

Week 10 - Spiritual By-Pass

All of you are using the metaphor of the mountain to discover and realize dynamics and processes within yourselves. This we can do with any symbol - whether a bird, or a flower, or gardening or the metaphor of pilgrimage - every path leads to the same place if we faithfully follow the trail.

One of the biggest pitfalls of the 3rd quadrant is to start having realizations and insights or momentary breakthroughs to mountain top experiences and think you have arrived. Dylan spoke powerfully of his realization of this on his recent hiking trip to the North Shore.

He realized that hiking to a plateau that overlooks the forest canopy is an exhilarating feeling. And then he realized that is only with the descent down into the space beneath the canopy that he discovered and learned about the river and lake, fish and frogs, the rocks, the flowers, bugs and animals, the fungi and different trees, the birds and fowl, that the experience of the mountain top could be fully appreciated through the knowledge gleaned in the undergrowth of the deep interconnectedness of all aspects of life.

With this knowledge climbing to the mountain top is not only exhilarating but also enriched with the deep knowing of what goes all the way down to the bottom of the lake.

If we try to skip this part of descent into knowing ourselves and every aspect of our inner world, right down to under the ground and to the depths of our inner lakes, we actually know nothing, and the experience at the top of the mountain cannot be sustained. It becomes kind of boring to just keep looking out from a lofty place on to the top of the canopy of trees.

To try to sustain this “high” experience without descent and free movement up and down is experienced by others as superior, lofty, false and fake and very superficial and is what is known in the literature as spiritual by-pass. How do we know when we are in by-pass? We seek any practice or thrill that will take us to the top of the mountain, that “feels good,” that gives us a “high.” We seek people that affirm our high level of attainment. We hide our struggles and do practices that cover over the issues of our life and that take us to the top of the mountain. It is using spirituality as a defense and is rampant in our culture. We do “stress reduction,” and learn “self care techniques,” but all of this is misunderstood and used to get us away from the valleys, away from what is under the tree line and so it is empty and devoid of any real compassion or wisdom. This is the ultimate inflation and grandiosity of the ego

Witnessing or observing demands far more of us.

It demands that we are **ever-present (omni-present)** to whatever level, age, stage, dynamic, process and struggle we are experiencing and brings what is needed to each and every level without any denial or any desire to escape exactly what the level and age and struggle is.

It is the capacity to be **present with knowing (omniscient)**, which comes from deep study of the condition at each level and the dynamics of each level and how this developed within the community and systems in which that age and stage and state lived and was raised.

It is the capacity to be effective in applying **(omnipotent)** the relationship solution that is required to whatever arises at every age, stage, process, dynamic and struggle that arises.

Climbing the first mountain of success has hopefully brought you enough knowledge and success that you can now have the courage to descend back down under the tree canopy and bring what is required to each and every aspect, age, stage and dynamic that you find down there.

This morning we had a conversation with an 80 year old woman who had never heard of attachment disorder which is so very prevalent for adopted children. She talked about her 50 year-old son being in jail and the problems “she” has had with him but with no knowledge or insight, just superiority and “kind judgment.” In other words, she raised a child without ever descending into the dark undergrowth where his life started and learned anything that would actually help her or him. She was not able in any way, to talk about how her own parenting that has been enabling and rooted in her own childhood struggles. She talked about handing the problem over to God - “it’s God’s problem, not mine.” She was just returning from church and evangelizes everyone to follow the Lord. This is spiritual by-pass in its most evil and heinous expression - evil masquerading as “a good spiritual person,” who has been “saved” by Jesus. The self-righteousness of this, the hypocrisy and the meanness of this life, is staggeringly apparent. She lives on the mountaintop with no knowledge of anything beneath the canopy. She blames God for all the struggles she has without realizing it, she expects God to fix all the problems she has, and she lives at the top of the mountain in an ivory tower taking no responsibility for her part in the sad story. She has never gotten off her “high” of being saved and really examined what is down in the roots of the family system. Exactly the same dynamics happen in the new-age movement, in spiritual communities, in all religions.

This is the tragedy of not really learning anything in second quadrant and living and dying in ignorance. It is a very low level of attainment to just meet survival needs and nothing much more than that.

For more reading on this go to “Compassion Group Notes” for July this year and read the last entry on Non-dual States of Consciousness. Suffice to say here that the challenge of the 3rd quadrant is to do your ABCD’s, which is the study of the undergrowth of the forest, the depths of the rivers and lakes, the roots of the trees. It is to learn to witness every level, every stage and to bring the correction to each and every stage and age.

As an exercise this month work on seeing what is arising inside of you and seeing what it is that you need to bring to your condition. In other words, practicing bringing “god-consciousness,” to your human condition.

When these conditions arise in you - what is the god-consciousness you need to bring to the condition and how would it look?

First of all, do I even recognize my human condition as it arises?

Do I understand it and where it comes from and how all aspects are interconnected?

Do I know what to bring to this condition from a compassionate and wise or loving and truthful place?

Defenses:

Anger, irritation, frustration? Fighting, attacking, using sarcasm, trying to change someone through argument and debate, hating others, judgement of others, criticism of others...

- eg. denial, repression, projection, reactivity, caretaking, enabling, fixing, rescuing, giving advice, avoiding, procrastination, perfectionism, self criticism, self judgment, people-pleasing, addictions.....

Emotions:

Shame, fear, hurt, pain, sadness, guilt, helplessness....

Beliefs:

Values and Thoughts, judgments, dualistic thoughts, either/or thinking

Needs: See Maslows Hierarchy

All of this is interconnected, just like all the life under the canopy. Can you see the interconnectedness?

In the next weeks we will be taking pivotal aspects of our humanity, like shame and seeing how to recognize it in our everyday language and then what the True Witness or God-Consciousness, which IS within you, can bring to the human condition. In other words, we will learn what and how to love ourselves. When the God-consciousness within you is connected to the big GODCONSCIOUSNESS, then your soul is in alignment with spirit and inner relationship with your humanity becomes harmonious, peaceful, loving, and very simple.

So, for instance, if you find shame arising inside of you, how will you relate lovingly to the shame with all of the aspects connected to the emotion in your thoughts, needs and behavior.

We “sin” in “thought, word and deed” - so when we discover this “sin” (separation) from our own god-consciousness, it means we have found a lost child and are now reconnected. As a good parent what is the correction that is required in Love and Truth?

Our work is to start realizing that we are the mountain. The mountain starts deep beneath the earth and goes all the way up to the heavens. There is no aspect of the mountain that is not us! There can be no preference for any one experience, level, or stage of the mountain. There is no aspect of the mountain that is less amazing, beautiful than any other. When you reach the top of the mountain, it must be with the fullest recognition and knowledge of every step of the way being you too. We have to start realizing that the god you seek, the light you desire, the mountain top experiences you perceive are indeed within you and it is this light, this godliness, this experience that must be brought to the whole mountain - from top to bottom and from the bottom to the top.



Finally, it is important to recognize the relativity of the symbol. Elevation is relative to the environment in which we find ourselves. This recognition brings humility. What you experience as a peak experience is a low elevation to another part of the world. A desert hill can seem like a very high mountain in a desert. Eg. Mount Arafat (12 miles east of Mecca in Saudi Arabia) which is only 230 feet can seem very high to worshippers who have never been to Mt. Kailash in Tibet (21,788 feet). Wherever, you find yourself in terms of elevation and worship, is just the first step always.

Exercise:

Can you start recognizing the difference between your very human experience and the god-consciousness that you are that can be brought to the human condition within?

Can you recognize the ways in which these aspects of Self have been separated from each other?

Can you start discerning within yourself ages, stages and levels of development?

Can you see yourself as the whole mountain and start discerning what is revealing itself to you at all the different levels?

Can you learn humility which means acceptance of every aspect of the mountain?

(Pride is an identification only with the highest attainment on the mountain and rejection of every step that got you there.)