



LANDING OUT OF THE MENTAL PLANE

WHILE FLYING INTO SACRAMENTO AIRPORT RECENTLY, I RECEIVED A PROFOUND TEACHING EMPOWERING MYSELF AND OTHERS I HAVE SHARED IT WITH TO IMMEDIATELY ENTER AND COMPREHEND THE WORK OF THE PRESENCE PROCESS, AND TO BENEFIT FROM THIS WORK RIGHT NOW, EVEN IF WE HAVE NOT YET ACCESSED THE BOOK AND THE PROCEDURE IT CONTAINS. AND, IF WE ARE ALREADY SEASONED TRAVELERS THROUGH THE CLIMATES OF EMOTIONAL CLEANSING, THIS TEACHING ASSISTS US TO CRYSTALLIZE OUR APPROACH TOWARD OUR HEART AND TO SINK DEEPER INTO THE EXPERIENCE OF PRESENT MOMENT AWARENESS.

Whereas the teachings of The Presence Process assist us to become increasingly vulnerable to the authentic condition of the emotional body, and then empower us to process this uncomfortable emotional awareness as it begins surfacing within our life experience, this particular teaching invites us to approach the unintegrated condition of our heart *directly* every day. In other words, there is no waiting to see what happens; we initiate processing with immediacy, and the consequences are just as immediate, though not what we may be expecting. If you get to the point of rereading this letter, the previous sentence will resonate with a deeper insight.

The metaphor delivering us directly into the heart of this teaching is that of comparing our mental approach toward problem solving to that of the experience of a passenger aboard a flying plane. For the purpose of this illustration we call the plane, "the mental plane". This teaching reveals: The impotency of exclusively taking a mental approach to life, what it takes to consciously land out of the mental plane we are currently in, and what the consequences are when we finally touchdown on the runway of our earthly reality.

The arena of the mental plane is useful within our human experience for calculation and navigation, and is a blessing when we work with it according to its intended function. It is valuable in navigating us toward the experiences we seek, and in transporting our attention at incalculable speed from one location to another. Yet, because many of us feel stuck and uncomfortable within the experience we call "our lives", and do not yet comprehend why, we mistakenly board the mental plane in search of release, believing it somehow has the capacity to resolve our quandary. Consequently, we now live almost exclusively in the mental plane and addictively lean upon it as the means to deliver us beyond our discomfort, hoping that by doing so it will restore the balance and peace we seek. Many of us do not even realize we are living almost exclusively in the mental plane and that our increasing confusion, frustration, and sense of hopelessness arise directly from this misplaced reliance.

The intent of this letter, through imparting this simple metaphoric teaching, is to reveal a method for consciously grounding ourselves out of the mental plane so we may more fully enter and engage with our experience of life. Right now, no one with any sensibility needs be told, that because of the current emotional turbulence impacting planet earth, if we do not consciously ground ourselves, we are inviting the experience of unconsciously crash landing. Life on earth right now is an ongoing demonstration of crash landing after crash landing after crash landing.

This letter is about choosing to get up from our seat within the cabin of the mental plane, no matter whether we perceive ourselves as flying first or economy class, and

deliberately making our way into the flight deck so we may consciously pilot and ground the life experience we are moving through. There is now an emergency on planet earth; we are being invited to "emerge and see". Through the means of The Presence Portal, this is therefore the communications tower saying:

"Ladies and gentlemen, we are now approaching the reality runway, please prepare yourself for landing. We no longer have the luxury of circling around and around in a holding pattern; of running away from the runway. We must now touch down or else we will run out of fuel and lose control of our current experience completely. Listen carefully to the following simple instructions and you will be guided safely inward. Thank you for flying with us in the mental plane, we do appreciate all your thinking, understanding, calculating, and analysis, but now you must take *the joy stick* and ground your experience into the heart of the matter."

THE TEACHING: As the plane I was in began its descent into Sacramento airport, the sun was at a perfect angle, so that as I looked out the window at the earth below, I observed the shadow of the aircraft I was sitting in moving in the distance upon the ground in perfect sync with us. At first the shadow was almost indiscernible; it was just a speck in the distance. However, as we descended toward the runway, the shadow grew closer, large, and more distinct. In the moment the shadow completely disappeared beneath the plane, we felt the impact of the wheels meeting the ground. Moving through this experience was the transmission of this teaching.

The nature of our current experience here on earth is we all have "a shadow". This shadow is all the unintegrated experiences we have not yet consciously digested; an ongoing bitter aftertaste of our unresolved past. Because these past experiences are unintegrated, they are a source of an ongoing inner discomfort that is, for the most part, now only perceived as symptomatic disorders and a lack of awareness of inner, and hence, outer peace.

This shadow is the consistent and unpredictable surfacing of all the uncomfortable feelings of fear, anger, and grief within our daily life experience. Instead of consciously facing this inner discomfort, we run from it through outward reactive behaviors intended to sedate and control the experience. Whether we real eyes it or not, we are now addicted to consciously, unconsciously, habitually, and instinctively pushing any awareness our shadow away from us. The more we push it away, the more ungrounded we become.

What we also may not real eyes is that by pushing this shadow away, whether we do it consciously, unconsciously, habitually or instinctively, we simultaneously ascend higher and higher into the mental plane – just like a plane moving away from it's shadow. Our belief that we can resolve our current state of discomfort through thinking, understanding, analysis, philosophy, calculation, conceptualization, discourses, reading, routine spiritual discipline, religious worship, repetitive physical procedures, pharmaceuticals, technology, and endless talking, only appears feasible and possible because we are adrift high in the mental plane. And, our attempt to do so automatically causes us to rise up even higher and higher into the mental plane.

Spiritually, our ascension into the mental plane as a means to escape our inner discomfort is what many now call, "The Ascension Process". As a species, we are now in such a delusionary predicament, that unless we have an actual and real experience of grounding ourselves into what is real, into what is "of this earth", we have absolutely no idea that we are constantly adrift within the maze of the mental plane. As a species, we have literally gone mental.

It is only when we have an authentically grounding experience that we real eyes the majority of what we have called "our spirituality" is actually "our mentality"; our spiritual *mentality*. Being in the mental maze is "so amazing" to us that we embrace the experience within it as being "God". This is why we are vulnerable to the insane notion that "thought creates". And, because everyone is behaving in this manner, just as fish have no idea they are in water until removed from it, we have no idea that we are

adrift in the maze of the mental plane until we have an experience of grounding ourselves out of it.

"This is ground control to Major Tom..." *David Bowie.*

Returning to our metaphor of being in a plane that is currently in flight assists us to begin realizing the futility of continuing to operate almost exclusively in the mental plane:

While we are in a plane that is in flight we are alive, yet we cannot engage with or impact our life experience in any real and meaningful way. We are in fact disconnected from our life experience almost completely. From the moment we board a plane and take off we are not even allowed to use our cell phones; there is no communication in or out. Even our physical environment is limited; for the most part we are confined to a generically shaped seat, we sit next to people not of our conscious choosing, we have to eat the quality and quantity of food we are served, we have to listen to repetitive instructions about how to behave in the event we crash, and, if there is entertainment on offer, we have to select it from a pre-determined array of options. As far as our physical movement is concerned, if it is not blocked by flight attendance trolleys, we may walk up and down the aisle, and if there is not a long line already waiting to make use of it, we may use the cramped toilet.

By its very nature, the experience of being on a plane in flight is confined, dictated, and uncomfortable. Once we step into a plane we are literally held prisoner by these limitations until we disembark. While we are in flight *we may think* all we want about our life experience, but we cannot act on these thoughts. Any action we take from within this environment is impotent. Metaphorically, when we approach, or escape into the mental plane as a means to impact our current life experience, our predicament is similar. The fact remains: Whatever baggage we "check in" when we enter the mental plane experience is still with us when we disembark from it.

Many of us are frustrated because our attempts to resolve our current challenges appear not to bear the fruit we seek. Yet, when we carefully examine the way we approach the challenges within our life experience, we realize we attempt to accomplish resolution in an almost mechanical, methodical, robotic manner that was passed on to us through imprinting, example, and education: We immediately engage with our challenges mentally, through thinking, reasoning, analysis, understanding, and calculation, and then, as a consequence of this mental processing, and what it appears to reveal as "the logical way forward", we enter behaviors we assume will impact our circumstances accordingly. We unconsciously and automatically assume "if we *understand why* our life is in the state it is in now", and "if we can mentally construct a strategy for resolution from this mental understanding", that we can effectively make real and lasting changes; that "if we figure it out, we will have it all figured out".

This entire approach to interacting with our life experience is so automatic, so robotic, that for the most part we are not even conscious of "our standard operating procedure". Whenever we are faced with a challenge, we automatically shift into "our mental gear" and take off into the mental plane.

Have we ever stopped for a moment to ask whether there is another way of interacting with our life experience?

Yet, whenever we, through our sincerest convictions, take action based on what we have "thought out", we inevitably have to face the fact that nothing real and lasting is accomplished; that our mental processing seldom leads us into physical action that has a discernable impact on the quality of our life experience. No matter what action we take based on our mental calculations, no matter how logical our approach appears, the passage of time inevitably reveals that we still end up *feeling the same way about the circumstances we are intending to impact as we did before we engaged in the mentally motivated activity - and often we may feel worse.*

This frustrating, linear, mental-to-physical procedural passageway constantly reveals how ineffectual our physical actions are when projected from within the mental plane; that while we fly high off the ground, we have limited ability to make a real and lasting impact on the unfolding quality of our life experience. The unfolding of our actual life experience does not lie to us because the proof is always in the pudding; no matter how profoundly our mental processes persuade us otherwise, no matter how much we *understand*, and no matter with how much conviction we act upon our *understanding*, whenever the runway of reality infringes upon our conceptual world and subsequently directs us to "baggage claim", we come face to face with the undeniable fact that "the baggage we ascend with is the exact baggage we descend with".

What, therefore, is the true identity of "our baggage" if our mentally-motivated physical behavior fails to impact it in any authentic way? This is a worthy question.

So, in light of constantly spinning our mental wheels and yet going nowhere, why do we keep falling for this same approach time and time again? Why do we even believe this approach works when it seldom has any lasting, discernable impact?

It is because when we fly aboard Mental Airlines we feel "high in the sky" and mistakenly confuse this heightened feeling with "being empowered" or "uplifted". In other words, entering the mental plane as a reaction to difficulty is like a junkies fix. While flying high within the mental plane we appear to experience some temporary relief; it gives us the false feeling of "getting somewhere". This is why it appears sensible to take action based on this illusionary sense of relief and false mobility. Yet, this sense of relief and mobility stems from the convenient arrangement of having the majority of "our baggage" stored away and out of our awareness in "the baggage hold"; also known as "the unconscious".

To enter the mental plane and take flight within it we have to check in the majority of our baggage. The experience of checking it in, and therefore not having to lug it around with us, gives us a sense of increased mobility, lightness, and relief. Yet, this sense of

mobility, lightness, and relief is illusory; just because we do not feel the weight of "the baggage we are carrying" while in flight, it does not mean it is not there! This false sense of weightlessness is always temporary, and all decisions made through associations with this false high are ungrounded, no matter how en-"light"-ening they appear at the time. This is the predicament we enter when we live almost exclusively in the mental plane; we are completely unaware of how much baggage we are carrying with us and we make decisions based on this numbed awareness.

Right now, across the face of planet earth, this *mentality* of approaching our life challenges almost exclusively through the experience of the mental plane has delivered us into a state of emergency, and the only way to integrate this predicament is to *emerge and see* it for what it is; to ground ourselves as quickly and efficiently as possible by consciously landing ourselves out of the mental plane and into the resonance of the heart.

If we do not willingly take *the joy stick* and consciously bring ourselves *in*, the increasing crash landings we are witnessing within the lives of many human beings on this planet may also become our fate. Accomplishing this grounding out of the mental plane is simple:

We consciously approach the runway by willingly engaging and drawing our shadow toward us; by facing what we run away from. In other words, that from which we *run away* is the *runway*.

To commence our approach toward the runway we require a reliable portal into an awareness of our shadow. Having a reliable portal empowers us to engage with and consciously draw our shadow into our awareness. Once we are able to consciously latch onto our shadow and draw it more intimately into our awareness, we simultaneously descend out of the mental plane and begin grounding ourselves into the reality of the "here and now".

Our shadow is in itself the runway. We therefore navigate onto it by consciously turning our experience toward that which we run away from; our ongoing, underlying, and consistently nagging experiences of inner felt-discomfort. And, our most direct portal into our shadow is accessible in any moment through any incident causing us upset, regardless of whether this upset appears to us as physical discomfort, mental confusion, and/or emotional imbalance.

The common denominator within any encounter of being upset is that *we feel a level of discomfort*. Instinctively, when confronted by an upset, we react through an expression of:

Emotional feelings.

By entertaining mental thoughts forms or stories.

Through outwardly projected physical behavior.

Whether we are aware of it or not, no matter what reactive approach we take when upset, by reacting to the upset we are attempting to sedate and control what we perceive is happening to us from our awareness. And, all sedation and control in the face of an upset is "the pushing of our shadow away from us", and consequently, a forced ascension of our awareness into the mental plane. The more we push away at the experience of "being upset", the more ungrounded we become.

Yet, the blessing is this: As efficiently as we may unconsciously use an upset to fly away from an awareness of our inner discomfort and into the mental plane, we may also consciously use it as a portal through which to consciously approach the runway of reality; the here and now. Any upsetting experience is just as equally "a perfect set up" to land ourselves more deeply and intimately into the embrace of the moment. To turn our encounters around, to instead use them as a means to ground ourselves rather than to become increasingly mental, we may apply a very simple practice:

Instead of impulsively, unconsciously, and addictively submitting to our ineffectual reactive mode, we choose to consciously access and "face our shadow"; to willingly engage the felt-resonance of the emotional signature flowing beneath every upset. We intend to consciously face it and cradle it. We willingly allow the upset to "bring us down". Of course, this course of action goes against the grain of everything we have been taught regarding how to succeed in life! Who would have thought that an upset is *set* to take us *up* when we deliberately allow it to bring us down?

When we consciously observe an upsetting experience we real eyes there are three distinct aspects to it; a physical, mental, and emotional:

The physical aspects are the circumstances or person/s that triggered the upset, and they are also the physical behaviors we are considering initiating as a consequence of whatever occurred.

The mental aspect is the story we are telling ourselves about what happened, who did what, why it happened, and whose fault it was.

The emotional aspect is how this upset is causing us to feel. The emotional aspect of any upset is accessible to us as both an uncomfortable feeling state, and emotion which we may call fear, anger, and/or grief, and as a corresponding physical sensation anchored within our body.

Grounding ourselves out of the mental plane requires dismissing the physical and mental aspects of the upset, and simultaneously consciously cradling the emotional component. In other words, releasing our attachment to both the story we are telling and to the behavior we are intending to reenact, while simultaneously maintaining the focus of our attention upon the felt-aspect of the experience, whether we perceive this felt-resonance as fear, anger, and/or grief, or as a sensational state within our physical body.

"Down to the ground, down to the ground..." *Joan Armatrading.*

Here are a set of instructions inviting you to consciously enter the grounding experience we are discussing:

Remember the most recent occasion in which you felt upset. Notice how you use the mental plane as a corridor to recall the details of the incident; it obediently delivers your attention to the moment of the incident that initially triggered you. This is a useful application of the mental plane; using it as a means to fly your attention from one moment to another – whether this moment is currently unfolding or is already past. To enter a portal of upset you may also choose an upsetting experience from the past that has been festering within your thought forms right up to this present moment. You will find that your awareness of any past unintegrated event diminishes and seemingly completely disappears when you are busy and engaged within life's demands, (which may be why you engage yourself so actively in so many "doings"). However, as you try to go to sleep at night, or as you awake in the morning, its resonance of disquiet dutifully returns. This type of upset is ripe for the picking. Whatever is upsetting you, whether something happening right now, or something from the past that is still nagging at you, is a way in.

As you recall the upset of your choosing, instead of engaging in the mental aspect of the experience, or upon the physical actions you may be considering, place your attention fully on "the feeling" accompanying it. Take note of where this uncomfortable feeling is located as a physical sensation in your body. It does not matter what you call this uncomfortable feeling, whether it is fear, anger, and/or grief. *Your only task is to feel it, and while feeling it, to simultaneously take note of where it is within your physical body.* Whatever the uncomfortable emotional state is that accompanies the upset, it is also reflected as a physical sensation within your body. Your task is to place your attention within this physical sensation and to "cradle it". How? Momentarily bring to mind the image of The Madonna & Child: She is gently cradling the child in her arms; there is no movement within her posture, and no attempt to change or understand anything. Her only intention is to embrace the innocence contained within her arms. As

you place your attention upon the uncomfortable feeling of this upset, cradle it in this manner; there is no physical movement required from your body, nor any mental participation in this practice other than using the mental body as a means to place and hold your attention fully within your physical body upon the sensational location of your emotional discomfort.

As you cradle the uncomfortable feeling with your attention, *keep your eyes **open***. Yes, *open*. As you place your attention upon the feeling within, do not close your eyes and escape from the outer physical reality of the moment you are currently engaging. The eyes you place upon this inner discomfort, the eyes that have the capacity to "feel", are the eyes of the heart. While the eyes of the heart attend to this inner feeling, allow the eyes of the physical body to rest in stillness, open, gently embracing the presence of the outer world. Notice how, as you place the eyes of the heart on the inner feeling, you instinctively want to close your eyes and disappear. This is the old habit of "mentally running away" which has often been disguised as "a spiritual practice". Do not leave, do not fly off, stay here.

Now, if you choose to, place this piece of writing down, and enter this practice for a few minutes. Pay attention to the inner and outer experience it initiates. Here are the instructions for brief review:

Remember the most recent occasion in which you felt upset.

As you recall the upset, instead of engaging your attention in the mental aspect of the experience, or in the physical actions you are considering taking, place your attention fully on the accompanying feeling. take note of where this feeling is located as a physical sensation in your body. Cradle this feeling in that location.

As you cradle the uncomfortable feeling with your attention, *keep your eyes **open***. Simultaneously watch both the inner feeling and the outer world.

Do not be concerned if you struggle to keep your attention hooked onto the feeling aspect of the recalled upset. Remember that the eyes of the heart are weak because we live upon a planet that does not consciously develop them or appreciate what they are able to show us. The eyes of the heart develop organically through our consistent use of them.

When approaching an upset consciously in this manner, by placing our full attention on the felt-aspect of the experience, instead of escaping into mental activity or any physical behavior the mental plane encourages, we notice almost immediate occurrences:

We begin feeling more grounded into our life experience. This is because these uncomfortable feelings lead us directly into an awareness of the shadow we run away from, and by consciously drawing the shadow towards us, we approach the runway of reality. Approaching the experience of "being grounded" may be so unfamiliar to us, that as we consciously engage our landing gear, we experience a sense of anxiety. It is a bit like the moment just before a plane's wheels impact the runway; there is a sense of "holding on" or "holding back". However, the moment we allow ourselves to relax into the uncomfortable felt-resonance within the upset we are recalling, we gradually come down to earth and appreciate the groundedness initiated by the experience. This grounding causes a sense of relief, just like the moment after touching down on the runway and knowing we are once again safely upon the earth.

Once we are grounded into the physical location of the feeling within our body, we notice that an energetic movement begins within this sensation. The actual sensation through which the uncomfortable emotional state is anchored into our physical body, which has been stuck or blocked, starts transforming. It transforms because *our awareness is our tool of transformation*. Often this inner movement is experienced as an upward rise of energy through our chest area and up into our head which may culminate in tearing up. Yes, as we sink *down* into it, it rises *up!* Who would have *thought?*

outwardly, we also notice that the more grounded into the inner feeling we become, the more alive, vital, and animated the world around us becomes. Our experience of being here upon earth ceases to appear as a flat inanimate encounter, but instead takes on a textured hue, an energetic aura. This is because we, through consciously grounding ourselves, arrive more fully into the present moment of our current experience. Only when we allow ourselves to engage fully with the moment we are in now do we real eyes how heavenly this earthly experience is.

Aside from these immediate shifts within our experience, there are also naturally unfolding organic consequences to landing ourselves out of the mental plane and into the heart of the matter. These can be reviewed through the metaphoric illustration of what unfolds after a plane touches down at an airport:

Communication is re-established: Almost immediately after touching down upon the runway a voice over the speaker says, "Welcome to planet earth, you may now use your cell phones." In other words, as a consequence of grounding ourselves, communication within our life experience is re-established; we are now vulnerable to receiving in-sight. Our predicament is that when we are not residing in the present moment, when we are adrift in the maze of the amazing mental plane, we are not consciously within the domain of whatever God is for us. This is because all the power of creation makes its home in the present moment – not in our thoughts about whatever moment we choose to escape into. While we fly through the mental plane, we are in the domain of our thoughts forms, and our thoughts forms can take us into any moment we choose. Yet, life only exists for us as a real experience, as an encounter we can impact in any real and lasting way, within the present moment. *This is the paradox of the shadow; the very thing we run from is the doorway into the very thing we yearn for.*

The moment we begin consciously inviting in and cradling our shadow, we simultaneously ground ourselves into the domain of "no order of difficulty", and from within this cradling experience new life is born like a child out of a cradle. This is when

we are able to integrate that "the Christ comes out of the crisis", to quote Dr. Paul Bahder. Our task is to consciously cradle our unintegrated feelings for a few minutes each day, for about as long as it takes for a plane to taxi along the runway toward the airport terminal. This small adjustment within our attention, initiated daily, and applied within any moment that suddenly upsets us, automatically grounds us, reinstalls insight, and sets up the resonance of miraculous rebirth within our experiences.

Once we come to the end of the runway, we move into and through the experience of "the terminal": The airport building is not called "the terminal" without imbedded humor. We all know what it means when we are told someone has "a terminal disease"; it means their current experience is in some way "coming to an end". This terminal experience too is part of the rite of passage of consciously landing ourselves out of the mental plane by grounding our attention in the heart of the matter. As a consequence of exiting our mental delusions an aspect of our experience must die.

This "death experience" comes to us organically in the days and weeks following a consistent daily application this simple practice. Without any warning it engulfs us periodically as deeply uncomfortable physical, mental, and emotional states. Yet, at its core, it is an emotional death; a death to the way a dysfunctional "energy in motion" has been flowing; a real and lasting adjustment being initiated at the causal point of the quality of our experience.

When these extremely uncomfortable states first impact us, we reel into unconsciousness; we reactively fight the experience, desperately trying our best to stop whatever it is that is happening from happening. Through our reactivity we attempt to escape emotionally, mentally, and physically from the encounter with "the reaper of the past". As this death experience unfolds we literally feel as if "we are dying", as if "there is nothing to live for", as if "our life is over", as if "it is hopeless to do anything", and as if "we are condemned forever to these feelings of darkness, doom, and gloom". Yet, within a relatively short period of time, within hours or sometimes days, depending on the immensity of dysfunctional energetic experience we are dying to, this wave of

momentarily "physically, mentally, and emotionally shedding the skin of our past" peels over us and is gone. In its wake we feel more aware, inspired, awake, and deeply grateful to be alive.

Once we commence grounding ourselves out of the mental plane and back into the momentary currents of our life, there is no avoiding these death experiences; they are perfectly normal, natural, and organic. They seed life. They are also known as "dying while living". They are a deliberate consequence of consistently placing our attention within the core of any emotional discomfort triggered by an upset; by cradling an unshed past experience.

When we allow ourselves to go through this rite of passage, it becomes blatantly obvious to us that it has been to avoid these death experiences that we have taken off en masse into the mental plane. It is precisely because our current culture has been indoctrinated into believing "death is an enemy" that we have run terrified and attempted to barricade ourselves from these experiences. From childhood we have been led to believe through imprinted example that "the experience of death is a mistake", and so we have run from it into our thoughts, into our spiritual practices, into the arms of our religious organizations, into our complex philosophies, and into our intricate psychological systems. We have forgotten that "to remain present entails consistently dying to the mental construct of the past and the future". We have forgotten that life and death co-habit the same reality and that all life comes out of death; that a consciously initiated and embraced death is the invited moment of rebirth.

This death experience that unfolds organically as a consequence of entering the heart of the matter is not "a spiritual experience", for we have manufactured what we now call "spirituality" as a vain attempt to save us from this deathly experience. Our spiritual endeavors promise an eternity barricaded from death. This daily death that we consciously initiate and invite when we face our shadow is more accurately "a shamanic experience"; it is the exact experience that becomes shunned within communities whenever they are overtaken, overshadowed, and indoctrinated by any religious

mentality. This death experience is not The Ascension Process; it is not a mental or conceptualized experience of metaphysical worship which is too often a veiled attempt to rise toward God as "an escape route from the authentic condition of our heart" - as a reaction to the reality of death.

This invited death is not a reaction to living but a direct, in the moment, response to whatever God is for us. It is a conscious calling in of the unfathomable darkness of the unfamiliar, ever-changing, and unknown. This invited and ongoing reoccurrence of dying to the past is a conscious "sinking into the void", the blackness, the unknowable, the unfamiliar, the uncomfortable, and deeply into the as yet unformed. This death is "a rising up through sinking in", like a Phoenix out of the ashes.

This death experience was known and honored long before anyone's church-mentality outlawed all practices honoring it. And, because we have run in terror from it, it now follows us into old age as a frightening shadow that leaves in its wake a trail of disease, unconscious accidental mishaps, addiction, and a quality of life eventually culminating in an experience of demeaning decay and dismay. Instead of dying daily, we now resist it with all our might and subsequently allow it to build up into a massive, culminating drama that explodes ungracefully when our moment of transition from earth approaches.

Yet, when we consciously turn around, when we willingly enter our heart and face our shadow, and when we consistently allow the past to physically, mentally, and emotionally die through us, we organically reawaken into an ancient shamanic rite of passage elevating us into a direct experience with whatever God is for us; the fullness of the present moment. Then, we discover that these waves of death sharing the ocean of life with us are a blessing; that they come to show us "we must die consistently and consciously so that we may live fully". They come to strip us of the past so that each moment we step into is born anew. This death is the Christ through which all is born anew. This death experience is the crucifixion that takes place before any legitimate

ascension. It doesn't belong to Christianity; it was merely appropriated and sadly misinterpreted by it. If anything, Jesus is a Shaman.

By experientially embracing this death experience as integral to life, we discover it has been because of avoiding these death experiences that our hearts have shut down, and through this unconscious emotional death, desperately sought ascension through the mental plane. Yet, all the mental plane accomplishes when we lean on it as a means to birth each moment anew, is the movement of our life experience from one of "living in The Kingdom" into the bland and inanimate existence of "subsisting in The Boredom".

Entering "the terminal" after landing, and awakening consciously into this organic death experience is not pleasant. It is not meant to be; it is after all *dying*. Whilst in it, it is a horror. However, when we stop running from this deathly shedding of our past, when we stop resisting its divine presence as part of life's tide, we invite ourselves to experientially perceive the undeniable consequence of this occurrence within the quality of our life experience. And, the consequence is that our life experience is divinely blessed, over and over again, with a rebirth of life's sweetness. By consciously surrendering to the agony of death, we invite the ecstasy of life. Without these consistent shamanic sheddings of the skin of time from our psyche, our life has no juice and our death has no meaning. This is the Dharma of The Sacred Heart.

Baggage Claim: Within this metaphoric teaching of landing our current experience out of the mental plane and into the heart of the matter, these death experiences may be visualized as our "moving through the terminal". In the midst of them, and once these terminal experiences pass, we receive profound insight; these unfold as intimate revelations about our personal and collective life experience.

Initially, these revelations unfold through the analogy of "baggage claim"; only when we enter the terminal experience may we claim our baggage in a real and meaningful way. While we are in the mental plane, our baggage is in "the baggage hold" - our unconsciousness - and we have no direct access to it. We can think about it all we like,

but we have no impact on it because it is out of reach. This is why nothing real and lasting is accomplished while we attempt to impact our life experience from within the limitations of the mental plane. To impact our life experience in any real and lasting way we must claim, and take responsibility for, our baggage. And, the nature of "our baggage" - those aspects of our unintegrated past we unconsciously carry around which impact our unfolding experience in each moment - is that it is stored as felt-resonances imprinted within the emotional body. These felt-resonances are only accessible to us when we consciously enter the heart.

It is only when we take responsibility for our baggage, by claiming it, *by consciously feeling it*, that we reach the point of metaphorically "leaving the airport building altogether and once again stepping into the flow of our life experience". In other words, only once we have integrated the uncomfortable felt-resonances of our unresolved past by feeling them fully, by dying to them consciously, are we able to apply our feeling capacities to fully experiencing the resonances constantly embracing us within the present moment.

The miracle within all of this is that when we take care of *our responsibility*, when we voluntarily, consistently, and consciously face our shadow, all of this unfolds organically. It is like gardening; when we water the plant, the plant grows. We do not have to *make* it grow, or "figure out how it is to grow"; we are only to water it. The daily practice of consistently placing of our attention upon the uncomfortable felt-resonance within our unintegrated upsets is "the watering of the garden of our heart". When we take responsibility for our heart, everything is added unto us.

Right now, this grounding of our experiences through the heart of the matter is our prime responsibility. Either we consciously ground, or we unconsciously crash land. Either we blow hot (live passionately) or cold (die consciously); but to remain lukewarm (exist unconsciously) is to ask to be spat out.

Activating real and lasting movement: Because we have not been taking care of this primary responsibility, because we mistakenly attempted to adjust our feelings of frustration, irritation, and stuckness within our life experience through the mental plane, and then subsequently through acting on the ungrounded stories we have concocted from within the mental maze, we have experienced ongoing stuckness within many aspects of our life experience.

However, when we consistently take the time to be with our shadow, to pull it into our awareness as fully as possible through our felt-perception, we immediately feel an inner, energetic movement unfolding organically. This inner movement is then mirrored as outer movement within the aspects of our life experiences where we have for so long experienced paralysis. It is only through experientially applying this practice and perceiving the consequence that we realize trying to initiate change through mental flight is completely ineffectual; it is fiddling with an effect to try and make a causal impact. This is the miracle of the heart: **When the heart is moved, the world moves to mirror it.** However, if we do not realize this, we end up cleaning the mirror to try and change the nature of the reflection it shows us – which is mental.

Decrease of drama: Also, when we consciously and CONSISTENTLY approach our heart in this manner, when we engage with it and honor it as the causal point of the quality of our experience, it no longer has to attempt to get our attention through the manifestation of unexpected outer drama. The more we embrace the Dharma of the heart, the less we manifest unconscious drama within our life experience upon this earth.

GARDENING OUR HEART

It is up to us to give ourselves the experience of the consequences of consciously gardening our heart. If we require "understanding" before we are willing to take on this responsibility, it is only because we are trying to comprehend what is being offered here from our seat within the maze of the mental plane.

The heart cannot be understood; it can only be engaged. Only when we engage our heart do we enter a marriage made in heaven.

The following simple practice, when engaged consistently, shows us, through personal experience, that it is the garden of the heart from which all the fruits of a joyful, healthy, and abundant life experience are seeded, cultivated, and harvested. It is also from within the garden of the heart that we consciously awaken to the experience of the conscious death that fruits eternal rebirth. By tending to the garden of the heart consistently each day, we experience the miraculous. It reveals to us what it really means to "love and take care of ourselves"; to stand by ourselves no matter what. To initiate this encounter with the heart it is recommended we tend to our garden for a few minutes at the beginning and the end of each day, and also in the midst of any unexpected upset. This is how simple it is:

We sit comfortably in a quiet place where we will not be interrupted. (If we truly seek to be authentic when entering this practice, we switch our cell phone to "off". Otherwise, we are just doing this because nothing else is currently stealing our attention.)

We recall an upset, whether it is something that happened recently, or something currently festering within our physical, mental, and emotional experience.

We drop the story and the details of the physical events surrounding it, and instead place our attention fully on "how we feel about it".

Where seek out where we feel this discomfort within our body? We place our attention within this location and "cradle it".

While keeping the eyes of our heart upon the uncomfortable feeling within our body, we simultaneously keep our physical eyes open, and in a relaxed manner, we observe the world before us.

We observe how the inner feeling moves, and how, as it does, the outer world simultaneously increases in presence.

When we stray off into the mental again, we gently bring our attention back into the inner feeling within our body and simultaneously upon the presence of the outer world.

We cradle this experience for as long as we feel necessary.

NOTE: If we do not have an upset to consciously work with, we enter the practice by consciously placing our attention within the center of our chest and hold it there, following the above instructions, until we feel complete. The practice of consistently placing of our attention within the center of our chest is equally powerful in initiating "the death experience" that invites the blessing of rebirth within all unintegrated aspects of our life experience.

Eventually, through this practice, we discover that the feelings of discomfort underlying our unintegrated upsets are gradually integrated and replaced by stillness, silence, and a sense of balance and peace within our heart. Over time these feelings of balance and peace organically radiate into our thoughts and are reflected back through our outer physical circumstances.

As a consequence of daily and consistently facing our shadow and grounding ourselves through it, we begin also decreasing our addiction to escaping into the mental plane as a means to initiate a change in the quality of our life experience. We discover, when consistently attending to the garden of the heart in this way, by watering, weeding, and fertilizing it with our cradled attention, that it gradually lifts unnoticed veils and reveals

the depth of the immensity of the life experience available to us all in each moment. By attending to the heart in this manner, the teachings we receive internally through revelation free us of "following others", of wandering through endless conceptual spiritual mazes, and of "the seekers seemingly unscratchable itch". This practice gradually frees us of "spiritual delusion", or "the spiritual disease", as Adyashanti aptly calls it.

As we become familiar with "the death experience", and surrender to the companionship of its divine presence within the ever-changing currents of our life, we are reborn, again, and again, and again. This rebirthing nourishes a deepening awareness of what it means "to live fully within the radiance of the present moment".

Entering life more fully, by consciously and consistently entering the heart, really is this simple. However, to fully receive the revelation of the simple teaching shared here, requires experientially entering "the heart of the matter" as *a way of being in this world* and not as "something we need to do, and get over with, so that we can get on with something else". This teaching and the consequences it initiates is the Dharma of The Sacred Heart.

"It's not about feeling better – it's about getting better at feeling."

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