

THE PULSE OF SPIRIT



EMISSARIES
OF DIVINE LIGHT

NEW WORLD OR A NIGHTMARE

19 MAY 2008

We had a workshop called “Instill Peace” this weekend at the Glen Ivy Center. We looked at two internal practices that provide an antidote to the nightmare experience that people often have in human relations—forgiveness and gratitude. It is in our closest relationships where we are most likely to be deeply hurt, and it’s where we’re most likely to cause deep hurt. That could be reason to avoid facing them, but it’s also an excellent reason to look and see where adjustments are needed and where forgiveness can be offered. Where there is the greatest hurt is the greatest opportunity. If a person wants to create a more peaceful, joy-filled world, here is a good place to start.

There’s a step in the forgiveness process that relates to changing the story. It’s “re-labeling” the person who caused you hurt. Whether you’re conscious of it or not, it’s quite likely that you have a label for the person who caused you pain. They are a “bad person,” a “thief,” or a “liar.” You give them that identity, and hold the resultant expectations.

To “re-label,” we simply remove inaccurate labels and recognize, in any way we can, the truth of being in the person. A creative being of infinite possibility is there. When we do that, we set ourselves free, and we set them free and increase the possibility of them discovering this being of infinite possibility in themselves. We call forgiveness maintenance for our capacities of incarnation. If some cleanup is needed, and we’re willing and courageous enough to make changes, we move ahead.

Gratitude is simple: You cannot hold both gratitude and resentment, or judgment, at the same time. If you develop your own personal gratitude practice and let it become a discipline, it changes your life. You don’t find yourself holding resentment and judgment nearly as much. We call that “preventative maintenance.” We’re less likely to hurt another or be hurt by another.

These are the factors we worked with yesterday. During the day, the title of a song by The Dramatics came to mind: “What You See Is What You Get.” That sounds a little arrogant, so I refined the lyric to “What you call what you see is what you get.” If you insist on there being dishonest people, bad people in your life, you’ll find them.

Physicists know that everything is energy. The person you have labeled as a bad person is just a packet of energy vibrating at a certain rate. The label helps lock them into vibrating at the rate of “bad person.” When you change the label, it releases one of the bonds that hold them in the behaviors that cause you to label them “bad person.” It’s a gift to them but, ultimately, it’s freedom for yourself.

Vibration is just vibration. It stays the way it is because human beings insist on it. If you look at the world through the eyes of the media, you could insist on a nightmare. The ingredients are mixed perfectly for a nightmarish experience. That's easy to do, but we don't have to mix those ingredients. We don't have to look for blame or fault. We can set creation free and, in doing so, set ourselves free.

That's an attractive approach. Some people sense possibility, and wait for a big moment when it all changes and life is different. The master switch gets thrown, lightning descends from on high. Yet it happens much more readily in our everyday moments.

Here's an experience I had during our workshop. Mary Ann and I have an old, achy, obstinate, semi-continent dog. He still has the sweetest nature, but he's getting old and uncomfortable. Getting him out for his very necessary walks has become quite a chore. I realized I have grown resentful. I don't like it. I was labeling him a problem. Yesterday I realized that he's really an opportunity for me to have a different experience.

Having this realization, I said, "I will walk Domino in gratitude." Of course, when the workshop ended, he's been in the house a long time and needs a walk. And I remembered my commitment. It didn't look different from the day before, but my experience was profoundly changed, and I had fun with him.

That example may seem insignificant, but it points to an experience I can have in any circumstance, ANY circumstance in my life. So can you. I set myself free in those dog walks. It was joyful, and I was at peace. I don't know how to do much about a war in Iraq, starvation in Africa, or the other ingredients of the nightmare. I can create peace, joy, and a sense of infinite possibility in all my little moments.

The greatest opportunity I have is in my closest relationships. How is it for you? Is there anybody you're holding as a bad person? If you are, I encourage you to set yourself free and set that person free.

Hugh Duff mentioned earlier the recent Attunement gathering. What is most important in attunement is: Who is the one offering the attunement? Is it a being of infinite possibility, or someone living in the nightmare of limitation?

We can change everything, but we start with what's right at hand, right now. We can dream that someday we'll get a grand opportunity, and we'll be ready to change everything. It will never happen if we're not taking advantage of every opportunity to be a larger being, if we're playing small and using limitations as an excuse.

The Song of Solomon says that it is the little foxes that spoil the vine. I could have had a magnificent day in the workshop, and then had a sour experience walking my dog. That makes no sense.

You know what? I choose my experience, and so do you. You can choose the nightmare, or you can choose to live in gratitude, to be active and courageous in forgiveness, and to recognize that the issues in our closest relationships are not problems; they're opportunities. They're opportunities to let the truth of infinite possibility be known. If I don't bring it, I can't be sure it's going to be present. When I bring it, it's an invitation for others to show up in the same way. We set our own path and leave a trail. How about this path? How are we doing with that?

It's very easy to place blame for what's wrong in our lives. But consider this: Everything in your life, every person, every relationship, every circumstance, inner and outer, you have intentionally drawn to yourself to do the work of setting creation free. It is a great way to begin being big—not domineering, but big in the sense of being free of limitation.

We can have relationships where we get hurt, place a label on the “bad” person, and wait. The underlying message there is “I’ll show him. I’ll withdraw my love and my largeness until he changes. I’ll show him.” Show him what? Smallness and limitation? What about infinite possibility? What about unconditional love?

Anne LaMott says this about forgiveness: “Refusing to forgive is just like eating rat poison and waiting for the rat to die.” That graphic image indicates just how toxic this state is for our lives, our worlds and our relationships. There's nothing at risk in being big, courageous, forgiving and grateful.

A question you could ask at the next opportunity that comes disguised as hurt is this: How is this circumstance absolutely perfect for me to show up in my natural state of infinite possibility? If you ask that question, and gracefully refrain from cranking out an answer but let an answer come, you will have a different experience. If enough people have a different experience, an atmosphere of infinite possibility, unconditional love and gratitude begins to develop amongst us. In that atmosphere, the ingredients to create the nightmare suffocate. They can't survive. Picture that spreading, instilling peace into the world.

If you want to change the world, there are endless opportunities right in front of you. The only question is, how will you handle your opportunities? Or, like in attunement, WHO will handle the opportunities? A large being or a small one? We choose and live with our choices. We either plague ourselves and our world with our choice, or set creation free. It's a matter of being conscious and remembering who's living this life. We can have a new world, or we can have a familiar, worsening nightmare. It's completely up to us.

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