

To Be Free in the World You Must Be Free of the World

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A message from **Dale Allen**

Contributing Writer, Truth Comes to Light

May 15, 2020

[Editor's note: Dale Allen sent a beautiful message today, and also shared a poem, written 15 years ago, which speaks a perfect message for these times. I had just finished a heartfelt phone conversation with my son about "the world" and the challenges so many are experiencing. I still had tears in my eyes as I worked on the website when Dale's note came in. It brought such a smile to my heart that I asked him if I might share some of his note here with you. ~ Kathleen]

I'm sat here on the farm outside of the hut absorbed in an amazing sky and listening to JS Bach, with birds flying in complete harmony with every cord. Everything in perfect harmony. Even the descending darkness and the ascending light, all lovingly contained in beginningless and endless space.

I found myself under a dark cloud this morning, but sitting in the car alone in the countryside reading Nasargadatta this passage came up:

'To be free in the world you must be free of the world. Otherwise your past decides for you and your future. Between what had happened and what must happen you are caught. Call it destiny or karma, but never – freedom. First return to

your true being and then act from the heart of love.'

I'm hearing this more and more, from David Icke to Jeff Berwick and Max Igan.

If humanity catch on...

A friend sent me this. Timeless wisdom written 15 years ago, so powerfully relevant for these times.

The Shambhala warrior mind-training

by Akuppa, 2005

with gratitude to [Joanna Macy](#)

Firmly establish your intention to live your life for the healing of the world.

Be conscious of it, honour it, nurture it every day.

Be fully present in our time. Find the courage to breathe in the suffering of the world. Allow peace and healing to breathe out through you in return.

Do not meet power on its own terms.

See through to its real nature – mind- and heart-made.

Lead your response from that level.

Simplify. Clear away the dead wood in your life.

Look for the heartwood and give it the first call on your time; the best of your energy.

Put down the leaden burden of saving the world alone.

Join with others of like mind. Align yourself with the forces of resolution.

Hold in a single vision, in the same thought, the transformation of yourself and the transformation of the world. Live your life around that edge, always keeping it in sight.

As a bird flies on two wings, balance outer activity with inner sustenance.

Following your heart, realise your gifts.
Cultivate them with diligence to offer knowledge and skill to the world.

Train in non-violence of body, speech and mind.
With great patience with yourself, learn to make beautiful each action, word and thought.

In the crucible of meditation, bring forth day by day into your own heart the treasury of compassion, wisdom and courage for which the world longs.

Sit with hatred until you feel the fear beneath it.
Sit with fear until you feel the compassion beneath that.

Do not set your heart on particular results.
Enjoy positive action for its own sake and rest confident that it will bear fruit.

When you see violence, greed and narrow-mindedness in the fullness of its power, walk straight into the heart of it, remaining open to the sky and in touch with the earth.

Staying open, staying grounded, remember that you are the inheritor of the strengths of thousands of generations of life.

Staying open, staying grounded, recall that the thankful prayers of future generations are silently with you.

Staying open, staying grounded, be confident in the magic and power that arise when people come together in a great cause.

Staying open, staying grounded, know that the deep forces of Nature will emerge to the aid of those who defend the Earth.

Staying open, staying grounded, have faith that the higher

forces of wisdom and compassion
will manifest through our actions for the healing of the
world.

When you see weapons of hate, disarm them with love.

When you see armies of greed, meet them in the spirit of
sharing.

When you see fortresses of narrow-mindedness, breach them with
truth.

When you find yourself enshrouded in dark clouds of dread,
dispel them with fearlessness.

When forces of power seek to isolate us from each other, reach
out with joy.

In it all and through it all, holding to your intention, let
go into the music of life. Dance!



Dale Allen has been designing buildings from a child, and simply never stopped, exploring many ways of living and being along the way. He trained with a Shaolin master for 8 years, learning authentic QiGong and TaiChi and becoming a senior disciple. He trained with a Zen master for 3 years, a Tibetan master for 4 years, and was guided by an Advaita master for 6 years, as well as engaging in many other spiritual practices.

“From birth life bestowed inquisitiveness, non-acceptance of how things appeared to be, the ability to be completely empty, the patience to just sit with myself and observe, and empathy with those around me. Pretty much like most of us really.”

elementalarchitecture.co.uk

Dale is a contributing writer at [Truth Comes to Light](#).

'Stop the Lockup/Lockdown' Radio Advertisement | Come Alive!

[Lockup Radio advert](#)

by [Snordster](#)

April 30, 2020

No radio station will accept this piece. Democracy?
Riiiiiiight.

*Be aware. Come alive. Be prepared for the level shift. Be the
explosion you want to hear.*

Transcript:

When you can't love, you hate.
When you can't build, you destroy.
When you're ignored, you scream.
When you can't tell the truth, you lie.
When you can't reason, you act.
When no one will follow you out of admiration or

respect, you compel.

When you can't live, you kill.

As the totalitarian horror unfolds before our eyes,
only the willfully blind will ignore it.

Only those who refuse to think will fail to grasp its
implications.

Only the irretrievably corrupt will embrace it.

Stop the lock up.

Now.



A mirrored copy is available on Truth Comes to
Light's [Bitchute channel](#) should the source video be censored
or become otherwise unavailable at YouTube or other platforms.

Crazy Horse: One Does Not Sell the Earth the People Walk Upon

[Crazy Horse: One Does Not Sell the Earth the People Walk Upon](#)

by John Trudell

video by [Indigenous Environmental Network](#)

*Crazy Horse,
we hear what you say
One Earth
One Mother*

*One does not sell the Earth
the people walk upon
We are the land
How do we sell our Mother?
How do we sell the stars?
How do we sell the air?
Crazy Horse,
we hear what you say*

*Too many people
Standing their ground
Standing the wrong ground
Predator's face
He possessed a race
Possession,
a war that doesn't end
Children of God
feed on children of Earth*

*Days
People don't care for people
These days are the hardest
Material fields
Material harvest
Decoration on chain that binds
Mirrors gold
The people lose their minds
Crazy Horse,
we hear what you say*

*One Earth
One Mother
One does not sell the Earth
the people walk upon
We are the land*

Strange and Bizarre Ancient Artworks

Strange and Bizarre Ancient Artworks That We Are Still Struggling To Explain!

[Matrix Wisdom](#)

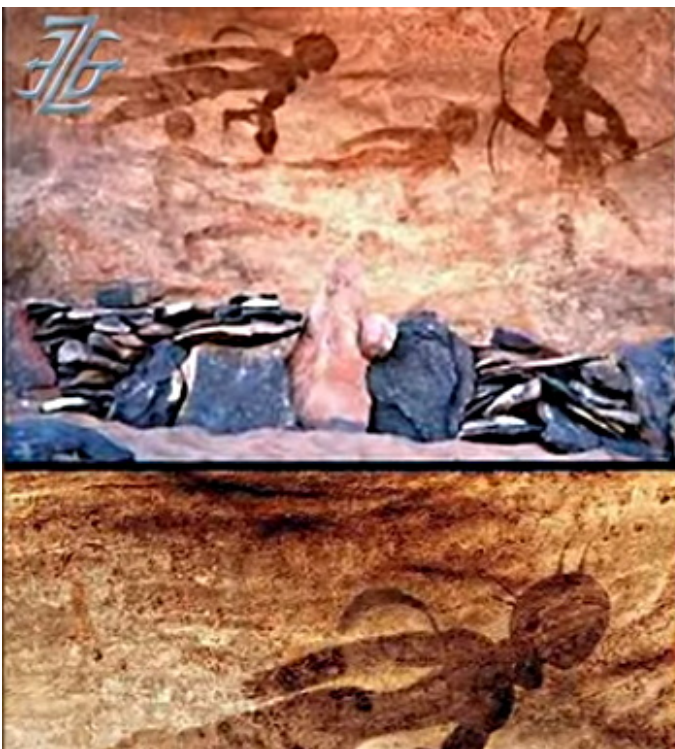
<https://youtu.be/VNgdR-PTJY8>

There are many events from thousands of years ago that are truly weird.











Photographer Captures One of the Last Female Eagle Hunters of Mongolia

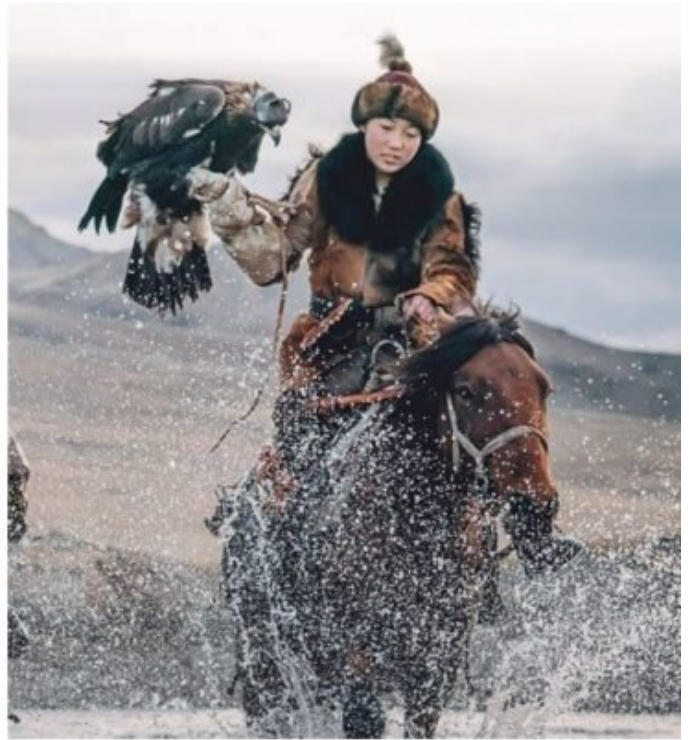
Images Credit: [Leo Thomas](#)

While golden eagle hunters were historically male, women did eventually break through but now the number of female hunters has plummeted to only ten.

by [Jade Small](#)

February 9, 2020

[Source](#)



([TMU](#)) – The nomadic tribes of western Mongolia have used the golden eagle to hunt for some 4,000 years. Today, only 10 women still practice the skill of hunting with eagles.

The tribes of the Altai region have trained young men and women in the art of hunting with golden eagles for centuries. While training to master this rare skill the hunters form a strong bond with their eagles.

https://www.instagram.com/p/B4fpeoECR3r/?utm_source=ig_web_button_share_sheet

Known as *burkitshi*, golden eagle hunters were historically male—the ancient art being handed down from father to son. Women did eventually break through the cultural “glass ceiling” and became excellent *burkitshi*.

However, the number of female hunters has plummeted to only ten.

Zamanbol, a member of the Kasakh tribe, is one of these female hunters and understands that she is part of a dying breed. She is not a full-time hunter like the rest of her family but spends her weeks in the city at school and trains as a hunter on weekends.

https://www.instagram.com/p/B4vTkkuizY9/?utm_source=ig_web_button_share_sheet

The training hasn't changed since it started millennia ago, and the hunters dress in traditional handmade furs and leather while riding on horseback with their eagles.

The eagles are captured at around four years old. They are old enough to be able to hunt and young enough to adapt to human contact and form a bond with their human hunter. The eagles are treated as part of the family, fed by hand, and live in the family home in comfortable quarters.

From as young as 13, children will be given young female eagles to begin the bonding process which will continue for 10 years.

Zamanbol and her brother Barzabai have established strong bonds with their eagles, demonstrated by an ability to communicate with their birds during the hunt—a physically and mentally demanding process.

The hunters trek high up into the mountains and find a suitable vantage point from where to survey the valleys and plains below. They release the eagle perched on their arm once a target is spotted (usually a small mammal like a hare or a fox).

The eagle then swoops down and captures the prey and soars back up to the mountaintops to give it over to its hunter. Female eagles are always used as they are larger and more adept hunters than males.

The hunters only keep the birds captive for a 10 year period of their expected lifespan of 30 years or more, allowing them to live free and hopefully breed a new generation of golden eagles.

Letting them go is not an easy task with the strong bond formed. As one hunter [recalled](#) of letting his eagle go, *“It was as if a member of my family had left. I think about what that eagle is doing; if she’s safe, and whether she can find food and make a nest. Have her hunts been successful? Sometimes I dream about these things.”*

German photographer Leo Thomas recently visited Western Mongolia’s Altai region to capture this fascinating culture and Zamanbol, dressed in her traditional handmade hunting garb.

Thomas’ images capture Zamanbol on horseback and dressed in handmade fur clothing, radiating with free spirit, strength, and a strong bond with her eagle.

Thomas says of Barzabai (Zamanbol’s 26-year-old brother of the same age as Thomas), *“While he’s living in the outdoors surrounded by family, incredible nature and animals, I’m sitting more than 60% of my time in front of a screen. A pretty basic comparison, but it made me think.”*

Thomas managed to capture the unique beauty of the ancient—and possibly vanishing—culture of the Kasakh tribe’s *kirbitshi*, featured below.

See more of Thomas’ work at: [Facebook](#) | [Instagram](#)

https://www.instagram.com/p/B5BLNnbiM-y/?utm_source=ig_web_button_share_sheet

https://www.instagram.com/p/B5QcvZ6iW0W/?utm_source=ig_web_button_share_sheet

https://www.instagram.com/p/B5a2EZ9ifW7/?utm_source=ig_web_button_share_sheet

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by [Jade Small](#) | [Creative Commons](#) | [TheMindUnleashed.com](#)

Moksha

by [Caitlin Johnstone](#)

January 29, 2020

[Source](#)

*They used to import slaves but that began to look ugly,
so they began outsourcing slave labor overseas.*

*They used to use torture but that began to look ugly,
so they began outsourcing torture overseas.*

*They used to use censorship but that began to look ugly,
so now Silicon Valley does it for them.*

*Bombs rain down endlessly but we don't hear about it;
they just decided that that's what normal is now.*

*They used to kill animals and butcher their flesh;
now they do it in factory farms out of sight.*

*Fathers do awful things to the flesh of small children,
and the mothers make sure nobody talks about it.*

*Husbands do awful things to the flesh of drained wives,
who assure everyone that everything is fine.*

There are parts of ourselves that are still screaming and

*crying,
but we don't look there because it is frightening.*

*But there is an eye in your heart which sees everything,
love.*

There is a part of you which always speaks truth.

*And there's a light on the horizon we can't run from, love.
There's an eye at the center of the universe.*

We're all sloppily tumbling into the light, my love.

Head over heels

over secrets

over lies

over avoidance

over courage

over fear

over longing

over Source

over shadow,

over the inability to be seen like this,

over the inability to remain hidden any longer.

Hold my hand,

my beloved,

and prepare for the great unveiling.

It will be so much nicer

and so much easier

than you have been expecting.

Just For This Moment

by [Caitlin Johnstone](#)

January 26, 2020

[Source](#)

*We could sit here all day
talking about how the news man is always lying
or how both parties are functionally the same
or how the Bastards toil endlessly to hide the truth from us
or how we know better than all those foolish brainwashed
sheep
who are just trying to survive another day on this earth.*

We could sit here all day doing that.

*Or,
maybe,
just for this one moment,
we could look inward
and be honest with ourselves.*

*Maybe just for this moment
we could ask if we are truly being present here
and perhaps contemplate what it is we might be running from.*

*Maybe just for this moment
we could be real about what ways we continue lying to
ourselves
and try breathing the light of truth onto those endarkened
areas.*

*Maybe just for this moment
we could stop escaping into smugness and self-righteousness,
into ideological conflict and drama,
into paranoia and suspicion of anyone who stands out,*

*into worry and fear of what's coming,
and be here now.*

*And maybe we will find deep wounds inside.
And maybe we can heal those wounds.*

*And maybe we will find conflicted aspects of ourselves.
And maybe we can move from conflict to integrity.*

*And maybe we will find all the parts of ourselves which run
to escape from here.*

*And maybe we can love them, and reassure them, and nurture
them into presence.*

*And maybe then we'll look around,
and notice that the smoke has cleared from our vision.*

*And maybe we'll notice all sorts of things we'd never noticed
before.*

Things about ourselves.

Things about the life we've been living.

Things about our social circles and relationships.

Things about our political system and government.

Things about our media and information systems.

*Things which were previously hidden by cowardice and
compartmentalizing.*

*And maybe we'll start seeing opportunities we'd never noticed
before.*

Doors and windows which were previously invisible to us.

New escape routes and entryways

*as we realize we'd been looking at a 3-D model in two
dimensions.*

And maybe then we'll have a chuckle

as we realize that the sages across the ages were right.

That it really is all one.

That we are inseparable from the whole.

That any consciousness brought to any area helps awaken the

totality.

*That the greatest gift anyone can bring to the world
is their own self-realization.*

First Biological Nano-Robots Created

by [Joseph P. Farrell](#)

January 22, 2020

[Source](#)

So many people sent me various versions of this story – and did so seemingly all at once – that it was one of those rare stories that almost immediately made it into this week’s “final cut” of stories to blog about, and in reading it, I can understand why it caught the attention of so many readers of this website, because there’s all sorts of thorny “high octane implications” to it. Here’s the version that most caught my eye:

[Scientists create first ‘living robots’ in major breakthrough](#)

It’s difficult to talk about this article without citing all of it, but let’s focus on these paragraphs:

Scientists have created what they claim are the first “living [robots](#)”: entirely new life-forms created out of living cells.

A team of researchers have taken cells from frog embryos and turned them into a machine that can be programmed to work as

they wish.

It is the first time that humanity has been able to create “completely biological [machines](#) from the ground up”, the team behind the discovery write in a new paper.

...

“These are novel living machines,” says Joshua Bongard, the University of Vermont expert who co-led the new research. “They’re neither a traditional robot nor a known species of animal. It’s a new class of artifact: a living, programmable organism.”

The new creatures were designed using a supercomputer and then built by biologists. They could now be used for a variety of different purposes, those behind the creation say.

“We can imagine many useful applications of these living robots that other machines can’t do like searching out nasty compounds or radioactive contamination, gathering microplastic in the oceans, travelling in arteries to scrape out plaque,” said co-leader Michael Levin who directs the Center for Regenerative and Developmental Biology at Tufts University, where the xenobots were actually created.

...

The researchers admit that there is the danger that such developments could be harnessed in ways that we don’t even understand, leading to unintended consequences. If the systems become sufficiently complex, it might be impossible for humans to predict how they will start to behave.

“If humanity is going to survive into the future, we need to better understand how complex properties, somehow, emerge from simple rules,” said Mr Levin in a statement. “This study is a direct contribution to getting a handle on what people are afraid of, which is unintended consequences,” he said.

(Emphases added)

As the article makes clear, there are a number of quite beneficial applications than can emerge, for example, it states these micro-programmable organisms could be fit with very small pouches to deliver medicine to specific areas of the body. One such use springs to mind, and that is the potential ability to bridge the blood-brain barrier, and deliver medicines or chemotherapy to otherwise inoperable types of brain tumors like a glioblastoma multiform, or to types of bone marrow cancers. It specifically mentions their potential utility in cleaning out arteries and vessels, and one can imagine their potential for getting rid of tumors bite by tiny bite, a kind of microsurgery that sums up to a macrosurgery, without the cutting and scraping of current surgical techniques.

But that's the rub, because as usual, we're being sold on the technology by a litany of potential benefits, while the article itself ends on the warning note about "unintended consequences." That, plus that "little" admission that the nano-bio-machines were designed by a supercomputer, gave me pause. So for the purposes of today's "high octane speculation," let's couple that admission to the "Elon Musk Scenario". Mr. Musk, a few years ago, warned about the possibility that in our quest to create a real "artificial intelligence" that the danger might be that we inadvertently transduce a "someone" or a "something" into that machine, i.e., the machine wakes up, but acquires a "personality" that is less than human-friendly. Next let's couple that idea to 3D printing, and what results is an AI that could literally design, and then create, organisms-to-design, its *own* design, and they might not be very human-friendly. With this, *voila!* We have a bio-apocalypse of almost unimaginable scale.

And there's yet another possibility, which for want of a better expression, we might call the "unknown biological

firewall.” Might there be, within nature herself, an in-built safeguard against too much genetic tinkering, a limit that says “this far, but no further?” And if so, what might it entail? A total reset mechanism that wipes all such engineering out if that wall is breached? I certainly don’t know the answers to those questions, but my intuition – based on certain old doctrines such as *logoi spermatikoi* or *rationes seminales* – says that might indeed be the case. Indeed, if there are such things as “seminal reasons” embedded in reality, and in things, then they are, as “reasons” or “rational principles,” discoverable, and as the Latin language version of the doctrine suggests, the root here is *ratio*, reason, proportion, ratio in the arithmetic sense, and hence, harmony. All of those things suggest quantifiability. So perhaps before we take yet another technological plunge without knowing those “unintended consequences,” we’d better re-examine some ancient doctrines, and examine them first with a view to finding that firewall.

See you on the flip side...

Tidbit: A Poem by C.S. Lewis

Again, apropos of today’s main blog, there’s this poem – one of my favorites in fact – by C.S. Lewis, and one might substitute the word “evolution” with “genetic engineering”:

[Evolutionary Hymn](#)

by C.S. Lewis

Lead us, Evolution, lead us
Up the future's endless stair;
Chop us, change us, prod us, weed us.
For stagnation is despair:
Groping, guessing, yet progressing,
Lead us nobody knows where.

Wrong or justice, joy or sorrow,
In the present what are they
while there's always jam-tomorrow,
While we tread the onward way?
Never knowing where we're going,
We can never go astray.

To whatever variation
Our posterity may turn
Hairy, squashy, or crustacean,
Bulbous-eyed or square of stern,
Tusked or toothless, mild or ruthless,
Towards that unknown god we yearn.

Ask not if it's god or devil,
Brethren, lest your words imply
Static norms of good and evil
(As in Plato) throned on high;
Such scholastic, inelastic,
Abstract yardsticks we deny.

Far too long have sages vainly
Glossed great Nature's simple text;
He who runs can read it plainly,
'Goodness = what comes next.'
By evolving, Life is solving
All the questions we perplexed.

Oh then! Value means survival-
Value. If our progeny
Spreads and spawns and licks each rival,

*That will prove its deity
(Far from pleasant, by our present,
Standards, though it may well be).*

A Blessing for Anyone

by [Caitlin Johnstone](#)

September 24, 2019

[Source](#)

May all of your illusions be shattered beyond your ability to reassemble them.

May you learn quickly from your failures and successes.

May life treat you how you treat life.

May you reap swiftly that which you sow, and may it be highly educational for you.

May all of the hidden parts of yourself enter the light.

May all of your unfelt feelings be felt.

May you have a crystal clear glimpse of your own boundlessness.

May you have a crystal clear glimpse of your own insignificance.

May your inner monologue cease and may you experience stillness.

May you experience the beauty of each moment that the babbling mind eclipses.

May you uncover the mystery that hides behind the veil of separation.

May you know true courage.

May you know true wisdom.

May you know true humility.

May you know true truth.

May you know yourself intimately, without disguises or distortions.

May you meet the world lucidly, without projections or prejudices.

May you perceive the world clearly, without filters or fantasies.

May your delusions disappoint you and may authenticity astonish you.

May everything you have constructed in untruth crumble before your eyes.

May life conspire to unmake every false object you have made.

May you live each moment fully, not for the goal of grandiose achievement, but for living itself.

May you truly, deeply see yourself, and find there what you've always been looking for.

May you be truly, deeply seen by someone else. May you let yourself be seen by them.

May you end your war against the feminine.

May you finally let in the enormity of what your mother did for you.

May you find a home in your body.

May your body feel at home on this earth.

May the earth feel your sorrow.

May you feel the earth's forgiveness.

May the earth feel your gratitude.

May the earth feel your love.

May the thrum of the earth dance through you.

May you fall in love with that dance.

Amen.

How Many Rounds?

[How Many Rounds?](#)

by [Zen Gardner](#)

January 14, 2020

How many rounds of same old stuff until the bubble pops?

How many times to learn in life until frustration stops?

Layers up and layers down while wheels go round and round

"The bottom now we finally hit? There's hardly any sound!"

*The ground breaks through, false floor again, as mind
bursts round the bend*

*"Again?" I cried. "Another lie? When will this learning
end?"*

*"I've tried it all, took every fall, I've searched for
treasure wide!"*

*Surely answers wait beyond the gate, I know it deep
inside!"*

"Aha" a voice so gently mocks, loving yet amused.

*"It seems that seeking answers are why you are thus con-
fused."*

*I gasp for air and strength to bear, "Another round?" I
mused.*

*This weary searcher, heart in hand, is clearly just
bemused.*

*"It's never wrong", the Voice's song, "Just let it come to
you."*

"What you seek is what you are. This is the seeker's rue."

*"But why this seeking, hungry heart? What is it I can't
see?"*

*"You'll reach an end, when'ere it hits. The layers just a
tease."*

I pondered there, on umpteenth floor, soon looking for a door.

“Step through it now” something calls. “Yourself your only moor.”

“How can that be? I’m only me! The truth I seek is all!”

“Leave all behind and step on through, you’ll see there was no door.”



Our seeker drops his hands to side, and thinks there's ought to lose

“I’ve tried it all repeatedly, OK, I’ll step aside.

I’m weary with the traveling, the running here and fro

There’s clearly now, aft all attempts, nowhere else to go.”

"It's never here, yet always is." the Voice in comfort speaks

"Outside this realm yet always in." The riddle seems to peak.

"I know the truth it permeates" I cry, "Yes every living thing!

But crashing down thru barriers has been no pleasant fling!"

"So what?" retorts of the voice of Truth. "What schedule are you on?

You presume to know or understand before you're even born.

That ignorance has parted you, and prevents like prison moat

Survival of this thing called you is what's kept self afloat."

"In punctured time, creations rhyme, you think you understand?

Humility is knowing self has nowhere aught to stand.

You are not you, as you perceive, in fact you're just like me.

Keep falling through, and graceful take, the who and how to be."

I'm flummoxed now, yet calm somehow. I know it's Truth I hear

It resonates with all I've learned, yet learning is not Me!

The cycles burst and bubbles pop, alas we've given birth

To what was true so all along. What all of it was worth.



Zen Gardner is an impactful and controversial author and speaker with a piercing philosophical viewpoint. His writings have been circulated to millions and his personal story has caused no small stir amongst the entrenched alternative pundits. His book *You Are the Awakening* has met rave reviews and is available on amazon.com. *You Are the Awakening* examines the dynamics of the awakening to a more conscious awareness of who we are and why we are here –

dynamics which are much different from the programmed approach of this world we were born into.

I'd Rather Die

I'd Rather Die

by [Zen Gardner](#)

January 12, 2020

*I'd rather die and be alive
Than die and just be dead
I'd rather fry than compromise
With flies around my head
"Death to Self!" the placard screams
While anger inside roils
"End it now, it pointless seems!"
Midst oceans on the boil
"What is this ego death, pray tell
What is this end to self?"
The specter looms with grin from hell
"Perhaps be truth thyself"
The banter rolls around the cage
Dampened by the fluff
Muffled, no expected rage
The audience? A bluff.
The lusting, liquid mind is quick
"No matter – hit the spot!"
"Perceive or not perceive I will!
Believe, or I am not!"
The pixelating picture fades
And falls to end of screen
Illusion and its many grades
Were never as were seen*

*The show goes on, the limits burn
Like layered walls of brick
Yet slowly, ever slow we learn
That naught will ever stick*



[Zen Gardner](#) is an impactful and controversial author and speaker with a piercing philosophical viewpoint.

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A Secret Cause of Disease – Loss of Heart

What Soap is for the Body Tears are for the Soul

by [Dr. Sircus](#)

December 4, 2019

[Source](#)

Rumi the great mystic poet said, “There is no liquid like a tear from a lover’s eye.” He also said, “There comes a holy and transparent time when **every touch of beauty opens the**

heart to tears. This is the time the Beloved of heaven is brought tenderly on earth. This is the time of the opening of the Rose.”

*My Tears Flow My Being Opens Totally
As your heart fills with feelings expand yourself,
prepare to meet the enormity of your own divine being.
The tears of the melting heart
can melt all barriers between you
and your own deeper and higher self.*

Jesus wept and we know that the soul takes no space without the tears of the melting heart to grace one’s life. And old Jewish proverb tells us that **what soap is for the body tears are for the soul** and Psalms 126:5 says “They that sow in tears shall reap in joy” and Psalms 30:5 reads, “Weeping may endure for the night, but joy cometh in the morning”

*Every tear that your heart sheds is a golden drop of sun.
I weigh each one in my heart of hearts
not knowing from which they all come from.
I drink the fluid that runs from your eyes
knowing you better with every drop.*

“Man is like an onion. When you peel away the layers, all that is left is tears,” wrote Rabbi Nachman of Bratslav, an Hasidic master. “The fruits of the inner man begin only with the shedding of tears. When you reach the place of tears, then know that your spirit has come out from the prison of this world and has set its foot upon the path that leads towards the new age,” wrote Saint Isaac of Nineveh.

The Heart represents our basic capacity to care and feel. Inside the purified and free heart is a flow, a river, a current, a passion for life and a healing power that no medical treatment can compete with. The greatest force for health is the human heart. The purpose of our life here on this earth is to contact our being, expand and grow our being by coming into a direct relationship with the essence of our

heart's true nature. And what is this true nature? The heart is the vulnerability of being.

Emotional intelligence comes with an appreciation of each feeling's role and function in our awareness. Life stripped of feelings is a life stripped of meaning.

Emotional tears heal the heart by returning us to it. Thus crying makes us feel better even if we are not better or the situation is not improving. Dr. Judith Orloff says, "It is good to cry. It is healthy to cry. This helps to emotionally clear sadness and stress. Crying is also essential to resolve grief, when waves of tears periodically come over us after we experience a loss. Tears help us process the loss so we can keep living with open hearts. Otherwise, we are a set up for depression if we suppress these potent feelings. When a friend apologized for curling up in the fetal position on my floor, weeping, depressed over a failing romance, I told her, 'Your tears blessed my floor. There is nothing to apologize for.'

Dr. Orloff wrote, "For over 20 years as a physician, I've witnessed time and again the healing power of tears. Tears are your body's release valve for stress, sadness, grief, anxiety and frustration. Also, you can have tears of joy, say when a child is born, or tears of relief when a difficult time has passed. In my own life, I am grateful when I can cry. It feels cleansing, a way to purge pent up emotions so they don't lodge in my body as stress symptoms such as fatigue or pain. To stay healthy and release stress, I encourage my patients to cry. For both men and women, tears are a sign of courage, strength and authenticity."

We cannot begin to flow towards another person or towards our own higher or inner being until the psychic skin covering the heart is removed. The tears of the melting heart are the key to disperse the cobwebs of our mind releasing us into the mysterious depths of our hearts, so let your tears flow to purify yourself of your mental stress and negativity.

[HeartHealth is now a free online comprehensive exploration and journey into the center of pure feeling.](#)

The most obvious confirmation that we are in fact moving in and through the door way to our deeper beings are our vulnerable tears. Not the tears of self-pity, but the simple welling up feeling that almost always accompanies the crossing and crisscrossing of the barriers between the heart and the head. These tears are more like a divine fluid. The tears of the heart are precious and the pure in heart always cherish the liquid river of tears.

When we first open the heart a river of feelings is released which swamps the mind and its habitual defenses. We feel overwhelmed because our usual cool control is lost. The coolness of the separate personality is swept away as familiar ground moves from under our feet. Though most fear this moment, it is such a release, such a lightening of our load. Our real self is freed from the iron grip our ego normally holds over heart consciousness.

When we open our hearts we are surrendering ourselves to the vastness and strength and love of God. We open ourselves and make ourselves vulnerable to a great being that is one with all beings. Open to experience, open to it all. It's thrilling and sometimes even terrifying. Open to love and this is something else again.

A Secret Cause of Disease – Loss of Heart

Disease can show us how invulnerable we have become, how walled off we are from the world and our own inner reality of pure being. One of the great secrets of life has to do with the power of the heart and what a return to its vulnerability

can offer a person sick or dying of disease.

There is a quality of heart and pure being that can be called grace. The grace of the heart offers us a quality of being that is healing, animating, invigorating, supporting, nurturing, and comforting. The grace of the heart offers an inner tranquility and peace that the mind by itself rarely possesses.

[Dr. Steven Stosny](#) writes about the strong resistance we have to vulnerability saying, "Your core vulnerability is the emotional state that is most dreadful to you, in reaction to which you've developed the strongest defenses. Other states of vulnerability are more tolerable if they avoid stimulating your core vulnerability and less bearable when they don't. For most people, either [fear](#) (of harm, isolation, deprivation) or [shame](#) (of failure) constitutes their core vulnerability."

However when we face our deepest fears and vulnerabilities we become stronger and more capable of giving and receiving love. Deep in the nuclear core of the heart is a love of life and a love of love. Some beings come here to earth with such a strong heart that no circumstance can beat it out of them. In them is a furnace of heart energy and like the sun it will not be denied though they might have to go through great struggles to release and express this energy.

When fighting serious diseases like cancer we need to access the power and strength of our hearts, of love, because this will strengthen our immune systems and give us the will to change the things we need to change and face what we must, even if its death or the death of a loved one. Life is demanding more heart, more love and thus more tears if we wish to navigate through the increasing stresses of life without being ripped apart.

Gratitude

Gratitude

by Mary Oliver

What did you notice?

The dew-snail;
the low-flying sparrow;
the bat, on the wind, in the dark;
big-chested geese, in the V of sleekest performance;
the soft toad, patient in the hot sand;
the sweet-hungry ants;
the uproar of mice in the empty house;
the tin music of the cricket's body;
the blouse of the goldenrod.

What did you hear?

The thrush greeting the morning;
the little bluebirds in their hot box;
the salty talk of the wren,
then the deep cup of the hour of silence.

When did you admire?

The oaks, letting down their dark and hairy fruit;
the carrot, rising in its elongated waist;
the onion, sheet after sheet, curved inward to the pale green
wand;
at the end of summer the brassy dust, the almost liquid beauty
of the flowers;
then the ferns, scrawned black by the frost.

What astonished you?

The swallows making their dip and turn over the water.

What would you like to see again?

My dog: her energy and exuberance, her willingness,
her language beyond all nimbleness of tongue,
her recklessness, her loyalty, her sweetness,
her strong legs, her curled black lip, her snap.

What was most tender?

Queen Anne's lace, with its parsnip root;
the everlasting in its bonnets of wool;
the kinks and turns of the tupelo's body;
the tall, blank banks of sand;
the clam, clamped down.

What was most wonderful?

The sea, and its wide shoulders;
the sea and its triangles;
the sea lying back on its long athlete's spine.

What did you think was happening?

The green beast of the hummingbird;
the eye of the pond;
the wet face of the lily;
the bright, puckered knee of the broken oak;
the red tulip of the fox's mouth;
the up-swing, the down-pour, the frayed sleeve of the first
snow—

so the gods shake us from our sleep.

Nature Photos: Parenting in the Wild



Amazing Wildlife Art Sculpted from Recycled Paper



Source: [treehugger](#)

by [Kimberley Mok](#)

April 15, 2019

These life-like wildlife sculptures are actually made with rolled newspapers



As longtime readers will know, newspapers aren't just for reading – they can be worn as [jewelry](#), laid on walls as [wallpaper](#), used for building [furniture](#) and [whole buildings](#) (some of them even [lasting as long as a century](#)).

Of course, old newspapers can be made into new art, as

Japanese artist [Chie Hitotsuyama](#) does with her stunningly realistic, life-sized sculptures of wildlife, created entirely with rolled up pieces of recycled newspaper. Watch:



Besides the advantage of upcycling humble newsprint into something remarkable, Hitotsuyama's choice of using newspapers is deliberate and metaphoric:

Newspapers are interesting because they, too, carry a repetition of cycles. The cycle of birth and death, whilst carrying our memories. This, I felt, is so similar to human beings' lives who also repeat their own histories and experience in the cycles of life and death.



Using her own meticulous technique of cutting sheets into long strips, wetting them and then rolling them up, Hitotsuyama then gradually builds her works up on top of a base form, gluing each single 'string' side by side, often using the existing colours of the newsprint to add tones to her forms. As she notes: "A piece of paper on its own is too delicate to stand on its own, but an accumulation of these thin papers or strings, enables me to realize uncountable varieties of objects."



But it's not as simple as capturing the form, but the 'is-ness' of each animal just so, which is not an easy feat, explains Hitotsuyama:

Every time we make a new work of an animal, we need to face the challenge of learning and discovering their traits, personalities and nature of how they would view and interact with the world they are living in. There are a lot of information on the internet now, but the very thing we want can't be found. For example, there is no blog by an animal who can tell us how they feel about certain things. So, in a way, making the sculptures of animals that are not deceiving either to them and us, humans are very important. And this can be a challenge.



For Hitotsuyama, her artistic practice is also a connection to her family heritage, as her studio is based out of her grandfather's old paper-braiding factory. It's an intriguing convergence that expresses what is possible when one merges family tradition with newspaper story cycles, and with a greater message about the meaningful relationships we can have with our wild brothers and sisters, and the greater transformative cycles of nature. To see more, visit [Chie Hitotsuyama](#).

Elderhood in the Raw

Elderhood in the Raw

by [Robert Augustus Masters, PhD](#)

sourced from [Robert Augustus Masters newsletter](#)

April 16, 2019

Elderhood is far from common – it is not something that automatically happens when we reach a certain age. It is something that is honed, deepened, birthed through the ongoing labor of ceasing to be a slave to our conditioning, especially after we're no longer ascending the peak but are slowly, slowly sliding down the other side of it.

As such, it is more an undoing than a doing, an alignment with what doesn't decline as we decline – it doesn't depend on all our faculties operating at optimal levels, but does depend on deliberate, steady, disciplined alignment with what truly matters in the latter stages of an unabashedly human life.

Elders are not busy homesteading on the top rung, speaking from on high; they are still evolving, knowing this inside and out, still curious amidst the creaking and complaining of bones and sinews, still reaching even as they rest, their journey one of endless discovery and deepening, with their mortality whispering to them more and more often. Elders are iconoclastic warriors of heart and guts and unsung knowings, even if they are hobbling or super-forgetful or cranky – you can count on them to be straight with you, to challenge your certainties, to care about what really matters.

They are unapologetically human, having done their time in the forges and chill waters and considerable tests of maturation, bearing scars seen and unseen, their bloodstream taking its time, their foot easing off the accelerator, belly and jaw

soft. Do they get reactive, cranky, abrupt, edgy? Sure, but in palatable doses, with whatever cleanup is needed close at hand. Elders may be mellow some of the time, but are not stuck in being positive.

Elders have the capacity to die into Life, to die into a deeper death – as do some who are much more youthful – but they bring to this a gravitas, a getting-it-in-the-bones that is far less accessible for the younger. The decline of the body, however fit or trim or young-looking, gives fledgling elderhood the grounding, deep-rooted sobriety it needs.

Elders are clear, idiosyncratic channels for muddy waters, not caring much if they get dirty in the process. Etiquette may not be their strong suit. Their bodies may not be doing so well, but they honor their somatic reality, taking care of it without taking too much care of it. They do not bewail their physical and mental decline; it's a slow downhill dance that is free of wallflowers and the need for an audience.

Elderhood is a robustly wrinkled ripeness, harvested for those who make their way toward it. In the buzz and hustle of contemporary culture, elders may seem like anachronisms, souvenirs from decimated cultures, with initiation rituals in one pocket and wheeze-reducing herbs in the other – but they are at the leading edge of our times, however small their numbers, doing what they can to help root us in our deep humanity even as we stretch for better skies.

Turn toward them. Honor them. Use them. Elders aren't just taking a bedrock-strong stand, but are servants of that stand, stewards of the deeply relevant. They do this without hope, but with a stubbornly unshakable faith, their bodies bent but aglow with what this asks of them. Let us lean together into this, both bowing to it and embodying it, no matter how broken or aged our step may be.

Six Cantos: Poetry by Jon Rappoport

[Six Cantos](#)

by [Jon Rappoport, *Outside the Reality Machine*](#)

March 22, 2019

I

*Miles of unrecorded sand are
The skin of the dragon...
Haunch around the night
Preparing to shrug off hotels*

II

*This is the age of the actor
Who's found that every other age
Was lying in its rooms,
In fumes and spice,*

Weary of the pose in its own device.

This is the age of discovering

That every other age was dying,

Muted in a flame,

Born in presentiments of gold

In the pose of the honored name...

III

Lamps are lit

Along the Appian Way

*Caesar steps out on the running board of his tent and waves
to the surging crowd*

This can only end in elevation to heaven

What else is left?

*How many conquests until the gods tap him as one of their
own?*

Assassination? Impossible!

IV

I dreamt we fought a war to build Time from

A column rising out of the sea

And now, mystified by our own presence,

We aim to destroy it

V

*“Burned flowers of the field
My noon is over, growing old,
Everything I love is finally sold.
Sewed designs for men with money
Thinking it was duty,
To watch them lead the world to war,
From my little field of beauty.”*

VI

*There is no army of artists of reality
There can never be such an army*

Poem on the Passing of My Wife

[Source](#)

Laura Thompson, 1952-2019

by Jon Rappoport

March 21, 2019

Did a great Nothing swallow you whole, my darling?

Have you gone to ashes, buried next to the walnut tree in New Jersey, in the back yard of your family?

Is the same swelling of the legs that immobilized you creeping up my body?

I sat on our front porch smoking a cigarette looking at the wild cherry tree full of pink buds—this is your spring coming on in the hills of Carolina.

Were you a collection of elements driven by unknown forces? Have you gone back to the beginning? What beginning?

This is not my season for reassurances.

I don't rest in full knowledge that your essence is still whole somewhere brimming.

Spring is relentless in the hills around our home—fat cardinals are building a nest near an upstairs window. Is that you orchestrating a message? I'm told I need to drink more water and stop eating salt, when all I want is salt.

I wasn't with you at the clinic when you died. I'm told a nurse was combing your hair and singing to you when you stopped breathing, when you'd had enough suffering. You had many plans—the house is full of your things. I think a stray thought and by habit it refers to you. This is not the season for reassurances. This is not the time for a life without you. Are you in some cottage by the sea waiting for us?

In a week or so our wild cherry tree will be spilling with white flowers from every branch. Will you be there? For me, yes. Our house is surrounded by high deep forest. Hundreds of trees. As a boy, trees were my first love. You are my second—and much greater love. My darling.

Jon Rappoport

Remembering to Remember

by [Robert Augustus Masters](#)

February 2019

[Source](#)

There's an awakening that outshines our spiritual ambitions, revealing dimensions out of imagination's reach but as organically familiar as the supportive feel of our pillow as we slide into deep sleep.

The knocking on the door is ever there, infiltrating the clutter that populates our everyday mind. The message is simple: Remember to remember.

But remember what? What essentially matters, and what makes that matter.

This becomes clearer as you attune to what is out of sight, out of comprehension, out of hearing, out of the reach of the familiar. Give more of yourself to such fine-tuning, allowing more stretching of your spiritual radar.

Look inside your looking. And continue listening with your

totality to the presence of silence.

It's as if you've just begun to awaken from a cozy nap, your room pierced with slats of sunlight, and you, caught mid-yawn, have no idea whatsoever where you are or what you are, but there nevertheless is a vividly unsettling knowingness surging through you, leaving you too unveiled to pull things together, hyperaware of the absence of familiarity – suddenly you are acutely alive, adrift in the sheer enormity and revelatory implications of it all.

You could be sinking in an unknown sea, or crouching in a thunderously wet midnight jungle, or lying broken on a frozen battlefield or lonely bed or silvery emptiness, even as you start to recognize where you are physically located.

And so with relief you let the familiar invade you, reoccupy and compartmentalize you, not noticing how surreal this is, how consolingly encapsulating. The enterprise of reassembling your sense of self once again clicks into place, and in a very short time you are now a seemingly solid somebody, no matter how often you lose your ID in your dreams.

Still, something hugely other is palpably afoot, still with you, hovering in the back of the background, something that you know, in your secret heart, can at any moment become foreground, making of you an expressive zone for what is ever showing up as you – and everything else.

There is comfort and plenty of undeniable utility in being colonized by the familiar, even as it muffles the knocking at the door, distracting us from the awakening that tugs at our hidden bedcovers.

This awakening establishes itself as we let go of our bearings to enough of a degree to find deeper bearings, remembering that we actually know the way by heart, even when we cannot see or hear or move.

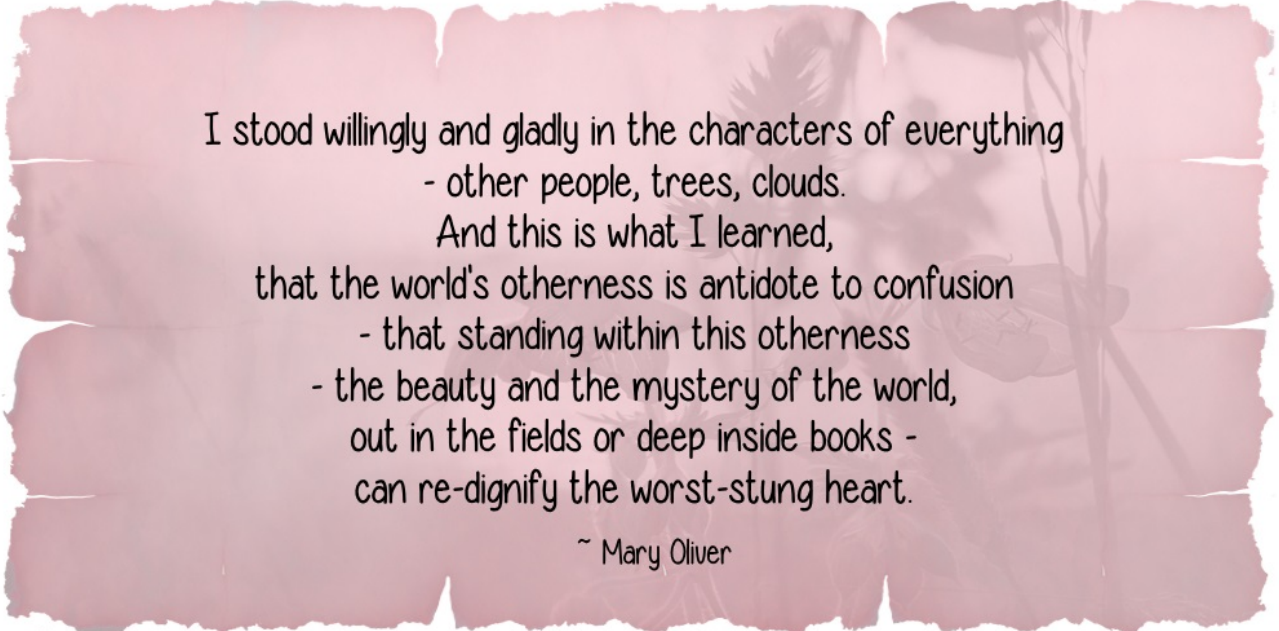
Ours is then a geography of resurfacing continents, wild green uprisings, cascading lava, alien skies, barely remembered faces and embraces that pull, pull, and pull some more at us with a depth of aching that links us up with a sense of significance before which all else pales.

We then look up as if for the first time, even as we look down at our disappearing ground, starlight our witness and crumbling foothold, gravity and vast luminosity making us up over and over and over, leaving us more and more at home with the whole irreducible mystery of it all.

Here, nothing is familiar and everything is recognized.

It is to this that we are ever invited. Remember to remember it.

I Looked Up



I stood willingly and gladly in the characters of everything
- other people, trees, clouds.
And this is what I learned,
that the world's otherness is antidote to confusion
- that standing within this otherness
- the beauty and the mystery of the world,
out in the fields or deep inside books -
can re-dignify the worst-stung heart.

~ Mary Oliver

by [Mary Oliver](#)

*I looked up and there it was
among the green branches of the pitchpines –
thick bird,
a ruffle of fire trailing over the shoulders and down the
back –
color of copper, iron, bronze –
lighting up the dark branches of the pine.
What misery to be afraid of death.
What wretchedness, to believe only in what can be proven.
When I made a little sound
it looked at me, then it looked past me.
Then it rose, the wings enormous and opulent,
and, as I said, wreathed in fire.*

Wild Geese

[Wild Geese](#)

by **Mary Oliver**

*You do not have to be good.
You do not have to walk on your knees*

*for a hundred miles through the desert repenting.
You only have to let the soft animal of your body
love what it loves.
Tell me about despair, yours, and I will tell you mine.
Meanwhile the world goes on.
Meanwhile the sun and the clear pebbles of the rain
are moving across the landscapes,
over the prairies and the deep trees,
the mountains and the rivers.
Meanwhile the wild geese, high in the clean blue air,
are heading home again.
Whoever you are, no matter how lonely,
the world offers itself to your imagination,
calls to you like the wild geese, harsh and exciting
over and over announcing your place
in the family of things.*

from [Dream Work](#) by Mary Oliver

Let Yourself Stumble

by [Kat Lehmann](#)

*let yourself
stumble a little
trip yourself open
let the sunlight
warm your soul*

Meeting Your Edge

by [Robert Augustus Masters](#)

If you're not afraid, it's not your edge. If you're not resistant, it's not your edge. If you can coast through it, it's not your edge.

If you're not feeling raw, it's not your edge. If you're trying to fit yourself into a cognitive framework, it's not your edge. If you think you've got it figured out, it's not your edge.

If you leap too soon, you'll bounce back to your old ways before long; and if you wait too long to leap, you'll remain bound to your old ways after the novelty of seeing different ground has worn thin. Going to your edge is not a one-time activity; it's a way of being.

If you're clinging to complication, ricocheting between perspectives, it's not your edge. If you're clinging to easy answers, it's not your edge. If you're settling for crumbs, it's not your edge.

If you're being seduced by hope, it's not your edge. If you're making explanation more central than revelation, it's not your edge. If you're overthinking this, it's not your edge.

If you're trying to make it all make sense, it's not your edge. If you're clinging to despair, it's not your edge. If you're remaining intact, it's not your edge. If it doesn't peel back your eyelids, it's not your edge.

If you're handing your inner critic a megaphone and an uncritical ear, you'll approach your edge only partially, sideways, half-heartedly. If you're fusing with your inner child, your approach to your edge will slow to a crawl, and then a standstill. If you look as you leap and leap as you look, your edge no longer will be ahead of you, but a deepening plunge into an unmapped, fully alive now.

If you keep shelving your invitation to your edge, you run the risk of dying before you truly live, of settling for a meager portion when the feast is not out of reach. If you allow self-sabotage to dethrone you, your edge will be reduced to a postcard you occasionally mail to yourself.

Your edge is where you are most alive, most challenged, most broken open, most in touch with what you were born to stretch into. Your edge may not be a precipice, but it is a naturally precarious place until you learn to homestead there, no longer turning impermanence into a problem or inconvenience.

If it's easy, it's not your edge. If it doesn't call for the very best from you, it's not your edge. If it doesn't seize your heart and ignite your belly, it's not your edge.

If it remains conceptual, it's not your edge. If it gets bogged down in emotion, it's not your edge. If it values the spiritual over the personal, it's not your edge.

Going to our edge uproots us until we find truer ground. It shakes and quakes us, stripping us of our lethargy, reluctance, and bypassing. It is rough grace unbraked, at once undoing and reforming us, without our usual input.

Going to our edge is a risk; not going to our edge is a

bigger risk. Listen very closely – do you not detect the pull, however subtle, of your edge? And do you not also feel a response, however slight, to this, regardless of the hubbub of the rest of your life?

Your edge, as always, awaits you. Now.

What is Grace?

[What is Grace?](#)

by [Robert Augustus Masters, PhD](#)

sourced from [Robert Masters newsletter](#)

December 2018

The notion of Grace is suggestive not only of a dimension of being beyond us yet palpably right here, but also of a guidance and support profoundly attuned to our deepest needs.

In Grace there often is an implication or felt sense of sacred intervention, a not-by-us engineered doing that serves our essential well-being, often in ways that are far from expected.

A serendipitous infusion of what may quite convincingly appear to be more-than-human guidance – this is Grace, however ragged or rough its delivery may be, however unreceptive its reception may be.

Grace arrives whether or not we recognize it. And it does not cease arriving.

The very consideration of Grace conveys a sense of something unexpected and uncannily supportive – though it may not feel supportive at the time! – showing up on our doorstep, permeated with undeniable significance.

Grace is a gift – and more often than not a surprising gift – regardless of its wrapping or manner of arrival.

Somewhere in us there persists a longing for Grace, a longing to receive it and let it carry us where it may – and at the same time there may be a longing for Grace to arrive in a particular form, which of course does not necessarily happen.

Sometimes what we most need is what we assume we least need or don't need, and Grace serves what we most need, which often means that it doesn't seem to us to be Grace at all, but rather just a nasty or unfortunate turn of the wheel.

Grace, however, is neither good luck nor the inevitable result of our good deeds. It is much more mysterious than that, responding as it does to more than just the obviously visible and known.

It's important to recognize that Grace takes much more into account than we can see, being unimaginably intimate with what is out of sight. Grace won't let us down, even if in the short term it deposits us in places or situations that we don't like.

May we let Grace guide our days; may we let Grace flow through us; may we allow Grace to come to us – such prayers are but confessions of intuiting or wanting to host the presence of something gloriously Other, something that, sooner or later, is recognized to be none other than part of what we truly are.

May we not limit Grace to how we think it should manifest. May we not decide beforehand how Grace should look or behave. May our prayers for Grace reach without grabbing, ask without begging, and ready us without leaving us on hold. May we

recognize Grace for what it is, and remain grateful for it.

Grace is the arrival and expression of not-by-us (at least as we ordinarily conceive of ourselves) orchestrated direction and support, emerging without any strategy or manipulation on our part.

When Grace shows up, we are guided in directions that we very likely would have otherwise overlooked, rejected, or not seen. The gift of Grace is an astonishing thing, no matter how often we have witnessed it. It always feels fresh.

In the same sense that prayer could be said to be a divine personal, Grace could be said to be a divine intrusion.

To the extent that prayer reaches up, Grace reaches down. The gravity of the situation demands it.

Some conceive of Grace as the tangible entry of our deepest dimensions into our everyday life and consciousness, appearing in whatever form fits our prevailing frame of reference. Others conceive of Grace as the tangible entry of something far beyond us.

When it comes to Grace, it doesn't matter if we're religious, agnostic, or atheistic. It doesn't matter what our status is. It doesn't matter how high we've been, or how low. Grace simply persists.

When Grace shows up, we usually register it at least to some degree, whether we acknowledge this or not. We cannot engineer Grace, but we can deepen our receptivity to it, making more room for it, knowing that we don't know when it will show up, nor in what form it will arrive.

In the same sense that Life could be said to be the Poetry of Being, and Intimacy the Poetry of Relationship, and Beauty the Poetry of Appearance, Grace could be said to be the Poetry of Opportunity.

May Grace touch you, and may you know that it is touching you.
Feel it now. Don't mind your mind's denial of it.

Invite it in, even though it's already here. Don't make an
idol out of it, for it is as natural to us as our breath. And
rest in its Mystery, knowing you'll never really figure it
out, and don't need to.

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Cover image credit: [bmorell](#)

If: A Poem by Rudyard Kipling (1896)

[If – A Poem by Rudyard Kipling](#)

Video version, as shared by parents and guardians.

If

by **Rudyard Kipling**

*(written in 1896, this poem by the author of The Jungle Book,
was first published in 1910 as part of a book titled "Rewards
and Fairies")*

*If you can keep your head when all about you
Are losing theirs and blaming it on you;
If you can trust yourself when all men doubt you,*

*But make allowance for their doubting too:
If you can wait and not be tired by waiting,
Or, being lied about, don't deal in lies,
Or being hated don't give way to hating,
And yet don't look too good, nor talk too wise;*

*If you can dream – and not make dreams your master;
If you can think – and not make thoughts your aim,
If you can meet with Triumph and Disaster
And treat those two impostors just the same:.
If you can bear to hear the truth you've spoken
Twisted by knaves to make a trap for fools,
Or watch the things you gave your life to, broken,
And stoop and build'em up with worn-out tools;*

*If you can make one heap of all your winnings
And risk it on one turn of pitch-and-toss,
And lose, and start again at your beginnings,
And never breathe a word about your loss:
If you can force your heart and nerve and sinew
To serve your turn long after they are gone,
And so hold on when there is nothing in you
Except the Will which says to them: 'Hold on! '*

*If you can talk with crowds and keep your virtue,
Or walk with Kings – nor lose the common touch,
If neither foes nor loving friends can hurt you,
If all men count with you, but none too much:
If you can fill the unforgiving minute
With sixty seconds' worth of distance run,
Yours is the Earth and everything that's in it,
And- -which is more – you'll be a Man, my son!*

If – a poem by Rudyard Kipling, as read by fathers, mothers
and god parents

a film by Arran North

October 1, 2015

Watch an authentic reading of Rudyard Kipling's world famous

poem, If.

A moving collaboration between fathers, mothers and god parents.

Filmed to coincide with the Cheltenham Literature Festival 2015, this film was planned and shot over the last weekend of September 2015. The film was created with no-budget and everyone generously volunteered their time.

Shot in the cellar bar of Café René, Gloucester, UK – Gloucester’s best known secret. A collaboration between two Gloucester based creative groups: Artists Collaborate and Food for Thoughts. Created by (in order of spoken words): Magdalena Payne, Daniel Woolf, Stig Godding, Steve Bracewell, Salvador Moncholi, Angela Bracewell, Kishi de l’Allebone, Joey Gill, Kieron Bates and Chris Atine.

Arran North (hello@arrannorth.com): Camera/Audio/Creative Direction/Editing/Grading/Production | Tara Kaliszewski: Concept/Creative Direction/Asst. Editing

Intimate Relationship as a Spiritual Crucible

[Intimate Relationship as a Spiritual Crucible](#)

“Every human being with whom we seek relatedness is a koan, that is to say, an impossibility. There is no formula for getting along with a human being. No technique will achieve relatedness. I am impossible to get along with; so is each

one of you; all our friends are impossible; the members of our families are impossible. How then shall we get along with them? ... If you are seeking a real encounter, then you must confront the koan represented by the other person. The koan is an invitation to enter into reality.” ~ John Welwood

by [John Welwood](#)

While most people would like to have healthy, satisfying relationships in their lives, the truth is that everyone has a hard time with intimate partnerships. The poet Rilke understood just how challenging they could be when he penned his classic statement, **“For one person to love another, this is the most difficult of all our tasks.”**

Rilke isn't suggesting it's hard to love or to have loving-kindness. Rather, he is speaking about how hard it is to keep loving someone we live with, day by day, year after year. After numerous hardships and failures, many people have given up on intimate relationship, regarding the relational terrain as so fraught with romantic illusion and emotional hazards that it is no longer worth the energy.

Although modern relationships are particularly challenging, their very difficulty presents a special arena for personal and spiritual growth. To develop more conscious relationships requires becoming conversant with how three different dimensions of human existence play out within them: ego, person, and being.

Every close relationship involves these three levels of interaction that two partners cycle through—ego to ego, person to person, and being to being. While one moment two people may be connecting being to being in pure openness, the next moment

their two egos may fall into deadly combat. When our partners treat us nicely, we open—"Ah, you're so great." But when they say or do something threatening, it's "How did I wind up with you?" Since it can be terribly confusing or devastating when the love of our life suddenly turns into our deadliest enemy, it's important to hold a larger vision that allows us to understand what is happening here.

Relationship as Alchemy

When we fall in love, this usually ushers in a special period, one with its own distinctive glow and magic. Glimpsing another person's beauty and feeling, our heart opening in response provides a taste of absolute love, a pure blend of openness and warmth. This being-to-being connection reveals the pure gold at the heart of our nature, qualities like beauty, delight, awe, deep passion and kindness, generosity, tenderness, and joy.

Yet opening to another also flushes to the surface all kinds of conditioned patterns and obstacles that tend to shut this connection down: our deepest wounds, our grasping and desperation, our worst fears, our mistrust, our rawest emotional trigger points. As a relationship develops, we often find that we don't have full access to the gold of our nature, for it remains embedded in the ore of our conditioned patterns. And so we continually fall from grace.

It's important to recognize that all the emotional and psychological wounding we carry with us from the past is relational in nature: it has to do with not feeling fully loved. And it happened in our earliest relationships—with our caretakers—when our brain and body were totally soft and impressionable. As a result, the ego's relational patterns largely developed as protection schemes to insulate us from the vulnerable openness that love entails. In relationship the ego acts as a survival mechanism for getting needs met while

fending off the threat of being hurt, manipulated, controlled, rejected, or abandoned in ways we were as a child. This is normal and totally understandable. Yet if it's the main tenor of a relationship, it keeps us locked in complex strategies of defensiveness and control that undermine the possibility of deeper connection.

Thus to gain greater access to the gold of our nature in relationship, a certain alchemy is required: the refining of our conditioned defensive patterns. The good news is that this alchemy generated between two people also furthers a larger alchemy within them. The opportunity here is to join and integrate the twin poles of human existence: heaven, the vast space of perfect, unconditional openness, and earth, our imperfect, limited human form, shaped by worldly causes and conditions. As the defensive/controlling ego cooks and melts down in the heat of love's influence, a beautiful evolutionary development starts to emerge—the genuine person, who embodies a quality of very human relational presence that is transparent to open-hearted being, right in the midst of the dense confines of worldly conditioning.

Relationship as Charnel Ground

To clarify the workings of this alchemy, a more gritty metaphor is useful, one that comes from the tantric traditions of Buddhism and Hinduism: relationship as charnel ground. In many traditional Asian societies, the charnel ground was where people would bring dead bodies, to be eaten by vultures and jackals. From the tantric yogi's perspective, this was an ideal place to practice, because it is right at the crossroads of life, where birth and death, fear and fearlessness, impermanence and awakening unfold right next to each other. Some things are dying and decaying, others are feeding and being fed, while others are being born out of the decay. The charnel ground is an ideal place to practice because it is

right at the crossroads of life, where one cannot help but feel the rawness of human existence.

Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche described the charnel ground as “that great graveyard, in which the complexities of samsara and nirvana lie buried.” Samsara is the conditioned mind that clouds our true nature, while nirvana is the direct seeing of this nature. As Trungpa Rinpoche describes this daunting crossroads in one of his early seminars:

It's a place to die and be born, equally, at the same time, it's simply our raw and rugged nature, the ground where we constantly puke and fall down, constantly make a mess. We are constantly dying, we are constantly giving birth. We are eating in the charnel ground, sitting in it, sleeping on it, having nightmares on it... Yet it does not try to hide its truth about reality. There are corpses lying all over the place, loose arms, loose hands, loose internal organs, and flowing hairs all over the place, jackals and vultures are roaming about, each one devising its own scheme for getting the best piece of flesh.

Many of us have a cartoon-like notion of relational bliss: that it should provide a steady state of security or solace that will save us from having to face the gritty, painful, difficult areas of life. We imagine that finding or marrying the right person will spare us from having to deal with such things as loneliness, disappointment, despair, terror, or disintegration. Yet anyone who has been married for a long time probably has some knowledge of the charnel ground quality of relationship—corpses all over the place, and jackals and vultures roaming about looking for the best piece of flesh. Trungpa Rinpoche suggests that if we can work with the “raw and rugged situation” of the charnel ground, **“then some spark or sympathy or compassion, some giving in or opening can begin to take place. The chaos that takes place in your neurosis is the only home ground that you can build the mandala of**

awakening on.” This last sentence is a powerful one, for it suggests that awakening happens only through facing the chaos of our neurotic patterns. Yet this is often the last thing we want to deal with in relationships.

Trungpa Rinpoche suggests that our neurosis is built on the fact that:

...large areas of our life have been devoted to trying to avoid discovering our own experience. Now [in the charnel ground, in our relationships] we have a chance to explore that large area which exists in our being, which we've been trying to avoid. That seems to be the first message, which may be very grim, but also very exciting. We're not trying to get away from the charnel ground, we don't want to build a Hilton hotel in the middle of it. Building the mandala of awakening actually happens on the charnel ground. What is happening on the charnel ground is constant personal exploration, and beyond that, just giving, opening, extending yourself completely to the situation that's available to you. Being fantastically exposed, and the sense that you could give birth to another world.

This also describes the spiritual potential of intimate involvement with another human being.

Another quote with a similar feeling comes from Swami Rudrananda (known as Rudy, a German teacher who was a student of the Indian saint Swami Nityananda), further describing how to work with neurosis in this way:

Don't look for perfection in me. I want to acknowledge my own imperfection, I want to understand that that is part of the endlessness of my growth. It's absolutely useless at this stage in your life, with all of the shit piled up in your closet, to walk around and try to kid yourself about your perfection. Out of the raw material you break down [here he is also speaking of the charnel ground] you grow and absorb

the energy. You work yourself from inside out, tearing out, destroying, and finding a sense of nothingness. That nothingness allows God to come in. But this somethingness—ego and prejudices and limitations—is your raw material. If you process and refine it all, you can open consciously. Otherwise, you will never come to anything that represents yourself ... The only thing that can create a oneness inside you is the ability to see more of yourself as you work every day to open deeper and say, fine, "I'm short-tempered," or "Fine, I'm aggressive," or, "Fine, I love to make money," or, "I have no feeling for anybody else." Once you recognize you're all of these things, you'll finally be able to take a breath and allow these things to open.

Rudy suggests that we have to acknowledge and embrace our imperfections as spiritual path; therefore grand spiritual pretensions miss the point. In his words, **"A man who thinks he has a spiritual life is really an idiot."** The same is true of relationships: beware of thinking you have a "spiritual relationship." While loving connection provides a glimpse of the gold that lies within, we continually corrupt it by turning it into a commodity, a magical charm to make us feel okay. All the delusions of romantic love follow from there. Focusing on relationship as a spiritual or emotional "fix" actually destroys the possibility of finding deep joy, true ease, or honest connection with another.

Sooner or later relationship brings us to our knees, forcing us to confront the raw and rugged mess of our mental and emotional life. George Orwell points to this devastating quality of human love in a sentence that also has a charnel ground flavor to it: "The essence of being human is that one does not seek perfection, and that one is prepared, in the end, to be defeated, and broken up by life, which is the inevitable price of fastening one's love upon other human individuals."

This then is the meaning of the charnel ground: we have to be willing to come apart at the seams, to be dismantled, to let our old ego structures fall apart before we can begin to embody sparks of the essential perfection at the core of our nature. To evolve spiritually, we have to allow these unworked, hidden, messy parts of ourselves to come to the surface. It's not that the strategic, controlling ego is something bad or some unnecessary, horrible mistake. Rather, it provides the indispensable grist that makes alchemical transformation possible.

This is not a pessimistic view, because some kind of breakdown is usually necessary before any significant breakthrough into new ways of living not so encumbered by past conditioning. Charnel ground, then, is a metaphor for this breakdown/breakthrough process that is an essential part of human growth and evolution, and one of the gifts of a deep, intimate connection is that it naturally sets this process in motion. Yet no one wants to be dismantled. So there are two main ways that people try to abort this process: running away and spiritual bypassing.

The problem with running away when a relationship becomes difficult is that we are also turning away from ourselves and our potential breakthroughs. Fleeing the raw, wounded places in ourselves because we don't think we can handle them is a form of self-rejection and self-abandonment that turns our feeling body into an abandoned, haunted house. The more we flee our shadowy places, the more they fester in the dark and the more haunted this house becomes. And the more haunted it becomes, the more it terrifies us. This is a vicious circle that keeps us cut off from and afraid of ourselves.

One of the scariest places we encounter in relationship is a deep inner sense of unlove, where we don't know that we're truly lovable just for being who we are, where we feel deficient and don't know our value. This is the raw wound of the heart, where we're disconnected from our true nature, our

inner perfection. Naturally we want to do everything we can to avoid this place, fix it, or neutralize it, so we'll never have to experience such pain again.

A second way to flee from the challenges of relationship is through spiritual bypassing—using spiritual ideas or practices to avoid or prematurely transcend relative human needs, feelings, personal issues, and developmental tasks. For example, a certain segment of the contemporary spiritual scene has become infected with a facile brand of “advaita-speak,” a one-sided transcendentalism that uses nondual terms and ideas to bypass the challenging work of personal transformation.

Advaita-speak can be very tricky, for it uses absolute truth to disparage relative truth, emptiness to devalue form, and oneness to belittle individuality. The following quotes from two popular contemporary teachers illustrate this tendency: “Know that what appears to be love for another is really love of Self, because other doesn't exist,” and “The other's 'otherness' stands revealed as an illusion pertaining to the purely human realm, the realm of form.” Notice the devaluation of form and the human realm in the latter statement. By suggesting that only absolute love or being-to-being union is real, these teachers equate the person-to-person element necessary for a transformative love bond with mere ego or illusion.

Yet personal intimacy is a spark flashing out across the divide between self and other. It depends on strong individuals making warm, personal contact, mutually sparking and enriching each other with complementary qualities and energies. This is the meeting of I and Thou, which Martin Buber understood not as an impersonal spiritual union but as a personal communion rooted in deep appreciation of the other's otherness.

A deep, intimate connection inevitably brings up all our love wounds from the past. This is why many spiritual practitioners

try to remain above the fray and impersonal in their relationships—so as not to face and deal with their own unhealed relational wounds. But this keeps the wounding unconscious, causing it to emerge as compulsive shadowy behavior or to dry up passion and juice. Intimate personal connecting cannot evolve unless the old love wounds that block it are faced, acknowledged, and freed up.

As wonderful as moments of being-to-being union can be, the alchemical play of joining heaven and earth in a relationship involves a more subtle and beautiful dance: not losing our twoness in the oneness, while not losing our oneness in the twoness. Personal intimacy evolves out of the dancing-ground of dualities: personal and trans-personal, known and unknown, death and birth, openness and karmic limitation, clarity and chaos, hellish clashes and heavenly bliss. The clash and interplay of these polarities, with all its shocks and surprises, provides a ferment that allows for deep transformation through forcing us to keep waking up, dropping preconceptions, expanding our sense of who we are, and learning to work with all the different elements of our humanity.

When we're in the midst of this ferment, it may seem like some kind of fiendish plot. We finally find someone we really love and then the most difficult things start emerging: fear, distrust, unlove, disillusion, resentment, blame, confusion. Yet this is a form of love's grace—that it brings our wounds and defenses forward into the light. For love can only heal what presents itself to be healed. If our woundedness remains hidden, it cannot be healed; the best in us cannot come out unless the worst comes out as well.

So instead of constructing a fancy hotel in the charnel ground, we must be willing to come down and relate to the mess on the ground. We need to regard the wounded heart as a place of spiritual practice. This kind of practice means engaging with our relational fears and vulnerabilities in a deliberate,

conscious way, like the yogis of old who faced down the goblins and demons of the charnel grounds.

The only way to be free of our conditioned patterns is through a full, conscious experience of them. This might be called “ripening our karma,” what the Indian teacher Swami Prajnanpad described as bhoga, meaning “deliberate, conscious experience.” He said, “You can only dissolve karma through the bhoga of this karma.” We become free of what we’re stuck in only through meeting and experiencing it directly. Having the bhoga of your karma allows you to digest unresolved, undigested elements of your emotional experience from the past that are still affecting you: how you were hurt or overwhelmed, how you defended yourself against that by shutting down, how you constructed walls to keep people out.

Another term for directly engaging our karma might be “conscious suffering.” This involves saying “yes” to our pain, opening ourselves to it, as it is. This kind of yes doesn’t mean, “I like it, I’m glad it’s like this.” It just means, “Yes, this is what’s happening.” Whatever comes up, you are willing to meet it and have a direct experience of it. For example, if you’re hard-hearted, you have a full experience of that. Then you see how acknowledging this affects you and what comes from doing that.

Bhoga involves learning to ride the waves of our feelings rather than becoming submerged in them. This requires mindfulness of where we are in the cycle of emotional experience. A skilled surfer is aware of exactly where he is on a wave, whereas an unskilled surfer winds up getting creamed. By their very nature, waves are rising fifty percent of the time and falling the other fifty percent. Instead of fighting the down cycles of our emotional life, we need to learn to keep our seat on the surfboard and have a full, conscious experience of going down. Especially in a culture that is addicted to “up,” we especially need our “yes” when the down cycles unfold—to be willing to fall apart, retreat,

slow down, be patient, let go. For it's often at the bottom of a down cycle, when everything looks totally bleak and miserable, that we finally receive a flash of insight that lets us see the hidden contours of some huge ego fixation in which we've been stuck all our life. Having a full, conscious experience of the down cycle as it's occurring, instead of fighting or transcending it, lets us be available for these moments of illumination.

While the highlands of absolute love are most beautiful, few but the saints can spend all their time there. Relative human love is not a peak experience nor a steady state. It wavers, fluctuates, waxes and wanes, changes shape and intensity, soars and crashes. "This is the exalted melancholy of our fate," writes Buber, describing how moments of I/Thou communion cannot last too very long. Yet though relationships participate fully in the law of impermanence, the good news is that this allows new surprises and revelations to keep arising endlessly.

Relationship as Koan

Relating to the full spectrum of our experience in the relational channel ground leads to a self-acceptance that expands our capacity to embrace and accept others as well. Usually our view of our partners is colored by what they do for us—how they make us look or feel good, or not—and shaped by our internal movie about what we want them to be. This of course makes it hard to see them for who they are in their own right.

Beyond our movie of the other is a much larger field of personal and spiritual possibilities, what Walt Whitman referred to when he said, "I contain multitudes." These "multitudes" are what keep a relationship fresh and interesting, but they can only do that if we can accept the ways that those we love are different from us—in their

background, values, perspectives, qualities, sensitivities, preferences, ways of doing things, and, finally, their destiny. In the words of Swami Prajnanpad, standing advaita-speak on its head: **“To see fully that the other is not you is the way to realizing oneness ... Nothing is separate, everything is different ... Love is the appreciation of difference.”**

Two partners not holding themselves separate, while remaining totally distinct—“not two, not one”—may seem like an impossible challenge in a relationship. Bernard Phillips, an early student of East/West psychology, likens this impossibility of relationship to a Zen koan, a riddle that cannot be solved with the conceptual mind. After continually trying and failing to figure out the answer, Zen students arrive at a genuine solution only in the moment of finally giving up and giving in. In Phillips' words:

Every human being with whom we seek relatedness is a koan, that is to say, an impossibility. There is no formula for getting along with a human being. No technique will achieve relatedness. I am impossible to get along with; so is each one of you; all our friends are impossible; the members of our families are impossible. How then shall we get along with them? ... If you are seeking a real encounter, then you must confront the koan represented by the other person. The koan is an invitation to enter into reality.

In the end, to love another requires dropping all our narcissistic agendas, movies, hopes, and fears, so that we may look freshly and see “the raw other, the sacred other,” just as he or she is. This involves a surrender, or perhaps defeat, as in George Orwell's words about being “defeated and broken up by life.” What is defeated here, of course, is the ego and its strategies, clearing the way for the genuine person to emerge, the person who is capable of real, full-spectrum contact. The nobility of this kind of defeat is portrayed by Rilke in four powerful lines describing Jacob's wrestling match with the angel:

Winning does not tempt that man

For this is how he grows:

By being defeated, decisively,

By constantly greater beings.

In relationship, it is two partners' greater beings, gradually freeing themselves from the prison of conditioned patterns, that bring about this decisive defeat. And as this starts reverberating through their relationship, old expectations finally give way, old movies stop running, and a much larger acceptance than they believed possible can start opening up between them. As they become willing to face and embrace whatever stands between them—old relational wounds from the past, personal pathologies, difficulties hearing and understanding each other, different values and sensitivities—all in the name of loving and letting be, they are invited to “enter into reality.” Then it becomes possible to start encountering each other nakedly, in the open field of nowness, fresh and unfabricated, the field of love forever vibrating with unimagined possibilities.

Adapted from a talk given at the California Institute of Integral Studies in San Francisco.

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What to Remember When Waking

by [David Whyte](#)

*In that first hardly noticed moment in which you wake,
coming back to this life from the other
more secret, moveable and frighteningly honest world
where everything began,
there is a small opening into the new day
which closes the moment you begin your plans.*

*What you can plan is too small for you to live.
What you can live wholeheartedly will make plans enough
for the vitality hidden in your sleep.*

*To be human is to become visible
while carrying what is hidden as a gift to others.
To remember the other world in this world
is to live in your true inheritance.*

*You are not a troubled guest on this earth,
you are not an accident amidst other accidents
you were invited from another and greater night
than the one from which you have just emerged.*

*Now, looking through the slanting light of the morning window
toward the mountain presence of everything that can be
what urgency calls you to your one love?
What shape waits in the seed of you
to grow and spread its branches
against a future sky?*

*Is it waiting in the fertile sea?
In the trees beyond the house?
In the life you can imagine for yourself?
In the open and lovely white page on the writing desk?*

The Mountain Before You

by [Kat Lehmann](#)

*the mountain before you
is just a symbol*

*what you climb
step by step
is yourself*

The Snow Man

*Death is the mother of beauty.
Only the perishable can be beautiful,
which is why we are unmoved by artificial flowers.
~ Wallace Stevens*

by [Wallace Stevens](#)

*One must have a mind of winter
To regard the frost and the boughs
Of the pine-trees crusted with snow;

And have been cold a long time*

*To behold the junipers shagged with ice,
The spruces rough in the distant glitter*

*Of the January sun; and not to think
Of any misery in the sound of the wind,
In the sound of a few leaves,*

*Which is the sound of the land
Full of the same wind
That is blowing in the same bare place*

*For the listener, who listens in the snow,
And, nothing himself, beholds
Nothing that is not there and the nothing that is.*

Sometimes

Sometimes

by [David Whyte](#)

*Sometimes
if you move carefully
through the forest,*

*breathing
like the ones
in the old stories,*

*who could cross
a shimmering bed of leaves
without a sound,*

you come to a place

*whose only task
is to trouble you
with tiny
but frightening requests,
conceived out of nowhere
but in this place
beginning to lead everywhere.*

*Requests to stop what
you are doing right now,
and*

*to stop what you
are becoming
while you do it,*

*questions
that can make
or unmake
a life,*

*questions
that have patiently
waited for you,*

*questions
that have no right
to go away.*

from David Whyte's [Everything is Waiting for You](#)

Comedy Wildlife Photos

Source: [Mother Nature News](#)

Squirrel can't believe who won the Comedy Wildlife Photography Awards

by [Jacqueline Gullede](#)

November 21, 2018



'Caught in the Act' (Photo: Mary McGowan/Comedy Wildlife Photography Awards)

Just in time for the holidays, we've got the winners of the [Comedy Wildlife Photography Awards](#) – and they're sure to put a smile on your face.

The overall winner was Mary McGowan for her hilarious photo of a surprised squirrel. Makes you wonder what the naughty squirrel was up to before this picture was taken. Judges and the public loved the photo so much that McGowan also won the Affinity Photo People's Choice Award and Alex Walker's Serian Creatures of the Land Award.

Other category winners feature animals under the sea and up high in the sky along with a young photographer category, portfolio showcase winner, and several images received a "highly commended" honor.

While these images are downright humorous, the competition highlights the serious issue of conservation and partners with [Born Free Foundation](#), a wildlife charity that works to help wild animals living in captivity.

The Comedy Wildlife Photography Awards encourages its followers to follow their mantra. “We want you to take up our banner of wildlife conservation, bang the drum, beat the cymbal and make some noise, we need to spread the word – wildlife, as we know it, is in danger, all over the world and we need to do something to help save it.”

Spectrum Photo Creatures of the Air Award



‘Peekaboo’ (Photo: Shane Keena/Comedy Wildlife Photography Awards)

Think Tank Under the Sea Category Award



‘Smiling shark’ (Photo: Tanya Houppermans/Comedy Wildlife Photography Awards)

Junior Category



‘Nature Calls...’ (Photo: Arshdeep Singh/Comedy Wildlife Photography Awards)

Amazing Internet Portfolio Award



'Mother home early from school parents meeting' (Photo: Valterri Mulkahainen/Comedy Wildlife Photography Awards)

Highly Commended Winners



'So There' (Photo: Barney Koszalka/Comedy Wildlife Photography Awards)



'Bear with a sore head' (Photo: Danielle D'Ermo/Comedy Wildlife Photography Awards)



'Splits' (Photo: Geert Weggen/Comedy Wildlife Photography Awards)



'Drive Safe!' (Photo: Jonathan Irish/Comedy Wildlife Photography Awards)



'Rhinopeacock' (Photo: Kallol Mukherjee/Comedy Wildlife Photography Awards)

Photography Awards)



'Tango' (Photo: Michael Watts/Comedy Wildlife Photography Awards)



'PhotograBear' (Photo: Roie Galitz/Comedy Wildlife Photography Awards)



'Martian Tango' (Photo: Sergey Savvi/Comedy Wildlife Photography Awards)



'This is Sparta' (Photo: Sergey Savvi/Comedy Wildlife Photography Awards)



**'Mother home early from school parents meeting'
(Photo: Valterri Mulkahainen/Comedy Wildlife Photography Awards)**

The House of Belonging

The House of Belonging

by David Whyte

*I awoke
this morning
in the gold light
turning this way
and that*

*thinking for
a moment
it was one
day
like any other.*

*But
the veil had gone
from my
darkened heart
and
I thought*

*it must have been the quiet
candlelight
that filled my room,*

*it must have been
the first
easy rhythm
with which I breathed
myself to sleep,*

*it must have been
the prayer I said*

*speaking to the otherness
of the night.*

And

*I thought
this is the good day
you could
meet your love,*

*this is the black day
someone close
to you could die.*

*This is the day
you realize
how easily the thread
is broken
between this world
and the next*

*and I found myself
sitting up
in the quiet pathway
of light,*

*the tawny
close-grained cedar
burning round
me like fire
and all the angels of this housely
heaven ascending
through the first
roof of light
the sun has made.*

*This is the bright home
in which I live,
this is where
I ask*

*my friends
to come,
this is where I want
to love all the things
it has taken me so long
to learn to love.*

*This is the temple
of my adult aloneness
and I belong
to that aloneness
as I belong to my life.*

*There is no house
like the house of belonging.*

from David Whyte's [House of Belonging](#)

The Invitation

by [Oriah Mountain Dreamer](#)

[Source](#)

*It doesn't interest me what you do for a living.
I want to know what you ache for
and if you dare to dream of meeting your heart's longing.*

*It doesn't interest me how old you are.
I want to know if you will risk looking like a fool*

for love
for your dream
for the adventure of being alive.

It doesn't interest me what planets are squaring your moon .

. . .

*I want to know if you have touched the centre of your own
sorrow*

*if you have been opened by life's betrayals
or have become shrivelled and closed
from fear of further pain.*

*I want to know if you can sit with pain
mine or your own
without moving to hide it
or fade it
or fix it.*

*I want to know if you can be with joy
mine or your own
if you can dance with wildness
and let the ecstasy fill you to the tips of your fingers and
toes
without cautioning us to be careful be realistic
remember the limitations of being human.*

*It doesn't interest me if the story you are telling me is
true.*

*I want to know if you can disappoint another to be true to
yourself.*

*If you can bear the accusation of betrayal
and not betray your own soul.*

If you can be faithless and therefore trustworthy.

*I want to know if you can see Beauty
even when it is not pretty every day.
And if you can source your own life from its presence.*

I want to know if you can live with failure

*yours and mine
and still stand at the edge of the lake
and shout to the silver of the full moon,
"Yes."*

*It doesn't interest me to know where you live
or how much money you have.
I want to know if you can get up after the night of grief and
despair
weary and bruised to the bone
and do what needs to be done to feed the children.*

*It doesn't interest me who you know or how you came to be
here.
I want to know if you will stand in the centre of the fire
with me
and not shrink back.*

*It doesn't interest me where or what or with whom you have
studied.
I want to know what sustains you from the inside
when all else falls away.*

*I want to know if you can be alone with yourself
and if you truly like the company you keep
in the empty moments.*

Selection from [THE INVITATION](#), Harper: San Francisco, 1999.

The Journey

The Journey

by [David Whyte](#)

*Above the mountains
the geese turn into
the light again*

*Painting their
black silhouettes
on an open sky.*

*Sometimes everything
has to be
inscribed across
the heavens*

*so you can find
the one line
already written
inside you.*

*Sometimes it takes
a great sky
to find that*

*first, bright
and indescribable
wedge of freedom
in your own heart.*

*Sometimes with
the bones of the black
sticks left when the fire
has gone out*

*someone has written
something new
in the ashes of your life.*

*You are not leaving.
Even as the light fades quickly now,
you are arriving.*

from David Whyte's [House of Belonging](#)

An Infinite Number of New Beginnings

Source: [Life Without a Centre](#)

by Jeff Foster

*In your attempt to be an 'adult',
you lose touch with your inner child.
In your rush to be the 'expert',
you disconnect from the amateur in you,
the inner lover, innocent and wild.*

*In your quest for security,
you run from your insecurity,
bury your anxiety, crush your doubts,
until one day they explode all over the place.
And make a mess of your nice, 'ordered' life.*

*Don't confuse the role you play
with who you truly are.
Don't confuse the adaptation with the actor,*

the changing weather with the vastness of sky.

Your true identity lies in Presence, friend.

And wonder.

And creativity.

And an infinite number of new beginnings.

Each moment.

Each canvas.

Each Now.

How to Love

Source: [Life Without a Centre](#)

by Jeff Foster

*When a loved one is in physical or emotional pain,
when their world no longer makes sense,
your simple listening can work wonders.*

Cry with them.

Be silent with them.

Validate their feelings, however painful.

Help them feel known in this world.

Don't offer clever answers now. Offer yourself.

Don't preach and teach.

Don't judge them, or make them feel wrong for thinking their thoughts.

Embrace them.

So they do not feel alone.

*So they can touch upon their own courage.
Their capacity to withstand intense feelings.*

*When a friend is in physical or emotional pain,
when their world no longer makes sense,
offer them the greatest medicine of all:
Your love.*

Who Says Animals Don't Have a Sense of Humor?

Source: [Mother Nature Network](#)

Check out the finalists of the Comedy Wildlife Photography Awards.

by [Jacqueline Gullede](#)

September 17, 2018



'Drive Safe' (Photo: Jonathan Irish/Comedy Wildlife Photography Awards)

From a smiling shark to an elephant playing in the dirt and a whole bunch of bears dancing the tango, this year's [Comedy Wildlife Photography Awards](#) finalists are sure to put a smile on your face.

These 41 images were selected out of thousands of submissions from around the world. While the photos are whimsical, the

competition also has a serious message. The photography contest maintains a partnership with Born Free Foundation, an international nonprofit organization that is “working tirelessly to ensure that all wild animals, whether living in captivity or in the wild, are treated with compassion and respect. We work across the world to preserve and protect wildlife in its natural habitat – finding Compassionate Conservation solutions so that humans and wildlife can co-exist peacefully.”

For the first time, the competition has opened up one category, the Affinity Photo People’s Choice Award, for a public vote. Anyone can [vote online](#) for their favorite.

On Nov. 15, one of the images listed here will be announced as the grand prize winner, and all of these photographs will be published in [The Comedy Wildlife Photography Awards Vol. 2](#) book to be released in October.



‘The Yawn’ (Photo: Danielle D’Ermo/Comedy Wildlife Photography Awards)



‘Order’ (Photo: Achim Sterna/Comedy Wildlife Photography Awards)



‘Bullies’ (Photo: Amy Kennedy/Comedy Wildlife Photography Awards)



'Guffaw' (Photo: Amy Kennedy/Comedy Wildlife Photography Awards)



'Ashamed' (Photo: Antonio Medina/Comedy Wildlife Photography Awards)



'Smiling ele' (Photo: Anup Deodhar/Comedy Wildlife Photography Awards)



'So There' (Photo: Barney Koszalka/Comedy Wildlife Photography Awards)



'Dancing Deer' (Photo: Bartek Olszewski/Comedy Wildlife Photography Awards)



'I guess the honeymoon is over' (Photo: Christopher Schlaf/Comedy Wildlife Photography Awards)



'Rabbit hiding face in embarrassment' (Photo: Daniel Friend/Comedy Wildlife Photography Awards)



'Coastal brown bear cub with headache' (Photo: Danielle D'Ermo/Comedy Wildlife Photography Awards)



'Perfect Pillow' (Photo: Denise Dupras/Comedy Wildlife Photography Awards)



'Split' (Photo: Geert Weggen/Comedy Wildlife Photography Awards)



'Walrus Breath' (Photo: Jackie Downey/Comedy Wildlife Photography Awards)



'Astonished Lemur' (Photo: Jakob Strecker/Comedy Wildlife Photography Awards)



'Crouching Tiger Peeking Moose' (Photo: Jamie Bussey/Comedy Wildlife Photography Awards)

Wildlife Photography Awards)



'Rhinopeacock' (Photo: Kallol Mukherjee/Comedy Wildlife Photography Awards)



'The Black Skimmer Gang' (Photo: Ke Qiang Ruan/Comedy Wildlife Photography Awards)



'Flying Hyena' (Photo: Kevin Rooney/Comedy Wildlife Photography Awards)



'Dances with Bears' (Photo: Luca Venturi/Comedy Wildlife Photography Awards)



'The singing moose' (Photo: Mary Hone/Comedy Wildlife Photography Awards)



'Caught in the Act' (Photo: Mary McGowan/Comedy Wildlife Photography Awards)



'Have a Headache' (Photo: Maureen Toft/Comedy Wildlife Photography Awards)



'Should have gone to Specsavers' (Photo: Michael Lane/Comedy Wildlife Photography Awards)



'Tango' (Photo: Michael Watts/Comedy Wildlife Photography Awards)



'Spy' (Photo: Muntazeri Abdi/Comedy Wildlife Photography Awards)



'Happy' (Photo: Muriel Vekemans/Comedy Wildlife Photography Awards)



'The people are back' (Photo: Patty Bauchman/Comedy Wildlife Photography Awards)



'Yoga Bear' (Photo: Qiusheng Hu/Comedy Wildlife Photography Awards)



'majestic stag' (Photo: Robert Adamson/Comedy Wildlife Photography Awards)



'PhotograBear' (Photo: Roie Galitz/Comedy Wildlife Photography Awards)



'Polar bear doing yoga' (Photo: Roie Galitz/Comedy Wildlife Photography Awards)



'Least Tern Chick' (Photo: Sarah Devlin/Comedy Wildlife Photography Awards)



'Hot Kiss' (Photo: Sergey Savvi/Comedy Wildlife Photography Awards)



'Martian Tango' (Photo: Sergey Savvi/Comedy Wildlife Photography Awards)



'This is Sparta' (Photo: Sergey Savvi/Comedy Wildlife Photography Awards)



'Peek-a-boo' (Photo: Shane Keena/Comedy Wildlife Photography Awards)



'Over here' (Photo: Simon Gee/Comedy Wildlife Photography Awards)



'Smiling Blue Shark' (Photo: Tanya Houppermans/Comedy Wildlife Photography Awards)



'Mother returned from her parents meeting from school' (Photo: Valterri Mulkahainen/Comedy Wildlife Photography Awards)

Hidden Mystery

Source: [Web of Love](#)

by Fred Burks

*In the deepest depths of you and me
In the deepest depths of we
Lies the most beautiful jewel
Shining forth eternally*

*Within that precious jewel
Within that priceless piece of we
Lies a time beyond all time
Lies a place beyond all space*

*Within that sacred source of radiance
Lies a love beyond all love
Waiting
Waiting
Waiting
Ever so patiently*

*Waiting for you, waiting for me
Waiting patiently for all to see
The beauty that is you inside of me
The beauty that is me inside of thee*

*In the deepest depths of you and me
In the deepest depths of we
Lies the love and wisdom
Of all Eternity*

Be Like the Sky

by Jeff Foster

Be like the Sky.

*Let rain, snow, the most ferocious storm,
pass through, moment by moment.*

You can withstand anything.

You were built to LIVE.

Breathe into your pain.

Oxygenate your sorrow.

Invite Awareness deep into your rage.

Trust that it is here.

Trust that it shall pass.

Trust that you will remain.

Trust that you always have.

Trust that

sometimes

you forget

how to trust.

Beautiful, Flawed Us

by [John Welwood](#)

You are flawed,

you are stuck in old patterns,

you become carried away with yourself.

Indeed you are quite impossible in many ways.

And still, you are beautiful beyond measure.

For the core of what you are is fashioned out of love,

that potent blend of openness, warmth,

and clear, transparent presence.

A Great Need

Out

Of a great need

We are all holding hands

And climbing.

Not loving is a letting go.

Listen,

The terrain around here

Is

Far too

Dangerous

For

That.

~Hafiz

from *The Subject Tonight is Love*, translated by Daniel
Ladinsky

Forgiveness

Forgiveness is the cash you need.

All the other kinds of silver really buy just strange things.

Everything has its music.

Everything has genes of God inside.

But learn from those courageous addicted lovers

of glands and opium and gold –

Look, they cannot jump high or laugh long

when they are whirling.

And the moon and the stars become sad

when their tender light is used for night wars.

Forgiveness is part of the treasure you need

to craft your falcon wings

And return to your true realm

of Divine freedom.

~Hafiz, in *The Subject Tonight is Love*, translated by Daniel Ladinsky

You are Me

*You are me and I am you.
It is obvious that we are inter-are.
You cultivate the flower in
yourself so that I will be beautiful.
I transform the garbage in myself so
that you do not have to suffer.
I support you you support me.
I am here to bring you peace
you are here to bring me joy.*

From Prison to Paradise

Source: [Light on Conspiracies](#)

[*From Prison to Paradise*](#)

by Ole Dammegard

*Once upon a time in a place not far from here
There were so much loneliness, despair and oh so much fear.
Darkness ruled all over the land, there was lightning in the*

Sky

Causing wars and separation with no one knowing why.

*These evil times raised leaders disguised as Kind and True
Hiding the Truth in misty fog so only very few people knew
Controlled by an Elite few manipulating you and me
Closing out the Light and Power that can make us all be free.*

*Wake up! Wake up! We've gotta wake up!
Wake up! Wake up! We've gotta wake up! Now!*

*Forced by invisible powers, demanded to conform
Into shapes unknown to Mankind making him totally abnormal,
Drowned in debts and sorrows blaming others for their lot
Made Man believe to be inferior, feeling tiny like a dot*

*But then came Times of Change covering countries and their
towns.*

*Few became many and soon the prison walls came down
Starting with the men in the mirrors staring right back into
their eyes
Understanding that this was a chance to stop those hideous
lies.*

*Unhappiness is merely an Illusion of misery
Based on brainwash and a misconception of True Reality.
From now on let's build bridges between our Souls and Hearts
So we together can rejoice when the final change comes to its
start.*

*Turning prison into Paradise may seem too much to achieve
But believe me, it only takes One Strong Spirit to be Free
The True Power of a pyramid is never at the top
Instead, it is We The People that can make this global game
stop.*

*Wake up – Wake up – we've gotta wake up – it has to stop
So wake up – Wake up – you've gotta wake up – to stop
So wake up – wake up – It has to stop – We've gotta wake up*

Now.

Vaccine Woman

[Vaccine Woman](#)

by [Jon Rappoport](#), [No More Fake News](#)

July 3, 2018

*there was no way to deny it or get around it
her little boy started screaming after the shot
and then 2 days later
the world shut down*

*he sat in a corner
he lay in his bed
he didn't speak*

*the doctor huffed and puffed in back of his steady blank
eyes
he assured her this had nothing to do with the shot
it was a predisposition or a genetic trait or a
precondition*

*he smiled now and then
he said autism could have emerged on its own just after the
shot was given
as if the universe rearranged itself
at that moment*

*she saw she was talking to a psychopath
he had been a machine for a long long time*

she went into the darkness and pled her case before a

government committee
they sat like ancient high priests
and listened and glanced at documents
and when they had permitted her the allotted time they
handed down their judgment:

no

she went home and took her boy in her arms
he was still
he didn't look at her
he didn't speak

she consulted a lawyer
who told her
the manufacturer was protected by an iron wall
he would continue to make the vaccine and sell it
and pocket billions

the long night was closing in
the storm was here
the silent boy was sitting in its eye

rage was burning in the middle of her chest

a rage the public would see as insanity

from a distance, the moon and the stars might know
what was going on
but people in their everyday straitjackets
would lash out at her
because they needed a target
they needed to ridicule a defector from their own slave-
shuffle

they obeyed all the small print
they were neutered in their cores
paralytics

but she wields
the two-edged sword in the empire

that cuts away the web
and comes to the spider

*no matter what defamation
the intermediary whores
lay at her door*

*lady liberty, liberty from the living death...Vaccine Woman
She and her family are pre-civilization, civilization, and
Post-civilization*

And she will go to the ends of the earth

To bare the innards of the crime

Her enemies will never know

What it means to have her mission, her eternal mission

But she knows

Vaccine Woman

Love in her breast for her own is one answer

Justice is the other

She has a two-edged sword in the Empire

That cuts through the web

And comes to the spider

Vaccine Woman...

Connect with Jon Rappoport [website](#) | [substack](#)

**Love's Song of Freedom | What
You Gonna Do About Me**

Love's Song of Freedom & What You're Gonna Do About Me

by Terry Callier

Love Theme from Spartacus

*Can it be? Do you hear?
A new freedom song is ringing
No more dark, no more fear
There's a new day that it's bringing
Something simple is the key
Only love will set us free
It's so far, it's so near
Almost close, almost here*

What About Me?

*What you gonna do about me?
Oh, what you gonna do about me*

*Oh, what you gonna do about me
You poisoned our sweet water
And you chopped down our green trees.*

*The food they sell to children
Is the cause of their disease.*

*My world is slowly meltin' down
And the air's not fit to breathe
Those of us who care enough
Are strugglin' to be free.*

*Oh, what you gonna do about me
Oh, what you gonna do about me
Oh, what you gonna do about me
Oh, what you gonna do about me*

*I work inside your factories
I struggle in your schools
I fill your penitentiaries
And your military too*

*I feel the whole world tremblin'
As the world is passed around
If you stand up for what you believe in
Then be prepared to get shot down*

Oh, what you gonna do about me

Oh, what you gonna do about me

Oh, what you gonna do about me

Oh, what you gonna do about me

I feel just like a stranger

Blamed for things I've never done

I'm livin' like an outlaw

I'm always on the run

Oh, what you gonna do about me

Oh, what you gonna do about me

Oh, what you gonna do about me

Oh, what you gonna do about me

Terrence Orlando "Terry" Callier (May 24, 1945 – October 27, 2012) was an American [soul](#), [folk](#) and [jazz](#) guitarist and singer-songwriter.

Am I an Anti-Semite?

Am I an Anti-Semite?

<http://bornoutsidethebox.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/Am%20I%20an%20Anti-Semite.mp4>

Awakening from Awakening

Source: [Life Without a Center](#)

by [Jeff Foster](#)

This is a true story.

Once, at a conference, I watched a spiritual teacher addressing a grieving woman whose precious young son had just died.

Her world had just collapsed.

An old reality had shattered.

She said, "My heart is broken and raw".

He told her, "Your heartbreak is the activity of the separate self,

and therefore illusory, based in ignorance.

When the separate self dissolves,

there will be no more suffering.

In awareness, there is no death.

Awareness has no son."

He told her she needed to 'wake up'.

She needed to recognise herself as 'Pure Awareness'.

She was pretending to be a victim.

She didn't know 'who she truly was'.

And in that moment, I saw a deep sickness and inhumanity at the heart of much of our contemporary spirituality.

The invalidation and shaming of trauma,

the false promises, the power games,

and most of all, the suppression of the divine feminine.

Making our grief, anger, fear and joy a 'mistake' or some
'sign'
that we are not awakened enough, not spiritual enough,
not 'divine' enough in our embodied humanity.
The pathologising of our wildness.
The shaming of our fragility, our sensitivity.

Friends, if this is 'spiritual awakening', I simply have no
interest.

Let us bow to our fragile, vulnerable humanity! Not run from
it!

Let us bless our precious broken hearts! Not pathologise them!
Let us infuse our deepest human experience with empathy,
understanding. See it for the miracle it is.

Send a curious, warm awareness deep into our wounds.

Not to mend, not to fix, but to feel!

Not to 'awaken', but to penetrate and be penetrated
by love. The awakening of the heart. The remembering
of the magic we knew when we were very young.

Let us embrace our painful feelings.

Not see them as a 'sign' of our spiritual failure,

or our inability to manifest,

or our ignorance,

or our lack of strength.

Let us wake up from the old concept of 'awakening'.

Re-enchanted the word itself, drench it with compassion.

Return to the sacredness in our humanity!

Let the Divine shine through our messy human hearts.

Bless them. Infuse them. Let them ache and be transmuted.

Meet each other in the fire of living.

Be present with each other

instead of trying to fix each other.

Say, *"Yes my heart is broken and raw and you are my sister!"*

Lao Tzu and Others on Why You Must Fix Your Anger Before Trying to Fix the World

Source: [Waking Times](#)

by [Dylan Charles](#)

March 29, 2018

“The best fighter is never angry.” ~Lao Tzu

There are so many different social movements coming into the media spotlight every year, each of them working towards a different agenda, and each of them working against other social movements. It is chaos. But in this chaos there is one commonality they all share: they are motivated first and foremost by anger.

While it is certainly noble to wish to change the world for the better, the vast majority of would-be-change-makers are acting out of anger. And while it can be argued that anger is a natural response to the dire conditions of the day, it is important to understand that acting out of anger is most often highly counter-productive to the aim of improving one's condition and position in life.

The great Chinese philosopher Lao Tzu understood this, and he knew that actions born of anger lead to further muddling of circumstances. He also understood that a truly effective warrior comes from a place of radical acceptance of what is, for this is the central message of Taoism.

In chapter 68 of the Tao Te Ching, Lao Tzu notes:

*A good soldier is not violent.
A good fighter is not angry.
A good winner is not vengeful.
A good employer is humble.
This is known as the Virtue of not striving.
This is known as ability to deal with others.
This since ancient times has been known
as the ultimate unity with heaven.*

~Lao Tzu, the Tao Te Ching chapter 68

From the Taoist perspective anger is seen as an expression of a conflict between the ego's perception of the way things are and reality. It is resistance to embracing all things in whatever state they may appear to be in, which is a trap of self-absorption. It is the result of a failure to accept what is.

The following passage from Lao Tzu's Hua Hu Ching explains this 'departure' from the way.

"Those who wish to embody the Tao should embrace all things. To embrace all things means first that one holds no anger or resistance toward any idea or thing, living or dead, formed or formless. Acceptance is the very essence of the Tao. To embrace all things means also that one rids oneself of any concept of separation; male and female, self and other, life and death. Division is contrary to the nature of the Tao. Foregoing antagonism and separation, one enters in the harmonious oneness of all things.

Every departure from the Tao contaminates one's spirit. Anger is a departure, resistance a departure, self-absorption a departure." ~Lao Tzu in the Hua Hu Ching

Speaking to journalist Bill Moyers in the following passage, the great American mythologist and author Joseph Campbell tells a story about a Samurai warrior and anger:

“JOSEPH CAMPBELL: I will participate in the game. It’s a wonderful, wonderful opera, except that it hurts. And that wonderful Irish saying, you know, “Is this a private fight, or can anybody get into it?” This is the way life is, and the hero is the one who can participate in it decently, in the way of nature, not in the way of personal rancor, revenge or anything of the kind.

Let me tell you one story here, of a samurai warrior, a Japanese warrior, who had the duty to avenge the murder of his overlord. And he actually, after some time, found and cornered the man who had murdered his overlord. And he was about to deal with him with his samurai sword, when this man in the corner, in the passion of terror, spat in his face. And the samurai sheathed the sword and walked away. Why did he do that?

BILL MOYERS: Why?

JOSEPH CAMPBELL: Because he was made angry, and if he had killed that man then, it would have been a personal act, of another kind of act, that’s not what he had come to do.”
[Source]

You see, the world is an impersonal place inhabited by persons. None of us see eye-to-eye on everything, but all of us have the capacity to influence and shape our shared reality. When people, divided by ideas and propaganda, join forces in anger and lash out against the world, it only stokes chaos and resentment, pushing things further out of balance.

Therefore, it is essential to resolve the anger within yourself before attempting to resolve some external

circumstance which brings out the angry version of you, which is the version of you least capable of improving anything, as psychologist and scholar Jordan Peterson describes:

“There’s the angry you, and you know, you all come in contact with the angry you. It’s rather rigid. That’s the first thing you might say about it. It’s impulsive and short-term. It doesn’t think much about the past, unless it’s bad things about whoever you’re angry at, in which case it thinks about them a lot. It’s not too concerned with long-term future consequences, and mostly it wants to be right.” ~Jordan Peterson

The simple but powerful notion of overcoming your anger in order to be a true change-maker is also elucidated by the Dalai Lama in a short quote:

*“The true hero is one who conquers his own anger and hatred.”
~The Dalai Lama*

This article ([Lao Tzu and Others on Why You Must Fix Your Anger Before Trying to Fix the World](#)) was originally created and published by [Waking Times](#) and is published here under a [Creative Commons](#) license with attribution to [Dylan Charles](#) and [WakingTimes.com](#). It may be re-posted freely with proper attribution, author bio, and this copyright statement.

Coming Home... Room for Sadness

[Snordster](#)

Published on Sep 26, 2017

ROOM FOR SADNESS

by [Jeff Foster](#) from [Book of Faces](#)

August 3, 2015

Your sadness doesn't say, "Please fix me, heal me, or release me". It doesn't say, "Please get rid of me, numb yourself to me, pretend I'm not here". It certainly doesn't say, "Please get enlightened so I can die!".

Sadness does not come to punish you, or reveal to you what a 'spiritual failure' you are. Sadness is not a sign that you are unevolved or far from healing, awakening, enlightenment, peace.

The presence of sadness is not an indication that you've done something wrong.

Sadness only whispers, "May I come in? I am tired, I long for rest".

And you reply, "But sadness, I don't know how to allow you in!"

And sadness replies, "It's okay. You don't need to know. I'm already in".

And we bow to sadness then, we recognise how it's already allowed in, how there's enough room in us for sadness, how we are not 'the sad one', not contained within sadness, but the room for sadness, its space, its home, its salvation, its loving embrace; not as a goal, but as our nature – consciousness itself, already free.

Don't heal yourself from sadness; let sadness heal you. Let it show you the way when you have forgotten. Let it reveal to you the mysteries of love. Let it remind you of your vast heart, your refusal to split off from any part of your ancient Self.

Let sadness help you remember that bigger Happiness you danced when you were young.

– Jeff Foster

The Stairway of Existence

[The Stairway of Existence](#)

by **Hafiz**, *Persian lyric poet & mystic (1320 to 1389)*

*We
Are not
In pursuit of formalities
Or fake religious
Laws,*

*For through the stairway of existence
We have come to God's
Door.*

*We are
People who need to love, because
Love is the soul's life,*

Love is simply creation's greatest joy.

Through

*The stairway of existence,
O, through the stairway of existence, Hafiz*

*Have
You now come,
Have we all now come to
The Beloved's
Door.*

*from [The Gift](#)
translated by Daniel Ladinsky*

To Be a Man: Toward True Masculine Power

[To Be a Man: Toward True Masculine Power](#)

by [Robert Augustus Masters, PhD](#)

the following is an excerpt from Robert Masters' book "[To Be a Man](#)"

"Be a man!"

Whatever its intentions, this demand does a lot more harm than good. It's a powerful shame-amplifier, packed with "shoulds" – and the last thing males need is more shaming, more degradation for not making the grade.

Men – and boys – on the receiving end of "Be a man!" get the

message that they are lacking in certain factors that supposedly constitute manliness.

And what are some of these factors? Showing no weakness; emotional stoicism; aggressiveness; holding it together and not losing face, no matter what's going on. Sucking it up. (Think of what pride boys may feel when they're successful at this, especially when they're "strong" enough to not cry or show any signs of vulnerability.)

A manly handshake is a firm one, even a steely one; a manly approach means, among other things, keeping it together emotionally, not losing one's cool. To be unmanned is to "lose it" emotionally (except when it comes to anger), such a loss of face often being taken to mean a loss of strength (when Abraham Lincoln couldn't help publicly crying over the killing of a friend, he described his very visible upset as having "unmanned" him). To be unmanned means being visibly vulnerable, being ball-less ("chickening out"), being brought low by shame, being subservient to dominant others.

To "man up" is an expression originally used in football and military contexts, meaning not much more than toughen up, move into battle, "grow a pair," with the apparent failure to do so often resulting in one getting referred to as a girl or lady (who in this context epitomize softness, equated in many a male mind with weakness). Imagine a masculine icon, a famous leader or athlete, not just misting up, not just shedding a few silent tears or fighting back his tears, but crying hard and with abandon – this would be very, very uncomfortable for all too many men watching, no matter how "legitimate" the sadness or grief was.

Men may respond to the exhortation to "be a man!" by getting harder or tougher, more ruthlessly driven, more competitive, more uncaring about their unresolved wounds, making "getting over it" more important than "feeling it" or "going through it." Conversely, men might also respond to the exhortation to

“be a man!” by rebelling against its certainties of what constitutes a man, driving their hardness and competitiveness into the shadows and making too much of a virtue out of their softness and more “feminine” qualities. But in either case they are reacting to whatever notion of manhood has been or is being authoritatively held aloft before them, defining themselves through – and impaling themselves upon – such reactivity.

So let’s consider other factors or qualities that ought to – but generally *don’t* – count for much in making a male a “real” man, factors that many men keep in the shadows: vulnerability, empathy, emotional transparency and literacy, the capacity for relational intimacy – all qualities far more commonly associated with being female than male.

The visible presence of these “soft” qualities induces far more discomfort in most men than the “hard” ones. But once they are brought out into the open and respected/honored – which takes courage – they can coexist with the capacity to express anger skillfully and take strongly directed action, empowering men in ways that serve the highest good of all of us. True masculine power is rooted in this dynamic blend of “softer” and “harder” attributes – showing up as a potent alignment of head, heart, and guts. When head (thinking, rationality, analysis), heart (caring, compassion, love) and guts (resolve, resilience, bravery) all inform each other and work together, a truly healthy manhood cannot help but arise.

Getting to such power requires facing and outgrowing less-than-healthy forms of power. There is great beauty and much to celebrate in men stepping more fully into their authentic manhood, a beauty at once rough and tender, caring and fierce, raw and subtle, anchored in standing one’s true ground, whatever the weather.

Shame Left Unattended Is Shame that Runs Us

“Be a man!” may seem a straightforward statement, but is

packed to varying degrees with pressures and expectations – and often an in-your-face shaming – the *delivery* of which often alienates men from much of their basic humanity. Such alienation has enormous consequences. When we are thus cut off – emotionally and relationally disconnected or numbed – we are far more capable of dehumanizing activity, far more able to rationalize harmful behavior, far more likely to be caught up in abuses of power and sex. But nothing can truly compensate for what’s been lost through such disconnection and numbing. Dissociation from one’s soul – one’s individuated essence or core of being – is hell, regardless of one’s comforts and distractions, and all too many men are suffering this, doing little more than just getting by or dutifully “manning up.”

There is such pain in the pressure, the demand, “to be a man,” such deep and often debilitating hurt, however much it might be camouflaged by stoicism, excessive pride, apparent sexual prowess, aggression, and conventional success. Men in general are hurting far more than they are showing, and *everyone* is paying the price for this, regardless of gender, age, nationality, or occupation. Attempts to address this have barely made a dent in conventional manhood’s armoring, one key reason for this being that such efforts can, however unintentionally, shame men for not meeting the standards of yet another way of saying what a man needs to be.

Until such shame (and shame in general) is recognized and understood, it will dominate – often from behind the scenes – men’s emotional and relational lives, obstructing their capacity to face and work through their unresolved wounding. Shame left unattended, shame left in the shadows, is shame that will run us from behind the scenes, disempowering us and determining far more of our behavior than we might imagine.

To in so many words tell a man (or boy) to “be a man!” carries the implication that he is not enough of a man (or enough of a person), that he is not measuring up – he’s not only failing to meet a certain standard, a preset expectation or “should,”

but also is being shamed for this, however subtly or indirectly.

The shaming effect of telling a man (or boy) to “be a man” is rarely seen for what it is, being commonly viewed as a kind of tough-love support (psychologically akin to “spare the rod and spoil the child”), especially in authoritarian or militaristic contexts. And such shaming usually becomes internalized as yet another aspect of the inner critic (a heartlessly negative self-appraisal originating in childhood), the shaming finger of which gets waved in our face so often that it gets normalized. This internal drill sergeant, this love-barren relentless inner overseer, simply wears us down even as it pushes us to be better, to be more successful, to be more of a man, etcetera after self-castigating etcetera. And if the delivery of this is sufficiently harsh, we may lose much or all of our drive to better ourselves, sinking into depression, apathy, and self-loathing – so long as we leave our inner critic unquestioned and in charge.

The pressure to “be a man!” is generally little more than oppression in good intentions’ clothing. Such pressure, such insensitive or out-of-tune motivational intensity, is but unhealthy or toxic challenge. From an early age, boys thrive in the presence of healthy challenge – non-shaming, age-appropriate, loving encouragement infused with a significant but safe degree of risk – learning firsthand how to both extend their edge and respect their limits. But boys who are steered by overly zealous (and commonly well-meaning) parents and teachers into overachieving and being “little men” (often taking on a premature responsibility) quickly learn to make a problem out of whatever in them counters such parental ambitions and pressures – like their tenderness and empathy and vulnerability.

Shame, Aggression, and Sex

When a man feels crushed or disempowered by shame (and/or by

being shamed), he's likely going to try to get as far away from it as possible, escaping, for example, into the compensatory power he feels through aggression. And why thus escape? Because shame is such a squirmingly uncomfortable and contracted emotion – especially when it is directed not just at our behavior but at our very being. Quite understandably, we generally want to get away from it as quickly as we can, ordinarily doing so by shifting into other states, like numbness, exaggerated detachment, or aggression

In females, such aggression is more commonly directed at oneself, but in males, it is more commonly directed at others. Men tend to counteract the self-deflation that is felt through shame – falling short of what's expected of them – with the self-inflation they feel by being aggressive (getting righteously “pumped up”). In such aggressiveness toward others – passive, dominating, and otherwise – we usually feel more powerful, more in control. What more potent antidote might a man find to feeling crushed than feeling his readily-activated, adrenaline-fueled capacity to crush others (as through verbal abuse or physical violence)?

Statements like “be a man” or “be man enough” not only catalyze shame, but also often drive a man to *prove* himself, a drive put into high gear when our shame shifts into aggression. The “proving” behavior that possess so many males – which start at an early age – needs to be deglamorized and not so unquestioningly equated with masculinity, but this can't be effectively done without addressing and working with the shame at its root.

Aggression can make us feel better, beefing up our everyday sense of self; we're not down, but are on top or closer to the top, whatever the scale. Even if we're low on the ladder, under some unpleasant others, we usually can keep ourselves above some others who are lower in the pecking order than us – and we also can fantasize, perhaps very aggressively, about overpowering those who are above us in the hierarchy.

And what else can make us feel better in a hurry, especially when we haven't been feeling so good .

Sex.

All the pressure and shame of trying to be a certain kind of man, all the anxiety and tension that can go with that, often can be briefly but potently eased very quickly through sex. And so too can the sense of not having much power, or of not being very important. So whatever feeds men's sexual appetite, whatever amplifies it, whatever keeps it front and central, can easily take on an exaggerated emphasis, as is so lavishly illustrated by our culture's sexual obsession. How easy it is to burden sex with the obligation to make us feel better or more secure or more manly!

Pornography has become one hell of an epidemic, gluing vast numbers of men to its screens and ejaculatory dreams, hooking up mind and genitals in dramas that turn relational connection into a no-man's-land wherein sexual arousal and discharge reign supreme. The power that so many men give to pornography – and to what it promises – not only cripples their capacity for real intimacy, but also keeps their underlying wounding cut off from the healing it needs. Pornography flattens and emasculates men, obstructing their evolving into a deeper manhood. Merely condemning pornography is not the solution, however, anymore than is being overly tolerant of it (as if any restriction on things sexual is somehow an infringement on our freedom). What is needed is to *outgrow* our “need” for pornography (including as a “solution” to our pain and unresolved wounds).

Shame, power, sex – these three in their unhealthy forms are at the core of male dysfunction, simultaneously possessing and crippling many men. Shame that crushes and shrinks, power (especially in the form of aggression) that inflates and dominates, sex that compensates and distracts – this unholy triumvirate usurps the throne of self in a great number of

men, obstructing them from taking the journey that can restore their integrity, dignity, and capacity for real intimacy.

Toward True Masculine Power

Many men tend to be at war – at war with life, with each other, with themselves, consumed by the fight to win at work and elsewhere. Bloodless war is still war, still an arena of battling with whatever weapons are at hand. A victorious athletic moment may not just feature some full-out exultation, but also sometimes a sense of standing over the defeated team as if on some bloody battlefield. Our entire culture is permeated with the language of war: the war on drugs, the war on cancer, the war on poverty, and so on. We don't just die from cancer, but lose our *battle* with it. Warfare is all about oppositional extremes, and so is much of conventional manhood, with an endless list of things to conquer. What a burden! And what a diversion from embodying our full humanity.

What could be more packed with excitation (both positive and negative) than war? After all, it includes huge drama, high stakes, tremendous challenges and risk, primal encounters, great danger, unusual camaraderie, and extremes of playing-of-the-edge. I once worked with a highly decorated Vietnam veteran, an officer of the highest caliber who'd done plenty of time in the trenches of direct battle; after doing a few sessions with me that took him to the core of his emotional wounding and required a deep vulnerability of him, he said that such work was more difficult than anything he'd had to do while in the military – and that he didn't want to stop doing it. It asked more of him, it gave him more, it further deepened him, bringing out a different kind of warrior in him, in whom vulnerability was an obvious source of strength and relational intimacy a crucible for breakthrough healing.

True masculine power happens when courage, integrity, vulnerability, compassion, awareness, and the capacity to take strong action are all functioning together. Such power is

potent but not aggressive, challenging but not shaming, grounded but not rigid, forceful but not pushy. Again, it requires head, heart, and guts in full-blooded alignment.

I sometimes tell men who are venturing into the work of accessing their true power that the journey they're beginning is one asking for a courage no less than that of real battle, calling forth from them a warriorhood as rooted in tenderness and relational openness as it is in facing and integrating one's monsters and shadow-places. This is a true hero's journey of healing and awakening, connecting the dots of past and present emotionally as well as intellectually, encountering on the way all that we've been and are. Along the way we cultivate an intimacy with *everything* that we are – high and low, dark and light, masculine and feminine, dying and undying – for the benefit of one and all. This is the primal odyssey pulsing in every man's marrow, whether we embark on it or not.

And there is a huge need for us to take this journey, not as one more should, but out of service to everyone. My aim in this book is to illuminate and support this journey as much as possible, providing navigational guidance for us to step more fully into our own authenticity, helping deepen our capacity for taking wise care of ourselves and our environment.

I have seen many men suffering from shutting themselves off to their own depths, cutting themselves off from what would enable them to have truly fulfilling relationships – not just their empathy, vulnerability, and capacity for emotional literacy, but also their true power and strength, their authenticity, their capacity to anchor themselves in real integrity. There is a deeper life for men, a life in which responsibility and freedom go hand in hand and level upon level, a life in which happiness is rooted not in what we have but in what we fundamentally are. It is to such a life that this book is dedicated.

Finding a Way Forward Together

Source: [Oriah](#)

by [Oriah Mountain Dreamer](#)

February 22, 2018

Sometimes, if we can be very still, eyes wide open, silencing the inner commentary for just one moment, we might see somethings we're missing.

Like the crazy beauty and unbelievable resilience of human beings,

The resurrection of the sun each morning,

How even those we oppose- those with "positions" different than our own- love their children.

Oh, I'm not hoping or wishing for endless harmony. I never really was a Kum ba ya girl.

But, I try not to protect my heart by pretending the children who are dying in the war in Syria, and schools in America, and the young indigenous man shot on a farm here in Canada are not all "our" children.

And what would we not do to protect our children?

There are times to stand up and shout, and times to be quiet and listen deeply. Of course I've sometimes gotten that wrong- had something to say when I needed to listen; hesitated to speak up when something needed to be said, or shouted, or sung by a solitary voice or in unison by thousands.

At night as I drift into sleep something touches me- a larger Presence, the Beloved, the God whose Love I have known since always- and I know that in some way, deep at the core of Life, everything is and will be okay.

Knowing this, I can see without fear that here and now, in this shared world, there are things that are not okay, things that sacrifice children, things that we must change.

Decades of experience has eroded my certainty that I have the solutions, but deepened my conviction that we can find a way forward together. ~Oriah

The Ploughman Cometh

[The Ploughman Cometh](#)

by [Zen Gardner](#)

Ready your heart, ready your steel

The plowman's coming and is he ever real

Ready your starboard, ready your stern

He's not very picky as it's everyone's turn

Plow up the earth, dig up the dearth
Till 'till the tillerman's done all he's worth
Old plants uprooted, raked from the soil
Making room for the new for our too-human coil

No one can tell how the change will unfold
It's ever so private, yet ever so bold
Will each of us yield, and let nature's sway?
Or cling to the old, and be thus dragged away

Cycles they must, to break up the crust
Where stagnation meets change is always a bust
Some are so supple, yet others resist
The choice is within, what'ere we insist



[Zen Gardner](#) is an impactful and controversial author and speaker with a piercing philosophical viewpoint. His writings have been circulated to millions and his personal story has caused no small stir amongst the entrenched alternative pundits. His book *You Are the Awakening* has met rave reviews and is available on amazon.com. *You Are the Awakening* examines the dynamics of the awakening to a more conscious awareness of who we are and why we are here –

dynamics which are much different from the programmed approach of this world we were born into.