

What are Peak Experiences?

Peak experiences refer to states of consciousness that are peaceful, loving, wise, compassionate, filled with awe and wonder, gratitude and appreciation, creativity, delight, beauty and joy, harmony and oneness, unity and mutuality in relationship, to name just a few facets of this diamond state of being. It is not an “altered state of consciousness,” but our truest and most natural state of consciousness.

“Peak experiences” are merely called peak experiences, because they are just that, occasional experiences for most people, not a stable condition of being.

It is my belief that humanity is very slowly evolving to being able to live in this state more and more. The greater we co-operate with the inner evolutionary drive that is within all of us, the sooner it can be attained at a global level. There can indeed be heaven on earth. And then, what we will call “Peak Experiences” will be the everyday foundational experience for the next expansion, beyond which, we have no stable and secure experience as yet.

Growth is infinite, as is consciousness, and so the expansion, just like the universe, continues.

The purpose of our incarnation, or our involution into matter, meaning, spirit becomes matter, is, so that, through this experience of physical life, we can become aware of ourselves as Consciousness itself. This happens organically when needs are adequately met and we co-operate with the evolution of our own soul instead of believing that there is an arrival point, or that we have arrived.

Most people believe they have arrived once they have enough money in the bank to live a safe and secure life and enjoy a few external pleasures. They reach a plateau and decide this is far enough to camp out for the rest of their lives.

All of you, that have signed up for this course, know that there is way, way more. You all understand that it is an inner journey at this point in your lives, not an external one, as the first half of life tends to be.

This does not mean that attaining external success in the world is to be rejected or judged – it is a necessary foundational piece and it does not go away just because we turn inward and start this journey of expanding awareness. It is a huge mistake to believe that rejecting the success in the outer world is “spiritual.” It is like saying because I have built the spires of a cathedral, I can get rid of the foundation.

All stages of development are enfolded and included in every next stage of development.

To attain more expanded states of consciousness and higher stages of development does not make you special or superior – only very, very lucky. There is no judgment of the stage of development that anyone has attained, or through which you have already moved. There is no “good” or “bad,” or “superior/inferior.” It just is, for more complex reasons in each life, than it is ours to know. If you judge others’ stages of development, you are judging yours. Which is the same as judging a sprouting acorn because it is not yet a 500-year old oak tree.

Most people advance only a little way on the climb to the top of this mountain. They climb just high enough to be safe, satisfied, belong somewhere, and have some kind of fairly satisfactory and successful life. They stop half-way up the mountain. It is “good enough.” They do not believe there is more. They are afraid of the climb and they are comfortable enough where they are. They accept that life is rather boring, mundane, irritating, that you have to work to survive, and the rewards are some pleasures. The reason for this is that this is the center of gravity for the evolution of consciousness. It is what is comfortable and meets the inner need to belong. To move beyond this stage means forfeiting the need to belong to the greater culture.

At this stage people cannot even imagine a life of joy, peace, love, creativity, beauty, delight, harmony, awe, wonder..... it is a rare and foreign experience and a nice idea, rarely glimpsed.

Everyone has had some of these experiences. Consider and think back to moments of great love, joy, peace or awe. How long did it last before your attention was drawn away and distracted by an inner thought, an external demand, a fear... Imagine not being distracted from your truest nature but living this experience, *even as* the distractions occur. The qualities of experience at this stage and in this state, is a recognition and realization of the nature of our being, after a very long interior journey to the very core of our being.

As Thomas Merton says,

"At the center of our being is a point of nothingness which is untouched by sin and by illusion, a point of truth, a point or spark which belongs entirely to God, which is ever at our disposal ... A point from which God disposes of our lives, a point which is inaccessible to the fantasies of our own mind or the brutalities of our own will. This little point of nothingness and of absolute poverty is the pure glory of God in us. It is, so to speak, Gods name written in us ..."

It is like a pure diamond, blazing with the invisible light of heaven. It is in everybody, and if we could see it, we would see these billions of points of light coming together in the face and blaze of a sun that would make all the darkness and cruelty of life vanish completely ... I have no program for this seeing. It is only given. But the gate of heaven is everywhere."

Once you have had a taste of this experience, you want more, and might start chasing it. This is what happened with the drug culture of the 60's. And yes, indeed, we can artificially induce these states in many ways – extreme initiations and drugs being a common way. However, this state of expanded awareness cannot be sustained in normal everyday life if you have not done the stage work that is necessary to match the state. As soon as the artificial means of opening and expanding awareness is stopped, you drop right back into a constricted, fear and shame-based state of consciousness. We have to do the stage work to live in a more expanded state of consciousness.

Human growth ties in directly with the needs of being human. Human needs are universal. In physical form, which is a very unstable and temporary condition, we all need each other to survive and thrive.

Maslow describes universal human needs in a hierarchical way. Like in the cathedral metaphor, the capacity to meet one's own needs build on one another – from foundation to spire. The temple and the mountain are essentially the same symbol. And the temple is the sacred geometrical representation of the human body.

The foundational need of humanity is merely, to survive. We need to have our basic needs for survival met – for water, food, shelter, safety. Without this need being met you will, of course, die and the whole process of evolution in consciousness will be aborted before it even starts.

According to the World Health Organization:

Key facts

- In 2018 an estimated 6.2 million children and adolescents under the age of 15 years died, mostly from preventable causes. Of these deaths, 5.3 million occurred in the first 5 years, with almost half of these in the first month of life.
- Leading causes of death in children under-5 years are preterm birth complications, pneumonia, birth asphyxia, congenital anomalies, diarrhea and malaria. Nearly half of these deaths are in newborns.

- More than half of these early child deaths are preventable or can be treated with simple, affordable interventions including immunization, adequate nutrition, safe water and food and appropriate care by a trained health provider when needed.
- Children in sub-Saharan Africa are more than 15 times more likely to die before the age of 5 than children in high income countries.

Approximately 15 000 children under the age of 5 die every day in the world.

For people living at the level of basic survival, there is no free attention to attain higher order needs like love, or self- esteem. Every ounce of attention is focused on the next meal, the suffering of disease in the body, clean water....

A very important principle of development is that we cannot stably get to the next level until the level before has been satisfactorily mastered. And humanity has not yet figured out how to survive as a world community. The world has not yet awakened to the needs for mutuality, service, reciprocity, interdependence, love... and so on. Each individual, largely speaking, is desperately grasping to get his or her own basic needs met without concern for the other. There is little attention to care about someone else's needs, when you use every bit of attention to get your own needs met.

For all of you on this course, you obviously survived. However, that does not mean that some of you would not have experienced the terror of perhaps nearly dying, or having your life and survival severely compromised as little children, either through abuse, neglect, accidents or disease.

It is likely that you might be still hyper-vigilant, focused externally on the outside world and others as being either a source of gain, or a source of danger. So even people that live in luxury, with all their basic needs met, can live in the trauma of the need for survival not being met – in other words in the memory state of fear and shame, when needs were not met in childhood.

It is important to recognize that there was fear and shame when the traumatic experiences of childhood occurred, and then, another condition arose within, which is defense – hyper-vigilance, external focus and locus of control in the form of fight and flight. You are now wound and defense. You are split in two. The defense works to hide, deny, minimize, rationalize and negate the experience of the trauma.

This is not in awareness but is lived out over and over again in relationship to self and others as an adult.

If this unaware, and so unresolved trauma still exists in you, your attention will be focused on survival and, to the degree that it is, is the degree to which there is no free attention to develop and meet higher order needs. You will be compromised in your development until the past trauma around survival has been fully resolved. **And this can only be done by you, yourself.**

Others can support this work, but the work or re-memembering, re-processing, re-parenting, re-connecting, re-living, can only happen within you. Only you can bring the truth and love of your being to the past wounds and heal them. No-one else can.

If this is true for you, then it is true for the world. It is every person's God-given responsibility to learn to heal and love the inner wounds and splits within the psyche. The words, remembering, re-processing, re-connecting, re-living, are all talking about creating unity, connection, intra-dependence in a soul that has been split off into wound and defense. Now a third condition has to be brought to the split and broken self – the condition of your consciousness – which, as we have already established is the condition of Spirit – Love and Truth.

If doing this inner work is true for you, then it is true for all humans. And so, of what use is it to bemoan the condition of the world, if your own inner world is split. Judgment, control, “helping others,” is of no avail at all. Each must take care of the divisions and conflicts of your own inner temple.

These principles hold true all the way through the life journey. If your needs for safety were well met, but the next order need to belong was inadequately met in some way, then the trauma of that level will exist in the present, even if, in adulthood you successfully belong to a hundred organizations and groups. The old insecurities and fears will dominate internally and compromise the quality of your life until they are attended to – meaning that you realize that you are capable of bringing present conscious awareness to the experience of so long ago in time.

Every moment is in this moment. The past trauma is completely present within the Present Moment of your experience, if it is triggered. It has not gone away. Time does not heal. Only Love heals the dark tears in the fabric of your existence.

The dense, dark energy of unaware fear and shame are created and stay created until you bring the light of awareness and love to them. You are the one who has to turn on the light switch in the dark room of old experience. What exists there is not a monster, not evil, not wrong and bad – just a small child that is hurt and shamed, frightened and abandoned, first by the original family and extended groups of its life, and now by you who split off from the feelings and learned to live in defense.

As children, we have nothing to give. We are just little beings of need. We cannot meet our own needs. We are entirely dependent on others for our livelihood. Do you remember when your needs for belonging, love, respect, acceptance were not met and how it filled you with intolerable pain, shame and fear? To the point that you wanted to run away from home. Maybe you even did get to the corner, or a few blocks away and then had the recognition that you had to go home, because you could not survive by yourself? No matter how bad it is at home, you are stuck. Most people never, ever realize as adults that they are now capable of meeting their own needs and do not need anyone anymore. They stay stuck in trying to get their needs met, like small children, from all the other people around them, that are also trying to get their needs met, with no awareness that they are perfectly capable of doing this themselves now.

At this stage of development groups and families are based on compromise and bargaining. I’ll scratch your back if you scratch mine. I will be nice to you if you are nice to me. I will do you a favor, but I expect something back, especially recognition and at least gratitude to make me feel good. This happens in complete unawareness. We learned it as children. eg. “If you do your chores for me, perhaps I will reward you with a treat afterwards.” We are not aware that all our so called “love relationships,” are built on this dark unaware basement of suffering. We are not aware of how we do not relate to our own wounds of unmet needs but expect others to meet them for us.

Only when we have learned to meet our own needs, which is not as easy as it sounds, can we then really meet the needs of another person, instead of pandering to what they want and compromising our own lives.

As we bring these old fears to the light of real understanding and so naturally start meeting our own needs, we are then firstly, capable of meeting the needs of another without the bargain. We expect nothing back. Secondly, we are able to perceive what the need actually is in another. Very often it is for them to learn autonomy, self-efficacy, self-love, not for us to keep giving something that is not being internalized and that they continue to not give to themselves. Often it is for firm limits instead of continual giving. In our unawareness to meet the needs of others very incorrectly, because, really it is about doing for them, so that OUR need is being met. Our giving is just a tactic to get, in unawareness, what is a huge deficit in ourselves, and a huge deficit in what we are capable of giving to ourselves.

There is a huge difference between a need and a want. A want can be defined as an unaware and, in the long term, unsuccessful and tragic tactic to try to get a need met. So, for instance, if you have an old desperate need to be liked met stemming back to a childhood in which you did not believe or experience yourself as likeable, you might overextend yourself with others, giving them what you think they want in order for them to like you. In doing this you are completely negating the suffering of your own inner child and trying to prove to others that this unlikeable child in you is likeable. This is, in effect a perpetration against your own wounded child. As an adult you might think of yourself as a good generous, kind, giving person who gives others what they want. So, the adult you feels really good, and the child inside still feels unlikeable. It is up to you to like the inner child and not run around trying to get other people to like what you still consider unlikeable. Furthermore, giving other people what they want so they like your inner child is not meeting their need at all – it is just encouraging them to use and take advantage of you and teaching self-entitlement. See if you can find and elucidate more examples for yourself about your own life. Ask yourself the question, “Why do I give and help?”

The more we learn to meet our own basic needs, the more we expand in awareness to much higher order needs. The higher order needs are not to “get” from others any longer, but to “give” endlessly, to be of service without an agenda, to sacrifice out of love, to create, to live truth.... etc. Life becomes a spontaneous outpouring, instead of a grasping and reaching. We live the Peak Experience all the time because the dark has been brought to the light of our own consciousness. What is unaware has been made aware, what was dying is given life – by us, ourselves.

The great paradox is, that only once we have learned to meet our own needs will we actually be able to meet the needs of another free of bargaining, compromise, guilt, shame, fear, resentment, anger. And when we do actually meet the other person’s need instead of meeting our own need through trying to meet theirs, then the world becomes harmonious, loving, reciprocal.

In other words, it is important to know that when you meet someone else’s need out of your need to feel good, loving, respectful, etc. you are missing the mark – you are grasping. You are using someone else to *your own benefit*, fully convinced that you are a good, right and perfect person by doing so. You are not actually meeting your need for service, but a lower order need to *GET* something.

I encourage you to really examine this modified version of Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs – which will be the second reading this week – just scroll down to the next lesson.

Consider for yourself how your needs in the bottom half of the diagram, were not adequately met, or overly met resulting in fear, shame and dependence on others to get those needs met. What are the dark energetic swirling masses that need the light of your awareness? What beliefs do you have about other people meeting your needs? What emotional memories arise in you when others do not meet your needs?

To this end you could work through the chakra workbook that you can purchase on this site. The Chakra system can be superimposed on the evolution of consciousness and movement through lower to higher order needs in the human experience. This little booklet will give you journaling suggestions for gaining deeper insight into how needs in childhood were overly met, not met, or inadequately met. This is essential core work for greater freedom within.

Exercise:

Study Maslow’s Hierarchy of needs and journal about **each of the needs** outlined in the lower half of the triangle. Ask yourself the questions:

- How was this need met?
- By whom?

- By whom was it not met?
- How did I feel? (Allow the inner child to answer, not you the adult)
- How did you learn to mask those feelings and pretend they were not there?
- What happened if you showed your feelings?
- How did people overly meet your needs?
- How did this stifle your development and frighten you away from doing things yourself?
- What tactics did you develop and learn to try to get your needs met?
- How were they successful? Can you honor them as all you had as a child?
- How has this become habitual and a way of life?
- What exactly and specifically is your commitment to listening to the inner needs and feelings of long ago and really be present to them with love for yourself?
- Can you help the little parts of you who are still stuck way down the mountain, climb up to where you are? How will you lend a helping hand, a rope, to that little one, with love instead of judgment?
- **Call someone in our cohort and ask if they would be willing to listen to one revelation you have had about your awareness of an old unmet need. Sharing without judgment or advice is healing. Consider, most of all, how you have comprised your own experience in order to be safe, belong, be loved, get attention, be special etc. You had to do these behaviors to survive, belong, get crumbs**