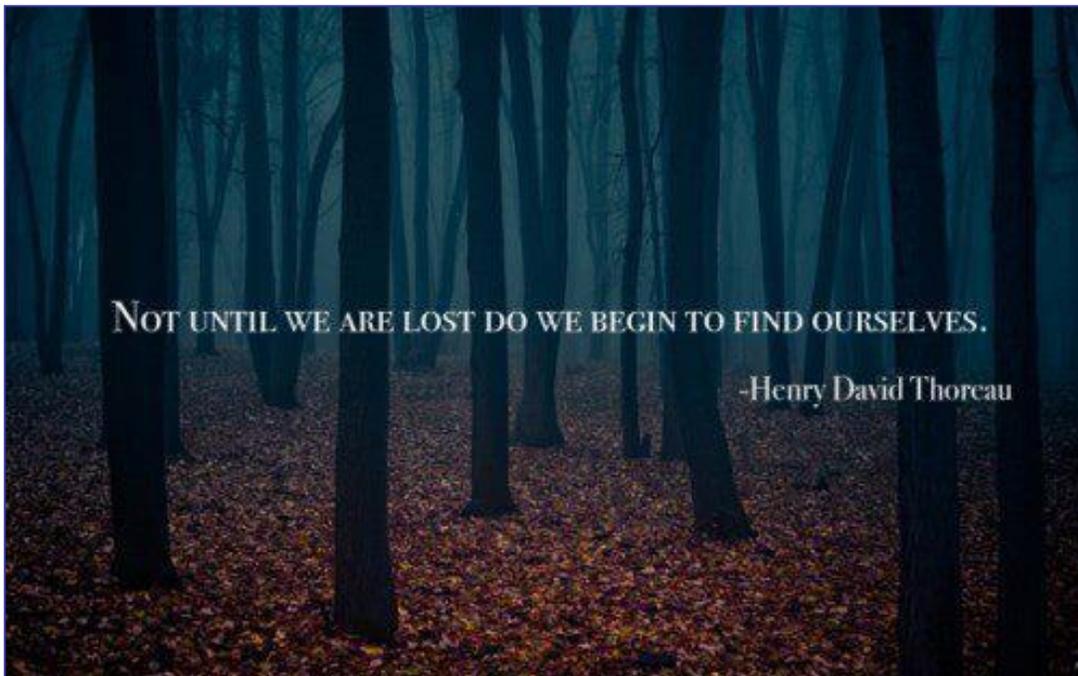
Let Go to let LOVE
(10/22/2011)

At first we know “love” in the form of desire, and later this “love” becomes the comfort of companionship. We think that satisfying our wants or sinking into a partnership will lead us to a state of lasting happiness. And yet for each & every one of us both of these illusions are eventually shattered ... For eventually we all come understand that we are now, and always have been, completely alone.

And what a tragically Beauty-full realization this is! For once we have accepted our solitude as an innate fact of our existence, we can finally discover true Love.

Yes, it is only when we have abandoned all hope of “being loved” that we can see that, though essentially alone, we are also immersed in an ocean of other solitary people — other Souls we can reach out and touch with gentle acts of Kindness. And when we have the courage to do so, we summon the Divine back to ourselves; we call God back to rest again within our Hearts.

And ironically, it is in these times that we come to know real Love — it is in these times that we are no longer alone.



Real LOVE
(10/26/2011)

Love is the courage to set aside the understandable fears of what might happen to you ... and Love is taking a break from striving for the reasonable hopes for what should happen for you. Indeed, Love is putting them all on hold just long enough to simply relax into one moment's opportunity to Care ... It is doing something for another that you might not want to do, but that you feel just might make them smile.

And it is ironic that this is the only way to attain real Happiness in life. It is the only choice that will ever soothe your darkest fears, and it is the only choice that will ever bring you what you most deeply desire.

Real Love is always given solely for the other, and real Love is the only thing that makes life truly worth living.

"It's impossible." *said pride.*
"It's risky." *said experience.*
"It's pointless." *said reason.*

"Give it a try."
whispered the heart.

Rebel with LOVE (10/27/2011)

With tomorrow's "Occupy Yourself" protest rapidly approaching, I am more aware than ever of the fraud that exists in our government.

Of course, I am also even more aware of the fact that each and every one of us can live outside the parameters of its charade — that each and every one of us can stop fighting the system (which only makes it stronger; which only makes things worse) and **START CHANGING THE WORLD** for the better instead.

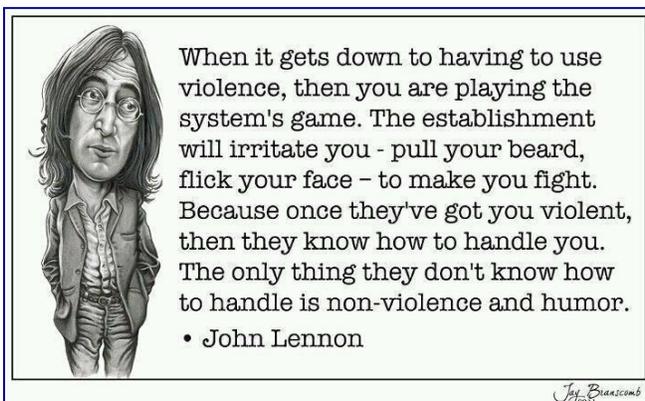
So, while tomorrow's political revolution looms, today's personal *evolution* awaits. Regardless of what you do tomorrow, **today** is a day for you to **WAKE UP** to who you truly Are. Today is a day to stop trying to "fix things" and to focus instead moment-to-moment on what you can do to directly help others to live happier lives.

And make no mistake: there are hundreds of people around you **RIGHT NOW** who need your Kindness — hundreds of people desperately in need of something far more important than "economic justice" or "social reform". These people simply need you to pause today when you meet them — they need you to pause, to look them in the eye, to touch them gently on the shoulder, and to tell them that you See them; to tell them that *you Care*.

And make no mistake, my Friends: *This shift makes a Difference!*

It is tempting to just give up or get mad — and believe me, that is what "the establishment" wants you to do ... But you don't have to help their cause that way.

You can choose a different path ... You can choose instead to be a beacon of Light in the darkness. You can choose today to shine forth Joy through sorrow, Gratitude through lack &/or Wonderment through "the normal" ... And most potently of all, you can simply choose be Kind to those people around you — especially those who are treating you most poorly ...



After all, this is the only way to truly **Occupy Your Self**.

True PEACE (12/26/2011)

The first Path to true Peace is easy to forget and yet just as easy to remember — simply pause in any given moment of any given day to re-mind yourself how Beauty-full it is to be alive (with Now being allWays the best time to do so) ... It is an internal Road — the choice to be simultaneously conscious and grateful.

The second Path to true Peace is an active one – It is the Road we take whenever we choose to do a Kind Deed for another; whenever we choose to openly show another that we truly Care. This is the Road of LOVE (which is a verb, by the Way — not a feeling).

These two Paths can be walked relatively easily when things are going well ... It is easy to be thankful when receiving gifts for Christmas — It is easy to be amazed when walking across a fresh snowfall — It is easy to be friendly to those we love and to those who are being nice to us.

And yet it is not a challenge to engage choices that are easy to make. We only attain a sense of Meaning & Worth & Purpose to this amazing life when we do the *difficult* deed — when we engage the act that brings us no direct personal benefit; when we have the courage to “be Kind when least inclined”.

To be grateful when we are reveling in abundance can make us feel temporarily cozy, and yet **real Peace** only comes in those moments when we are steeped in despair & yet choose to pause and be thankful for life *anyway*.

To feel joyous when we are reveling in physical pleasures can makes feel temporarily happy, and yet *real Joy* only comes in those moments when we are hungry or tired or depressed or in pain & yet choose to pause and seek to relieve the burdens of another *anyway*.

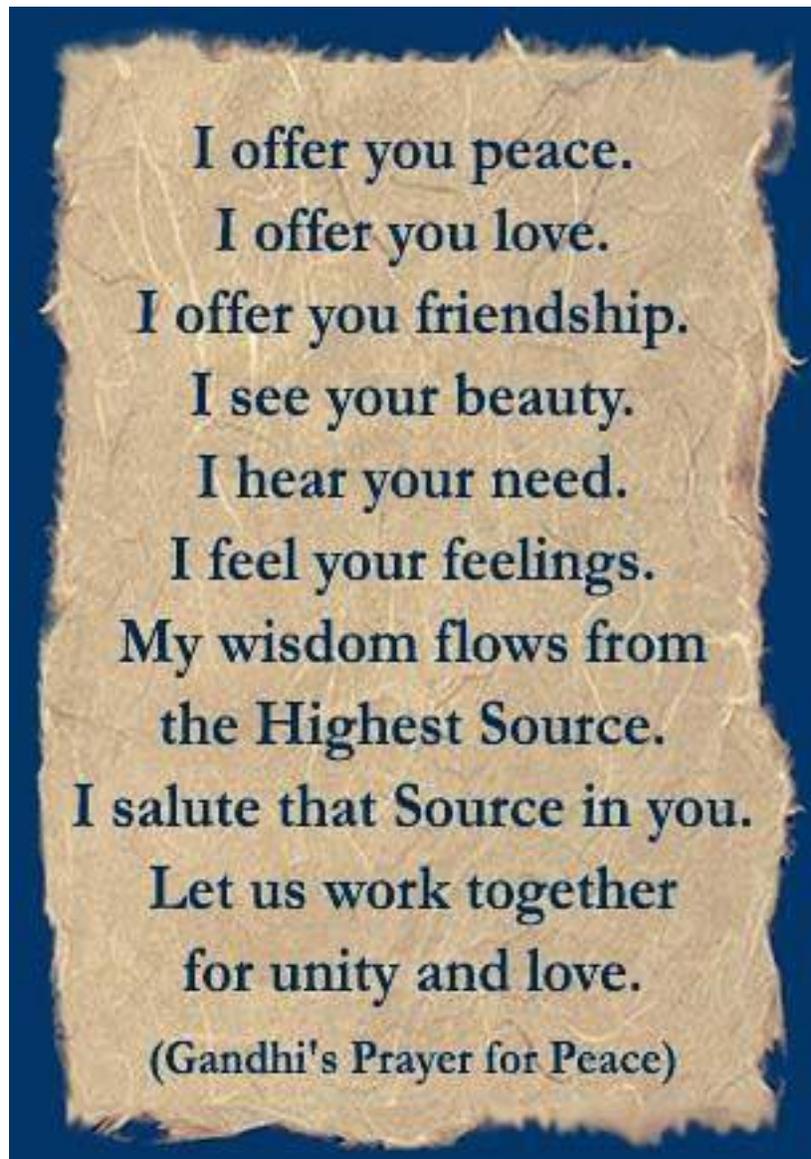
To be nice to our friends & family members & sweethearts can make us feel temporarily loved, and yet **real LOVE** only comes to us in those moments when we are being attacked or abandoned & yet choose to pause and be Kind to those “enemies” *anyway*.

This is the one Great Wisdom that rests at the Center of all the Teachings of all the Masters ... This is what it means to awaken and know what it means to be truly Human(e) ... This is the Truth we can all take forth today as we go forth to build lives that are not only thankful, but Grateful — not only happy but Joyous — not only nice, but Loving.

It is the most difficult of Roads to travel, and yet it is the Road with by far the grandest of views — with by far the richest of destinations ... for nothing compares to the Peace that comes to those with the Courage to truly LOVE those around them.

And it is this Peace – and this Peace only – that I wish for each of you ...

... today & evermore.



Becoming the Change (01/01/2012)

HAPPY NEW YEAR to all!

2012 is finally here, and with it, the feeling of another “new beginning” — another “fresh start” to our lives; another day when we all more readily remember that *we truly can* have a truly “good life” — that **we truly can** come to know real Happiness — that *we truly can* become the person we always wanted to be.

And I think the picture on the facing page represents this sentiment perfectly. We all strive so fervently to be the owl in the picture — We all so desire to have a life filled with pleasure and comfort — We all so yearn to be loved.

And this is indeed a great feeling; a feeling that comes regularly to us all more than few times over the course of our lives — a feeling I wish for you all.

Aaaaaand, there is an experience of Happiness that is much much much more profound — an experience of pure JOY that makes that owl’s temporary “bliss” look like a cold & rainy Monday. It is the JOY that comes to those of us who have the Courage to dedicate their moments to Caring for others (especially those people we least like) ... It is the JOY reserved for those of us who choose to set aside our own desires for “happiness” and seek instead to bring Peace to those around us ... It is the perfect Peace known by the person in the photo *at the other end of the hand shown*.

And that is my wish for each of you — to know this perfect Peace. And here is some Great News: it is more than possible for you all to know this JOY — ... today!!!

It doesn’t take much to feel it ... All that is required is a pause of one second, a conscious decision to do something Kind for another, and then the courage to get up and actually do that thing. It doesn’t even matter if your efforts are “successful” or not — the conscious, selfless doing is in & of itself enough.

Of the thousands of times I have tried this over the past 5+ years, it has worked every time. Though the more difficult deed of Kindness brings the more potent sense of Bliss, even the smallest of selfless acts (e.g. a prolonged, gentle smile given to a stranger) has the most Peace-full effect. Even more amazing, this Truth actually works better during those times when I am feeling the worst.

So why not make Kindness your New Year's Resolution? Why not resolve to go forth each day — maybe only for five minutes — and be actively Kind to another? Why not dedicate a few moments of each morning to someone other than yourself?

And why not start today — right now? Make a Kind phone call to an estranged friend or family member ... Write a Kind letter of apology to someone who you harmed in your past — or a Kind letter of forgiveness to someone who has harmed you ... Take a walk around the block and warmly greet every stranger you meet ... Bake some cookies for the neighbor you care for the least.

I think you get the concept ... After all, it's not rocket science ... And I'm pretty sure it is not only the only way to know real JOY for yourself, it is probably also the only way we are going to effectuate real & positive change for our entire world.

The time is now, my Friends ... So let's go be that gentle hand of Love. The world needs each and every one of us ...

... so let's go be the change we wish to see!



Sharing vs. deep Listening

(01/17/2012)

Based on some of the core principles of Quaker “Worship Sharing”, here are some tips for learning how to truly Listen: Speak from experience — avoid offering theoretical hypotheses or philosophical commentaries ... Avoid disagreeing with, agreeing with, analyzing or disputing the ideas of another ... Always, while others are speaking, listen quietly & intently ... After the other finishes sharing, sit silently for a time and reflect upon what they have offered.

“My favorite image for worship sharing centers on a quiet pool of water in the sunlight. The water is clear and transparent. At the bottom is fine, clean, light-colored sand. Around the pool is a group of quiet, comfortable people. Each has a collection of stones before her, and each person, in turn, carefully selects from his collection a single stone to throw into the water. The stone may be selected because it is similar to one that was thrown previously – or because it is very different, or because it complements another, or because it is the most beautiful in one’s collection, or one’s favorite, or because it’s the easiest to part with – or for any other reason. It matters not which stone is selected, only that only one is chosen – and that the stone selected does not make too large a splash when it enters the water. Such an occasion has a great sense of peace about it. We watch as each person slowly selects her stone ... As if in slow motion, we watch the stone leave the thrower’s hand, arc through the sunlight and enter the water. We see the water splash up around it. The stone slowly sinks through the clear water, coming to rest on the sandy bottom. We watch the ripples spread out in widening concentric rings, lapping against the sides of the pool. Gradually they diminish in size and smooth away ... Then the next person selects his or her stone. When all have given their stones to the pool and the last ripple has died away, we may have a unique collection of individual stones in our pool. Or we may find that a pattern has emerged, independent of our plans or volition, which would not have arisen had we not come together in this way.”

~ Patricia Loring



Longevity & disaster (01/30/2012)

I think Lao Tsu nailed it when he said that, “*The flame that burns twice as bright, burns half as long*” — or George Bernard Shaw, when he wrote that life is “*a sort of splendid torch which I have got hold of for a moment, and I want to make it burn as brightly as possible before handing it on to future generations.*”

My Friends, we are not here to live as long as possible, but rather to live as Meaning-fully as possible ... If that means living a life of great Meaning that is long, so be it. But longevity in and of itself means very little.

If we so choose, every “disaster” can become a great Gift. Indeed, the Chinese character for “crisis” is said to be composed of the symbols for both “danger” and “critical moment of change”. While this interpretation is subject to debate, it does reflect a deep Truth: that our times of “disaster” are the very times when we are offered the opportunity to transform ourSelves most powerfully — that these are the times when our Love can be most powerfully given, and as such are the times when we can effectuate the most Good, both for others as well as for our surroundings in general.

And while I certainly do not yearn for my next personal “disaster”, I know it *is* on its way. More importantly, I also know that I am no longer required to suffer from these inevitable waves of pain and discord; that I will instead be able to use these moments of difficulty as tools of emPowerment when they do arrive.



And this is what makes my own life worth Living – This is what gives my own life Meaning – This is what makes my own longevity essentially irrelevant. For as long as I continue to meet my life’s obstacles & difficulties with courage — by extending Kindness to others in those times when I most want to “take care of myself” — then my life will continue to overflow with wave after wave of Joy-filled Peace.

And here rests the greatest of ironies: the less I worry about myself, the more my True Self basks in the glories that the Selfless Life of LOVE offers to those who truly Care.

Small words of Kindness

(02/01/2012)

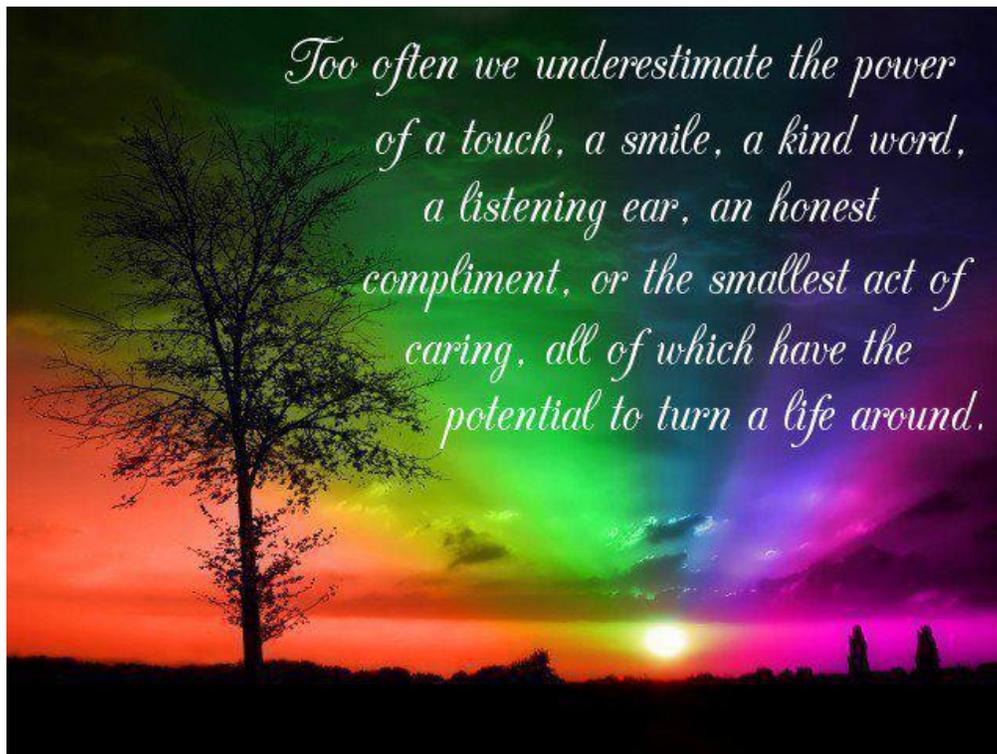
Actually, becoming a powerful “Force for Good” does not require us to do anything magnanimous or amazing at all. We don’t have to “save the world” or lead a civil rights march or liberate a country from tyranny to change others’ lives for the better ...

Indeed, in our current society — one that is steeped in fear & isolation; one in which we are encouraged to “be safe”, in large part by avoiding real contact with strangers — it has become a potent act of Love to warmly greet the people we encounter; to touch them on the shoulder, to look them in the eye, & to *really mean it* when we ask them “How are you doing?”

I have engaged this Truth many times over the past seven+ years, and it has functioned every single time I’ve tried it. Simply being Kind to another person really does make a **BIG** difference ...

It also happens to be lots of fun.

So why not give it a try today?



Becoming Enlightened - Part 1

(02/04/2012)

After many a moon of writing about Love & selflessness & “Radical Kindness”, I thought it was about time to make it all a bit more practical — to give you each a few simple tasks that will allow you to *EXPERIENCE* Enlightenment this very weekend, as opposed to merely thinking about it or discussing it.

It is important to note right off the bat that I do not claim to be “enlightened” myself. In fact, I would submit that anyone who does claim to be a “Master” is probably not one (radical Humility being a prerequisite for true Mastery) ... That having been said, even though I am just a “normal person” like most of you, I **DO** have access to Enlightenment itself; an access that I am granting you this morning.

First & foremost, the Enlightenment of which I speak is **not** a constant state of pleasure or “happiness”. All of the Masters I follow (Jesus Christ, Rumi, Peace Pilgrim, Lao Tsu, & Gandhi — to name a few) have noted that there is no such constant State of Being; at least not while we reside in a human body that is programmed to protect itself at all costs — to “survive & procreate” first, and Care for others only thereafter.

What *is* available to us all is the *experience* of our innate Oneness with everything around us — an *experience* that goes far beyond mere “happiness” or pleasure; an *experience* that can only be described as Bliss; the perfect, deep-seated Joy that comes when we feel in complete Harmony with everything around us in any given moment ... This Oneness I call Enlightenment, and it is this Oneness that is available to you in every moment of your lives ... It is this Oneness that I offer you today.

In order to truly know Enlightenment, it will be necessary to do more than think about it, read about it or talk about it — you will have to get up and **DO IT**. And we will start right now with Task #1: being Kind to a friend ... Simply think of someone you Love very much, and then go forth and do something Kind for them — **anonymously**. Don’t ever let them know that it was you who did the Kind deed and, just as importantly, **do not tell anyone** about of your act of Kindness ...

This first step will allow you to experience at least a small taste of the Joy innate to real Enlightenment.

So ... enJoy the JOY!!!



Becoming Enlightened – Part 2 (02/04/2012)

OK, now that you have gone out and done an anonymous deed of Kindness for a Friend (It felt GOOD, yes?), it's time to “turn up the volume” a bit. After all, only our difficult deeds are truly Power-full, and only our Power-full deeds will be “loud enough” to be heard by our ego — only our radical acts of Kindness will prove potent enough to allow us to not only comprehend our Oneness (which makes us “intelligent”), but to *experience* it (which is what in turn allows us to transform into “Enlightened beings”).

So how can we go about making our acts of Caring more difficult? Well, by making them more “dangerous” of course! ... No worries, Friends — this second task is not really dangerous at all, but rest assured that your primitive reptile brain will *think* that it is, and that will be enough.

Soooooo, without further ado, Task #2: Go forth and do exactly the same deed of Kindness you performed for your Friend, only do it for a complete stranger.

Note that, because you will be dealing with someone you have never met before, and someone who you will probably never meet again, it will be necessary to do the deed directly for them (without divulging your name or your reason, of course) ... Remember as well that the more difficult (see “self-sacrificial”, “valuable” or even “scary”) the deed, the more Love you will be “booming” to the other, and the more intense your experience of Enlightenment (i.e. pure Oneness) will become.

So, off you go ...

No, seriously, why are you still reading this?

Go ahead ... GO!

Get up, go outside,
and spend the next 15
minutes of your life doing
something amazing ...

Peace.



Becoming Enlightened – Part 3

(02/05/2012)

Maybe you engaged the two previously discussed “Enlightenment Tasks”, and maybe you didn’t ... It doesn’t really matter, for even if you did, you will only be slightly more prepared for today’s Final Step to Oneness.

You see, the Path to Enlightenment runs directly contrary to all our primitive, self-centered instincts ... It is a Road that leads straight to — and straight through — your deepest fear: the fear of your enemies; all those people in your life who you set aside as “other”; all those people who you keep outside your tight-knit circle of friends; all those people who you criticize and condemn, reproach and reject. If we are to truly become Enlightened, we must have the gumption to experience our Oneness with *everyone* in our lives, *especially* those folks we care for the least.

And this is not a matter of vague morality. We are not to Love our enemies merely because it is “the Right thing to do”. No, it also happens to be the most practical thing we can do. Loving the enemy *works* — every time. It’s a matter of the most fundamental psychology of being human, really.

Doubts, you have? Well consider the following two Truths:

*Loving your enemies *actually works* for you ... Those secular pain studies I mentioned yesterday not only relate to experiences of physical pain. They are equally relevant when dealing with emotional trauma as well. Over 90% of all our emotional suffering comes **not** from the source of our pain, but rather from our fear of that pain; **not** from the source of our anger or sadness (the “enemy”), but rather from our rejection of them — our condemnation of them as “dysfunctional”, or “mean”, or even “evil”. Thus, if we remove that self-focus — if we have the audacity to extend Caring towards them instead of contempt, then 90%+ portion of our emotional suffering will also steadily disappear. It is literally impossible to be angry or sad or afraid while actively Caring for another person — period!

*Loving your enemies *actually works* for others ... The abusive people in your life are not looking for your “energy” and they are certainly not being mean simply to be mean. They have a goal — and that goal is the enhancement of their own sense of empowerment by gaining control over a “victim”. And herein rests their ultimate weakness: for their strategy to work, they need our help. If we refuse to be a victim — if we refuse to react with the rejections of anger or sadness or fear — if we choose instead to reach out towards them with Compassion for their psychological illness and Love for the True Selves they have so obviously misplaced, then they have only one choice: awaken and be Kind to us in return (which admittedly rarely happens) *or* leave us in order to find a victim elsewhere.

And when we do so — when we persist in being Kind when least inclined, our “perpetrators” are reminded that they too are worthy of Love; they are reminded that they too can reach out with Kindness instead of lashing out with pain; they are reminded that they too are not “mean” or “evil”; they are reminded that they too are human beings — that every time they lash out at another, they are effectively lashing out at a member of their own Family.

And the effect of this Awakening is always a lessening of their brutality. If we reject them in order to “protect ourselves”, all we really do is throw our suffering onto their next victims. And yet if we reach out to them with sincere Kindness, we assure that their next attack will not be half as damaging ... We save them from the trauma of inflicting pain on others, and we save those others from a large portion of that pain as well.

So that is Task #3 — go forth today and do a Kind deed for one of your enemies. See past their “mean” or “immoral” behaviors to the Child within them; see past their cruel or annoying behaviors to the Child that wants so much to be forgiven and to be Loved ... to the Child that feels so unworthy of the same.

Let go of your resentments from the past — resentments that are weighing you down and keeping you from Peace.

Let go of your desires to “change them for the better” — judgments that are actually encouraging your enemies to continue to hurt you.

Let go of your hopes for “a better future” — expectations that are preventing you from remembering that you are already a Power-full Force for Good; that you are already primed and able to effectuate great, positive change in your surroundings — today ... right now — if you but have the courage to extend Kindness to those in your life who “deserve it the least”.

That’s it ... This is the “express lane” to Oneness ... This is the free pass to experiencing real Enlightenment ... This third step is actually the only step you have to make on what is actually a very short Road. I admit that it is a very difficult step to take — probably the most difficult step any human can ever make — and yet there is nothing but fear blocking your way; a fear that is vapor thin and easy to pierce.

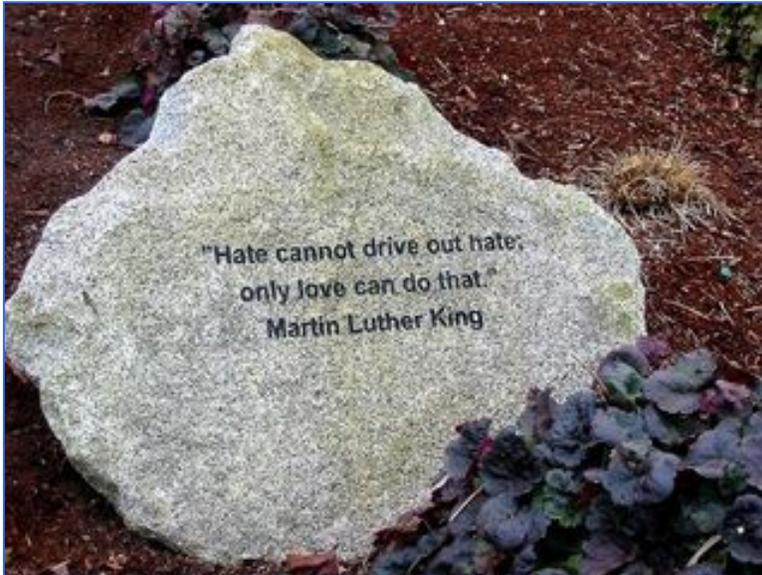
And once you do take this lone step, your arrival in the Bliss of Oneness is guaranteed. Your life will be more than merely “happy” or pleasurable ... Your life will be filled with deep-seated Peace and lasting Joy ... At that point, your life will become truly Meaning-full!

And yet before you GO, please note that this is not a “one and done” Journey – this is no merit badge that will make the rest of your life easy and perfect. Pain will continue to come to you ... People will continue to harm you ... Life will continue to shatter your dreams.

AND YET, once you start down this glorious Path, you will realize that when these disappointments do arrive, you will no longer be required to suffer from them. You will instead be able to pause in gratitude for your ability to choose your response, and then you will be able to use these difficulties to emPower your subsequent acts of Kindness — and thereby come again and again and again into the Heaven that is the experience of Oneness; the Paradise that is the of Enlightenment of true Love.

With that in mind (and with that in Heart) ...

I wish you all a BON VOYAGE!



An Enlightened Horoscope (02/11/2012)

In honor of all the horoscopes & channeled prognostications that are flowing into my inbox these days, I thought I would offer one myself — reminding us all that it is not the “days to come” that are important, but rather that it is **this moment** that is the critical one in our lives ... EnJOY!

.....

It has been noted that the theme of Trust runs deep through the month of February. Of course, the theme of Trust runs deep through every month of every living being in the entire Universe. And it is this trust in Trust that keeps most of us shackled into lives of limitation and listlessness. Until we can learn to stop trusting others to perform as we wish them to, and until we can stop trusting ourselves to eventually perform “better” as well, we will never have access to real Happiness in life.

Let it go ... We are already ready to be Kind to others, especially those who have not “earned our trust”. Contentment will never come to us if we continue to revisit past wounds or try to heal past relationships. Healing only takes place in those moments when we stop focusing on the “bad things” that others did to us in the past, when we let go of hoping that those people will “shape up” and be good to us in the future — when we instead start focusing on the Good we can do for others — RIGHT NOW.

*We will never know wealth until we stop manifesting money for ourselves.
We will never know health until we stop pining for the same.
We will never know peace until we start Caring for our enemies.*

Fortunately for us all, the alignment of the stars above us and the behaviors of others around us have absolutely nothing at all to do with our Wealth or our Health or our Happiness ... The time is always right to Give away what little we have to give. The time is always right to go forth and be Kind — and thereby know the state of Bliss that goes far beyond mere “happiness”; the state of Wholeness that goes far beyond mere “health”; and the state of Abundance that goes far beyond mere “wealth”.

*And we cannot attain this state of BEing by thinking about it — or meditating on it — or discussing it — or writing about it.
It can only come to us when we set aside all hopes and dreams and desires and fears — and go forth to LIVE IT!*

The coffee shop might be the place where you awaken to Friendship & Love, but the coffee shop is not going to be the place where you LIVE IT ...

The yoga studio might be the place where you awaken to Oneness, but the yoga studio is not going to be the place where you LIVE IT ...

The Internet might be the place where you awaken to your Interconnection with others, but the Internet is not going the place where you LIVE IT.

You will LIVE your Love in the presence of strangers ...

You will LIVE your True Self when you face your fears ...

You will LIVE your deepest Peace when you actively Forgive those who have wronged you; ... when you actively Give to those who you judge as unworthy; ... when you actively Care for those you normally detest or ignore.

This is the way to attain a sense of real Contentment ... the only way to truly “be happy” ... This is the way to attain a sense of real Peace ... the only way to truly “be safe” ... This is the way to attain a sense of real Balance in life ... the only way to truly “center yourself” ... This is the way to attain a sense of Self-Respect ... the only way to truly “Love yourself”.

The time is Right, my friends ...

Let us go be the change we wish to See.

*Let us go forth today, not as worshipers of the heavens,
... but as agents of Heaven itself.*

S, out — Peace, in

**The best way to find
yourself is to lose
yourself in the
service of others.**

Ghandi



Love & the law (02/17/2012)

I've been translating German legal documents into English for the past few days, and I freely admit that the going's been pretty rough at times ... Here's but a small sample of my most tedious task: "Point 4: By claims of defective service ("Mängelrügen"--???), payments from the client may be withheld in an amount proportionate to the perceived deficiency. If the contract relates to trading activities, the client can withhold payment only when ... there is no dispute as to the existence and the significance of the deficiency."

... (sigh) ...

My Friends, law came about for one simple reason, and it was *not* because we as a species are incapable of being Kind to one another. No, law came about because a group of folks "in power" decided that *they* didn't have faith in the rest of us to be able to Care for one another.

Well, I've got some good news: as long as **you** are choosing to be considerately Kind to others, **YOU ARE NOT SUBJECT TO THE LAW!**

And I've got some even better news: **WE CAN ALL BE KIND** to one another — even when some of us behave otherwise, human beings are innately Good and yearn to share that Goodness (I have lived this Truth radically for over seven years — don't believe the news and those CSI shows on TV!) ...

And the best news of all: such acts of courageous **KINDNESS REALLY WORK**, and it doesn't take a lot of us acting accordingly to eventually wake the rest of us up to that fact as well.

We humans have tried law and condemnation and punishment for over 10,000 years now, and it's pretty obvious that none of them work ... As such, it is high-time for us to give Love & Kindness & Forgiveness a chance.

So ... Who's with me?



“A Final Fare-well” revisited
(03/10/2012)

Back in the very early part of 2010, as I was preparing to walk my 1000+ km Peace Pilgrimage to Pompano Beach (southern Florida), I sent quite a few folks a copy of a CD that I had arranged; figuring that if “something happened to me” along the way, I would want folks to have access to most of my Message.

While I did listen to the CD once to make sure the recording functioned, I had never actually read the words that I “channeled” at that time — until today. It just so happens that the Peace Artist compiled the text from his copy of that CD and posted it all on Facebook yesterday. What a wonderful surprise to find them there when I logged on this afternoon!

Anyway, since most of you did not receive a copy of that “Final Fare-Well” CD, I thought I would post them here now, that you can “hear” what I offered then by reading the text that follows ...

EnJOY — & Bon Yoyage!

.....

“And the time comes in your life when you set aside self-centered desires, expectations, hopes, and dreams. When you gently set aside all that is not working for you, and you Awaken. You awaken to the Truth that is whispered by those small voices inside you, saying that something isn’t right, that there must be something more to life. You awaken to the Truth that you’ve known since your conception: that you CAN live a meaningful, powerful, peaceful, and joyful existence.

And when you sense this Truth, you have a desire to just tip your toes in the river, just to test the water and see how it is. You don’t do anything radical the first time in, you make small shifts in behaviors — you notice the simple beauties in life, and you treasure them more. You glimpse the Truth that “Heaven” truly IS already here and now; that happiness truly IS always a choice, that you truly ARE a powerful being, and that peace really DOES indeed wait for you.

And then of course, guidance is sought. This is the infancy of humility when you realize that there is “something more”; this is the infancy of the courage that has you choosing to go and find it. You look for someone who has walked The Way before you to be a guide on your own journey.

In the beginning you look for teachers that teach comfortable things, that encourage you to obtain your own peace, to find salvation for yourself, and/or to accumulate your own wealth or comfort. But as you progress, you begin to look for teachers that provide you with a more challenging regimen; teachers who present a possibly more difficult road, but one that is more complete, one that resides and harmonizes with unconditional Love. It is on these giant shoulders that we eventually ride.

Thereafter, to truly blossom into our True Self we eventually choose to Care for those who have harmed us. We realize that Love doesn't heal, Love IS the healing. And, this Love only exists when it is powerfully given to those we least wish to give it.

And after having done this, after having forgiven wholeheartedly, we then realize with a greater degree of certainty that there is nothing else to learn. We realize that we already know THE WAY to true Contentment. We realize that we are already dancing with everything that IS — as opposed to those things that could, should, or would be — and we begin to embrace those things with deep gratitude.

And as we do so, we see clearly that our time — in this particular body, with this particular identity, and in this particular lifetime — is very limited indeed. It is priceless ... A sense of urgency awakens within us, and we know that there is no time to wait.

And yet, we are afraid to leap. We understand that we cannot erase, fight, or combat fear. We cannot rid ourselves of our egos, we can only courageously harness them by choosing to Care especially in those moments when we least wish to do so. And yet we waiver...

Eventually of course, having come so far, we DO indeed leap. We DO perish to our ego and our self-centeredness. We are reborn in that leaping as the conscientious, loving, ethical, moral, virtuous beings that we truly are, and our newly awakened True Self blossoms into our actions. We set aside the previous beliefs that we are “only human”, and we replace them with an understanding that we are HUMAN(e). We set aside old beliefs that say I am only one and powerless, and realize instead that we are all significant parts of the IT, the ONE, the Universe — of all that which IS. And because of this, we come to realize that we are already quite Power-full.

And as we go forth courageously thereafter, our desires begin to shift. We begin to yearn to serve rather than be served. Our ego wants to be loved, and yet we understand that our Soul just wants to Love ... We understand that there is a different desire, and we choose this deeper desire — the desire to Care, and are completely willing to bring it to fruition ... We persist in actualizing this selflessness, and we do so consciously — regardless of what another does, says, or believes about it ... And we begin to do so over and over and over again.

At this point our calling, our mission, and our vocation become clear. And, not only does it become clear, we accept it ... We ACCEPT it ... WE accept that it is real — that it is part of us, and that we are a part of it. That this mission is what WE can do for humanity, and only what WE can do for humanity is a part of us. We become part of it, and we set forth to LIVE it.

And here is where life becomes smooth. Strife and conflict are set aside, desires and fears are lessened or muted (if not completely dismissed) ... And our life becomes a string of moments mellowed by mirth & meaning.

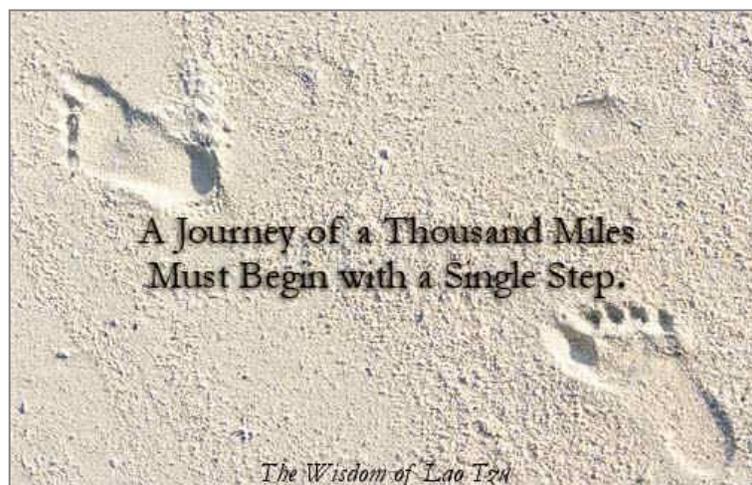
At this point, we detach from ourselves. Our identities and our personalities still exist, of course — we still remember who we are, and yet WHO WE ARE, what we are, and what we do no longer hold any importance for us. Our identity remains but not to further itself, to live a longer, healthier, and happier life for itself, but rather it exists only to be used for the betterment of all. Both dwelling on the past and worrying about the future disappear. We sink deep into the moment, and focus primarily on what we can DO in this moment for others.

And as we do so, our perspective reaches crystal clarity. We relax into the Universal Flow all around us — the Oneness of which we are an integral part. We see this flow, and because our desires and fears are no longer controlling our choices, we can respond to this flow and harmonize with it. We see others while walking in their shoes...we see life while walking in the shoes of the Divine.

And here we begin to serve from a place of deep serenity. Some call it living the life of a Saint. This is not to put ourselves on a pedestal, EVERY sentient being is innately a Saint — though most of us are not acting like it. But at this stage of growth, we have awakened to this inner True Self. We have made it real ... we have lived it often enough to allow our initial responses to situation to shift from “Fight or Flight” to “Serve & Give”. And in this shift, life becomes joyous and smooth.

We know Love, and become Love to all.

And thereafter, these moments of “reBirth” escalate in their depth and intensify in their frequency. We understand at this point that there is no “growth process”, that there is no “state of enlightenment” to strive for, that there are no “levels of mastery” to attain. Rather, we can return to our own innate inner “perfection” whenever we wish — by simply pausing in any given moment and choosing to Love, especially when we least wish to do so.”



Message in a bottle
(04/24/2012)

One year, 3 months & 6 days ago today, I wrote a message to the Universe, put it in a bottle, and set it afloat on a small lake. Yesterday, my message was returned to me by the person who finally found it.

It expresses a really nice thought, one that could very well change the world if enough of us enacted it a bit in our everyday lives, and it is as relevant for all of us today as it was for me back then ... so I thought I would share it with you all.

As such ... enJoy!

*“Dear heavenly Father,
Let me in this moment choose to BE as beautiful within,
as your gorgeous Cosmos that surrounds me.
Love & Peace,
Scaughdt”*



3 Steps to Happiness (05/10/2012)

Step 1: looking for happiness outside of one's self,
& doing so for personal benefit ...

Result: unhappiness.

Step 2: looking for happiness inside one's self,
& doing so for personal gratification ...

Result: unhappiness.

Step 3: setting aside all strivings & yearnings for personal happiness, & simply
living each day trying to bring as much Peace & Joy to as many others as possible ...

Result: ***HAPPINESS!***



Choosing SELF
(05/31/2012)

There is no wrong or right answer to the question of who you truly are, and yet in each moment of your life you do indeed only get to choose one of all available answers ...

As such ... Choose Care-fully!



Tolerance is a verb
(06/03/2012)

LOVE is so much more than tolerance ...
... and yet at least tolerance is a start.

And please remember:

Tolerance is a verb.



Prickly people
(06/04/2012)

LOVE goes far beyond mere tolerance ... LOVE cannot simultaneously be neutral and survive. Indeed, the moment your “love” becomes a bland resignation or a silent criticism or a turning away to “live and let live”, that is the moment that true LOVE dies.

My Friends, in order to truly BE, your **LOVE** must be actively given, and it must be given radically. You’ve got to open up and risk yourself — you’ve got to have the guts to be Kind to your life’s “prickly people” ... After all, these are the folks who obviously aren’t getting the same from anyone else ... and as such they are the ones who obviously need your **LOVE** the most.

So ... got **LOVE**?



beFriending enemies
(06/06/2012)

Your ego will try to convince you that you have enemies; that there people out there steadily trying to harm you & take what is yours ... And yet PLEASE NOTE the following: Despite what you read in the newspapers or see on TV or hear from your friends ...

THIS IS A LIE!

Your “enemies” (both at home and abroad) are merely Friends in waiting; folks who would so love to reach out and be Kind to you, but who are either too confused or too afraid to do so ... And it is up to YOU to remove the enemies from your life the only way it is possible to do so: by actively Be-Friending them.

As a species, the human race is standing on the brink — desperately yearning for Peace ... And yet Peace will not come our from our politicians or our pastors ... Peace has to come from YOU.

WE are our only hope, my Friends ...
... Please act accordingly today.

Thank you.



Coming HOME

(06/08/2012)

(a return HOME to your True Self)

HOME-Work assignment: Set an alarm for some random time this afternoon ... When it goes off, stop doing whatever you are doing, stand very still & look to the sky* ... And while you are doing so, choose to remember how awesome life is; how much Beauty surrounds you every day; how good people have been to you in your past and how good so many of them are being to each other in that very moment all over the world ... Remember that you are alive and what an amazing blessing that is.

Now close your eyes and deeply soak in your new-found Gratitude for a few moments ... Finally, remember that you have the power to bring this same Peace to others today — some eye contact and a smile is often enough ...

Now open your eyes and go make it so.

[*if indoors, you can gaze out a window, at a picture on a wall, at a plant, or even at your own hand. Just be sure to find something Beauty-full nearby and choose to appreciate it — choose to let it remind you that, regardless of your personal circumstances, you are alive in a world of wonders.]



Life's "black dots"

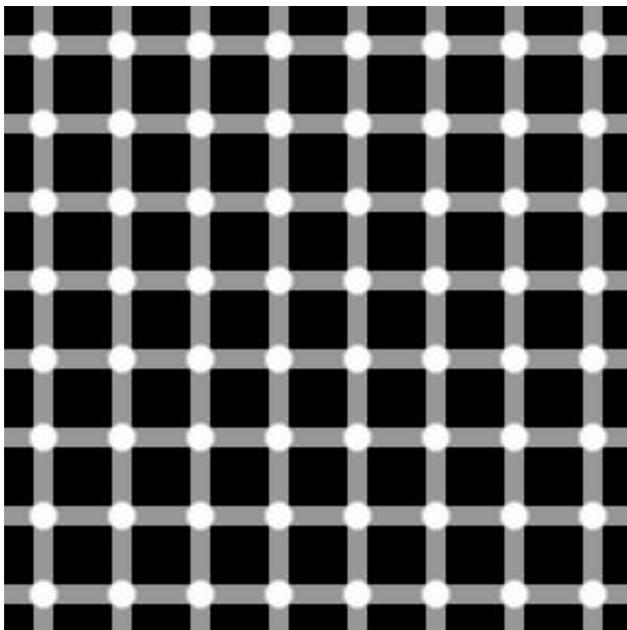
(06/17/2012)

And then there are those days when life seems “broken” — those mornings when we simply wake up “on the wrong side of the bed” ... These are the days when it seems like nothing we do makes any difference — when we are sure that no one is listening and even fewer really Care; ... when the news convinces us that there are terrorists plotting to kill us and that there are criminals on every street corner; ... when “self help” books and talk show hosts convince us that it is time to stop “giving too much” and start getting “our fair share” instead.

Just like in the image below, life sometimes seems to fill up with these “black dots” — difficulties and annoyances and crises that seem to surround us wherever we are.

AND YET, also just like in this image, when we have the humility and the courage to deeply gaze upon these “problems”, we can always see clearly that they aren't really problems at all — they are *opportunities*; blessings in disguise.

At that moment, we wake up to Life's deeper Truths: ... that EVERYTHING we do for others makes a huge difference — that quite a few people are listening very intently to what we DO; ... that there aren't that many terrorists out there at all, and that every criminal on every street corner is actually a human being who has been rejected &/or ridiculed so many times that they have simply forgotten who they truly are; ... that the authors of those books & the employers of those talk-show hosts are not really concerned with the awakening of your True Self, as much as they are concerned about the growth of their bank accounts.



So go ahead — look closely at all those things that are annoying you or saddening you or frightening you ... See that every single one of them is an opportunity to set aside your “inner animal” and become Human(e) again; every one of them is a new chance to choose Kindness over self-defense — to choose Caring over lashing out — to choose Love over fear.

Go ahead — take a good look at all those “black dots” in your life ... and keep on looking at them until you realize the Truth:

... that they aren't really black at all.

Love's simplicity
(06/19/2012)

Even though leaping into Love is pretty scary stuff, at least it's simple & straightforward: to know LOVE, all you have to do is give LOVE — and the more radically (i.e. the more “dangerously” or self-sacrificially) you Give it, the more clearly you Live it ... LOVE really is quite simple: whenever we are crazy-Kind to another being, LOVE simply IS.

No matter how deep our analysis of Love goes — no matter how close we are to “getting it” intellectually, we won't ever powerfully GET IT until we Power-fully GIVE IT ...

So ... got LOVE?



Kindness shares
(07/18/2012)

As long Joyful self-sacrifice is involved,
there is no act of Kindness too small.

We are not here to be cared for ...
... We are here to **CARE**.

So ... got LOVE?



Vanquishing “evil”

(07/18/2012)

I’ll let you all in on a little secret: there are no purely “evil people” in the world. There are folks out there who have done some “evil” things, of course, and yet none of them were “bad” or “mean” ... Every human being who has ever walked the Earth and every human being who is alive today has known Joy and given Joy, has known wonder and shared Wonder, has known Kindness and given Kindness; has known Love and has Loved ...

... all of them ...

... every single one ...

... even life’s “Stormtroopers”.

Real LOVE has both the humility to look past others’ behaviors and the courage to Care for them anyway ...

So ... got LOVE?



One world for PEACE
(07/21/2012)

Some folks believe
that finding Peace within yourself
allows you to live in Peace with others.

In actuality, of course ...
... it's the other way around.



Healing the past (07/23/2012)

We carry our wounds with us — those wounds from our young days; those wounds that never seem to heal. Rest assured, every fear you have, every desire you feel, every criticism you relay, every judgment you inflict — they all come from wounds received many moons before now. We could release them, of course, and yet they are so comfortable to have around — so familiar ...

So we walk around with them; pulling them out a few times every hour just to make sure they are still there; just to make sure they are still keeping us “aware of the risks” and “careful of the dangers”.

The great irony is that these wounds do not protect us at all. In fact, these whispering facets of painful memory are actually the very things keeping us from deeply Connecting with the others around us — a Connection of Caring that is the only thing that will ever bring us the lasting Peace for which we so desperately yearn.

Indeed, it is these echoes of our past that are responsible for continually sharpening the splinters our egos use to repeatedly prick & poke our calm Souls — keeping us afraid of strangers, keeping us angry at our enemies, keeping us subtly depressed over “the unfairness of it all”.

Of course, the Reality of Life is very different ...

In Reality, 99.9% of all the strangers we encounter are patently friendly folks who would love nothing better than to share a smile with us or help us out of a jam ... In Reality, nobody is really interested in hurting us at all. Almost every one of our enemies was (and still is) simply protecting his or her own wounds — probably from us (albeit unnecessarily, and possibly inappropriately) ... In Reality, even on the worst of days, Life is simply amazing — more than incredible enough to focus on the Good therein — more than enough to be thankful anyway.

My Friends, it is time for each of us to let our past depart our present ...

*It is time to stop picking at those scabs and become whole again ...

*It is time to recognize that our well-intended egos have shackled our true Well-Being for long enough ...

*It is time to See the Truth that we are ALL members of one huge, beautiful Family ...

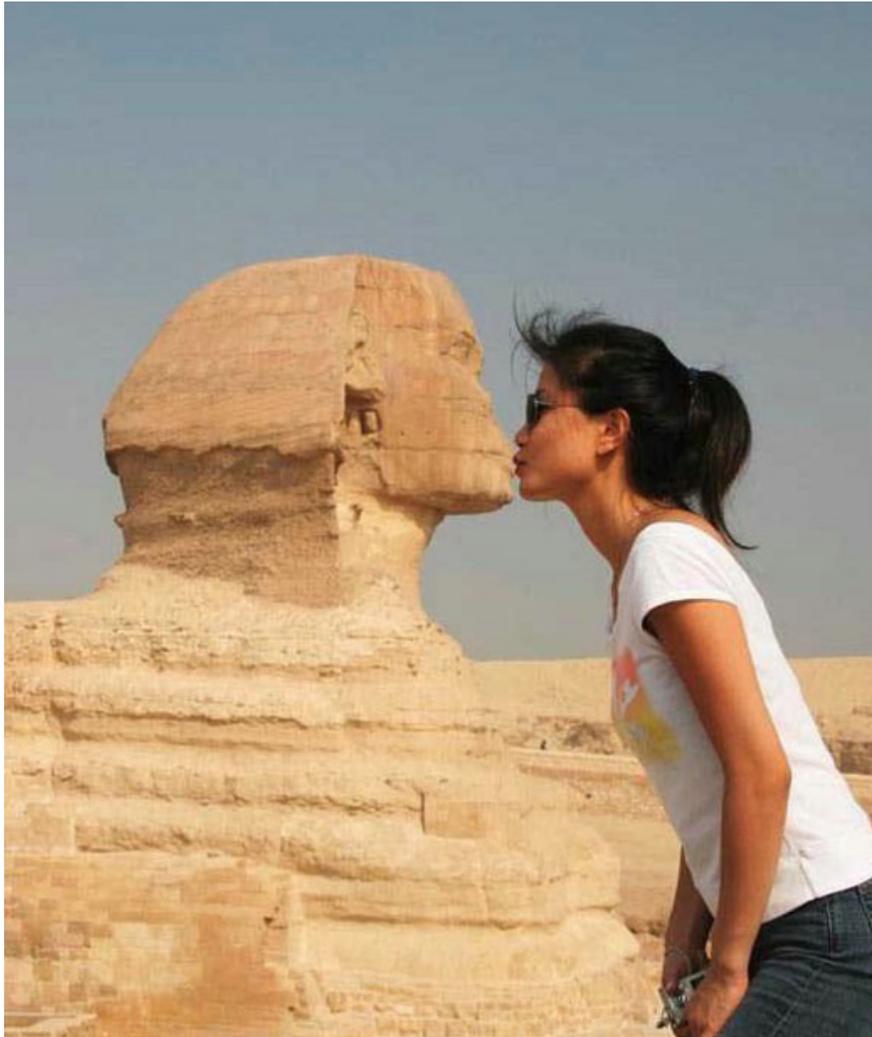
*It is time to turn away from our very reasonable fears in order to actively Care for someone else.

*It is time to gently stop criticizing what is wrong with our lives and awaken to what is Right.

Our wounds can only heal when we let them go ... Our past can only melt away when we stop re-enlivening its fears & desires ... And it is LOVE that gives the past that gentle kiss goodbye, and then turns us courageously towards the new day of Now.

So ... got LOVE?

(~ not from Osho, and yet somehow ignited thereby)



Waking UP to Caring
(07/24/2012)

Actually, while the capacity to Care is pretty amazing and a fantastic Gift with which we have all been blessed, it is what sometimes follows that is the true miracle ...

For more than the ability to Care, it is the actual *act* of Caring that gives Life its deepest Meaning.

Love is Caring for others,
... and that Caring is a verb.

So ... got LOVE?



Bringing out your Best
(07/28/2012)

There is a Purpose for everyone who comes into your life”, she said ...
“For every loved one, every associate, every stranger & every enemy, there is a reason for their arrival. Some of them are here to test you, others are here to educate you, and the rest, to bless you. The key to being happy is knowing who to surround yourself with.”

“The most important people in life”, she concluded, “are the ones who bring out the best in you, and those are the people worth keeping around. Distance yourself from everyone else, and you will be happy.”

“Fair enough”, I thought, “and yet she forgot the most important thing: that the people who bring out the true BEST in me ...

... are the ones who in-Courage me to Care for those who don't.”



Escaping the Darkness (07/30/2012)

“I am an emotionaut; a psychological explorer; a wanderer of the inner Void ... I choose to go where others fear to tread, so that when they are someday cast there against their will, I will be waiting to Guide them Home.” ~ anonymous

In order to gain Clarity; in order to finally See where you truly are in life; to See who you truly are as a person ... you've got to have the Humility & the Courage to come up from the depths and take a look around.



Easy Way to SELF
(08/02/2012)

The hard way to find your True Self: read lots of “self-help” books ... eat right ... surround yourself with friends ... protect yourself from enemies ... meditate ... do Tai Chi or yoga every morning ... pray every night ... manifest material abundance ... find your “true love” — keep “learning” and “growing” and “getting better” until you are one day, someday & somehow, at Peace.

The easy way to rediscover your True Self:

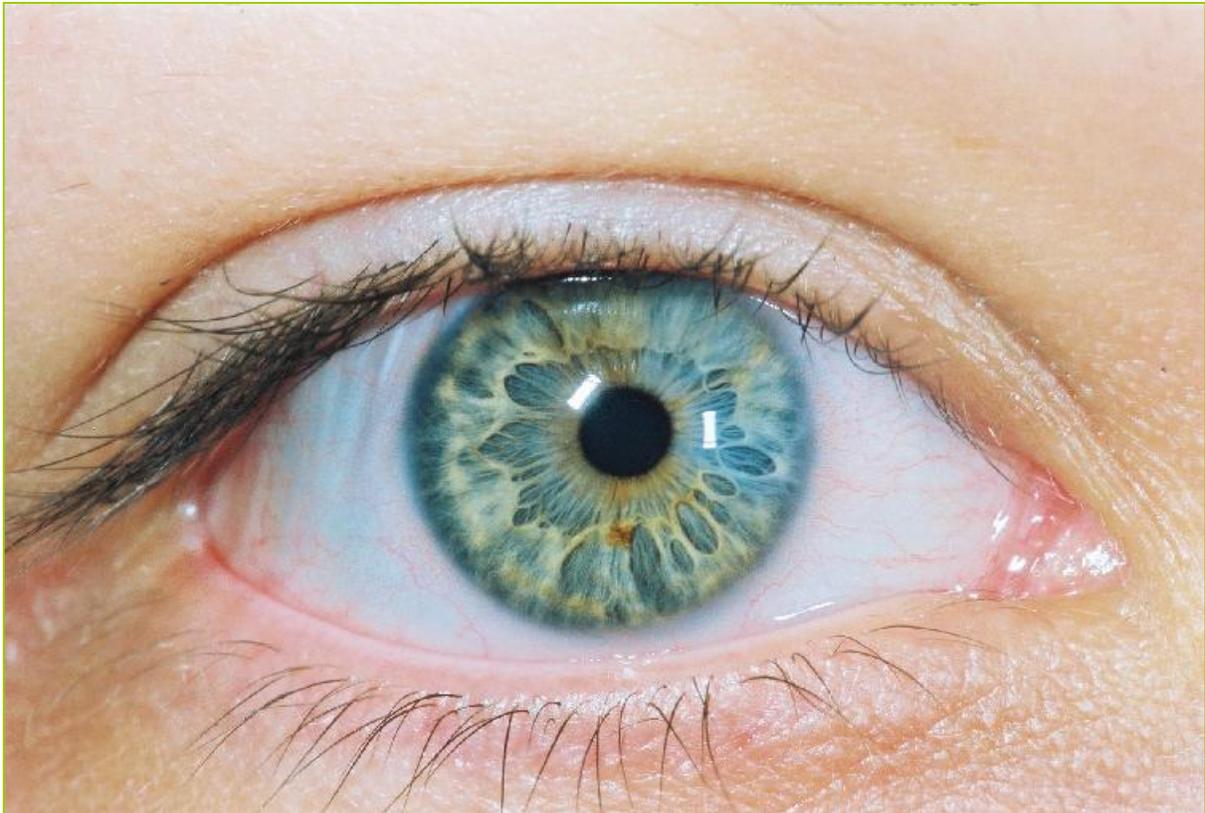
Go forth today and *imitate your dog*.



EYE of Beholder
(08/04/2012)

Subjective “beauty” might very well be in the eye of the beholder ... but
real BEAUTY is always present ...

... for real BEAUTY is simply in the EYE!

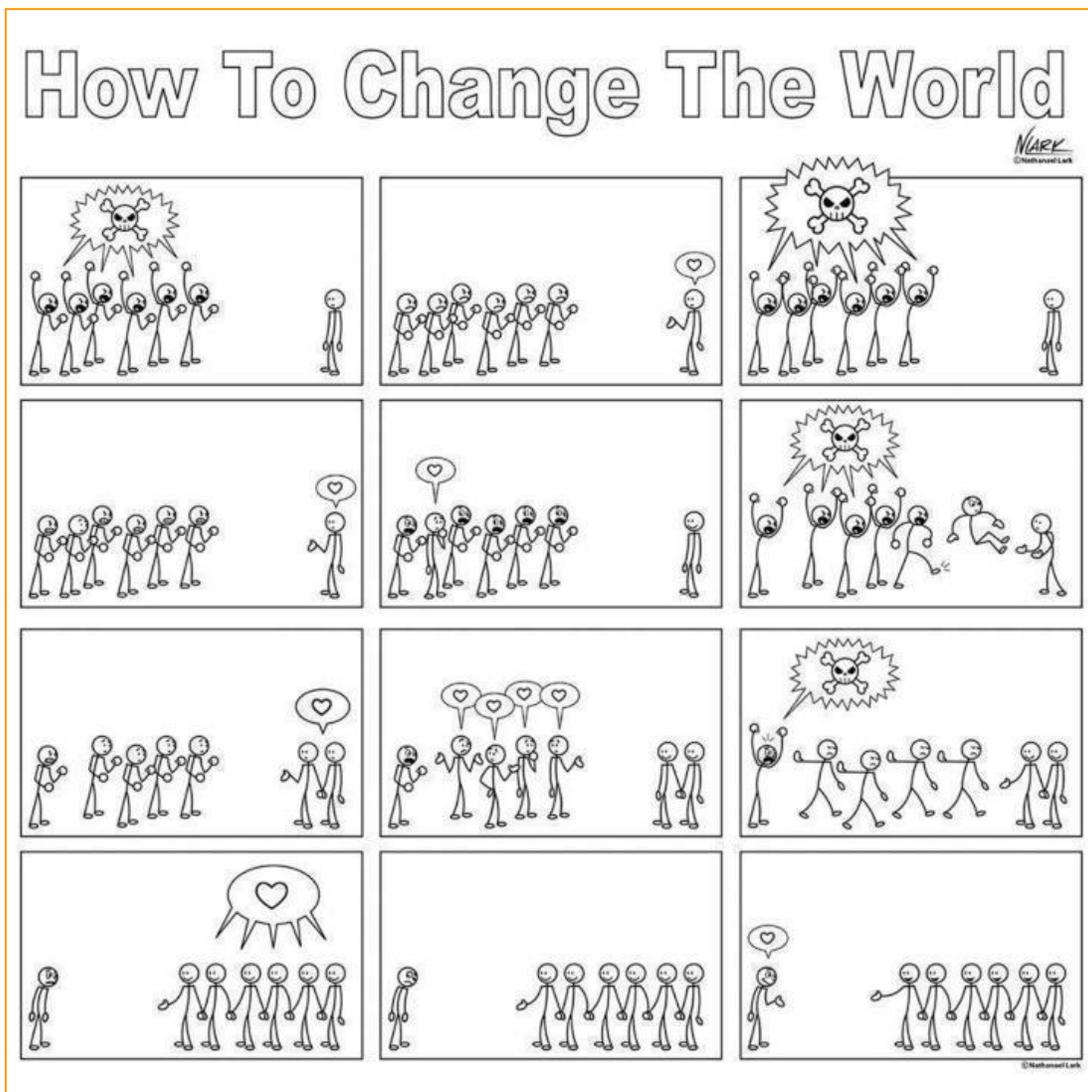


How to change the World (12/18/2012)

What's really cool about this picture is that what it illustrates is a sociological Truth — namely, that IT ACTUALLY WORKS!

So get out there and be bold for Love ... and enJOY!

[Hint: If you would like to be one of the small number of folks who are destined to make a **HUGE**, positive change on this planet, all it takes is the humility and the courage to gently & persistently repeat the action shown in the second and fourth frames.]



The Meaning in Giving (12/21/2012)

A good sign that you are doing a *fantastic* job of parenting: When your 4-year old child goes to visit Santa — not to ask him for a present, but to give *him* one that she has made him herself.

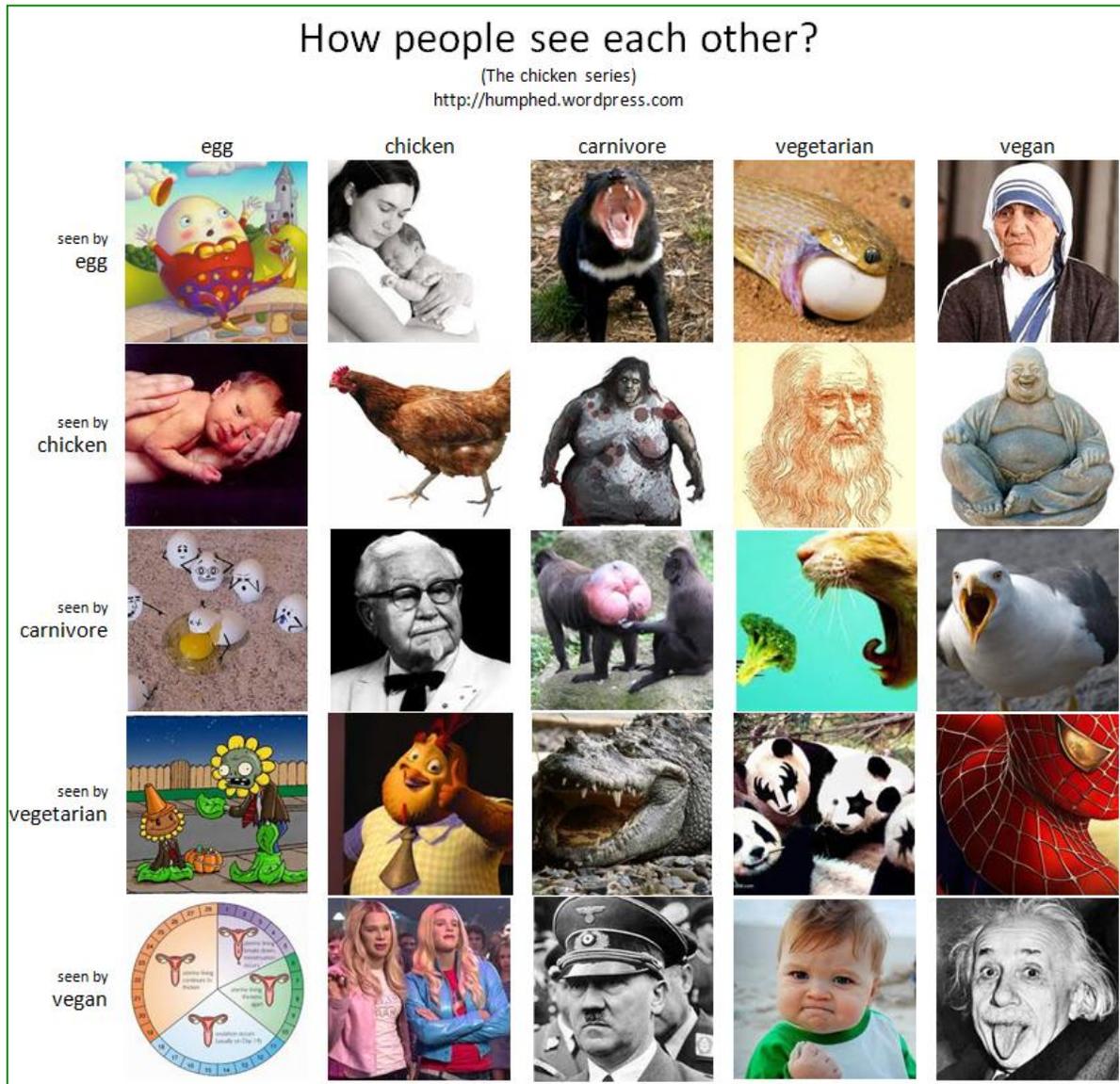
P.S. “Become again as a child” comes to mind, yes?



On Seeing each other (12/28/2012)

In honor of all my furred & feathered Friends who needlessly lost their lives during these “Holy-Days”, I offer the following ... Let us have the humility choose to SEE the Good in every sentient being — and then let us have the courage to act accordingly.

Peace to us ALL!



The Heart will be Free
(01/15/2013)

We are terrified of being hurt again, so we throw Love away in favor of “healthy boundaries” ... We are fearful of losing all that we own, so we throw Love away in favor of “being responsible” with our money ... We are anxious about all the “evil people” out to get us, so we throw Love away in favor of punishing criminals and attacking our enemies.

And yet deep inside every one of us, *WE KNOW ANOTHER WAY* ... No matter how much we repress it or rationalize its rejection, we know with every fiber of our being that Forgiveness neutralizes all aggression, and that Kindness overcomes all evil.

And even in our darkest hours of trial and tumult, that knowing keeps resurfacing — again & again & again, we are encouraged to reach out in times of risk or danger to Care for those most in need of the same.

Yes, we can keep turning our backs on Love or keep on throwing Love to the side of the road. We can even walk to the edge of the cliff and hurl Love into the sea.

But it doesn't really matter.

Because you see, Love is more than a feeling — Love is an integral facet of **WHO YOU TRULY ARE**. No matter how calculating or cowardly or callous you choose to be towards others, and no matter what “good reasons” you use to justify the same, as long as you remain, your Love remains as well.

No matter how far you toss it or how deep you bury it, Love will just keep coming back ...

It will just keep coming back ...

... to give you another chance to **LOVE**.

KEEP
CALM
AND
LOVE
ANYWAY





*“And I will take one from a thousand
and two from ten thousand,
and they shall Become a single One.”
~ Jesus (Gospel of Thomas 23)*