

Our Limited Words: Voicing the Invisible Realms

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Herbalist and author Stephen Harrod Buhner explains the power of words and how they can enhance or limit our perception of this reality.

Transcript:

I think it was Wittgenstein that said, "Things that we have no words for we pass over in silence."

In our culture, for instance, one of the best first examples I ever thought of is puppies, when you see a little puppy walking across the floor, now if you don't like dogs this has going to mean nothing to you but most people kind of like puppies you know they're really cute. It's about six weeks old, and it's walking across the way puppies doing it smelling the floor, hasn't seen you yet.

And you know the way puppies walk with their back legs a little faster than their front so their eyes kind of catter-corner? Smelling the floor totally caught up in wonder of all the smells that we even know what they are.

And then you see the puppy, and you go, Here boy here boy and the puppy looks up and goes, It's you. I've been waiting my whole life to find you.

And you feel this burst of energy come out of the puppy and

this burst of energy leaves you and goes into the puppy, and the puppy bounds over and you just want to touch each other more than anything it feels so good?

That burst of energy that goes between you, it's one of the most important things in a human life, but we don't have a word for it in our language so we can't talk about it, while the ancient Athenians had a word for it they called the aesthesis – it's the moment the exchange of soul essence between you and another living organism in the world outside of you and for a moment something leaves your body and enters the puppy and something leaves the puppy's body and enters you.

We all do it all the time, but we never talk about it because we've been trained to not understand that we have an interior world anymore. So language is incredibly important.

And I've spent much of my life seeking words, seeking ways to talk about experiences we all have every day but that we pass over in silence because we have no words that we learned in school for them.

So I think it's really important right now more than maybe any time we've ever had for us to figure out how to talk about all the invisibles that are what make our lives worthwhile, and to do so right now as well as we possibly can.