

Lesson 72: The Path to Personal & Spiritual Growth

The path to personal growth, which leads to spiritual growth, is not one that is easily traveled on because it requires a willingness to view, assess and evaluate the nature of your personal reality, sometimes through an entirely different perspective than the one you are accustomed too. Peering into the keyhole and viewing the circumstances of your life from the depths of truth does require an inner strength and courage to not only come face to face with the truths that will rise up before you, but to process and integrate those truths so that they become one with you and are woven into your personal reality. The act of committing to a voluntary journey of self-discovery and then seeing it through is not an easy feat but the end results always proves to be well worth the effort and patience required; sometimes needing nerves of steel to see it through and to not give up when you feel like you have had more than enough. Given that the path to inner growth does come by way of the proverbial rabbit hole, makes it well worth the while to place the focus of attention on describing the path to personal and spiritual growth which begins right where you are at this moment in your life and continues indefinitely as you gain a deeper understanding of the nature of your own reality. The discussions in the course of this lesson will not only define and describe the characteristics of personal and spiritual growth but will also describe the path to its attainment.

In life there are always two paths, symbolically speaking, that can be traveled on. One path is very familiar and generally leads to similar and even predictable outcomes, although not necessarily desirable, but is nonetheless, comfortable. The other path, while having been traveled on by many others, is not so well known and even though this path may hold the promise of a more desirable personal experience, its course is unfamiliar and is, therefore, potentially threatening. Attempting to navigate a new course that has not been previously charted and actually traveled on is to embark on an odyssey that you fear could lead you out into stormy seas, where you perceive the risk of losing your way back in the dense fog of unforeseen circumstances and events encountered along the way. A fear of the unknown will indeed prevent you from pursuing an entirely new course, which if traveled on anyway, will actually lead you into the safe harbors of personal and spiritual growth. Whether you choose to embark on a new path or continue traveling on the same path, both have the potential to eventually lead you to new and desirable experiences, however, one presents many unforeseen challenges that you will have to learn how to overcome and the other is to continue experiencing life by way of the school of hard knocks. As you stand, facing the fork in the road, you will need to decide which path to take; the one you are most familiar with or the one that offers unseen opportunities for personal and spiritual growth.

Such a potentially life-changing decision does not depend on intellect but rather its first steps are guided by an inner desire to bring about a much needed external change in

your reality. The pursuit of change leads to many unforeseen and unexpected new challenges that result in a deeper and more meaningful understanding that exceeds the ordinary limited scope of understanding. Personal and spiritual growth is not a path that is willingly embraced but is often the result of a dysfunctional lifestyle along with a few too many broken relationships, shattered dreams, goals left unachieved as well as many other contributing factors, the likes of which can literally leave you trembling and shaking in its wake. Most people prefer to settle down comfortably into a mundane pattern of life that eventually becomes stagnate, thereby limiting their potential for expansion on all levels or they desire a lifestyle that is harmonious, balanced and not prone to sudden and unexpected changes; however, such stability is not attained by way of escaping and avoiding unresolved personal issues. The stability experienced on the surface is just that, it is superficial at best because underneath the surface the unresolved issues are like a volcano that threatens to erupt at any given moment.

There simply is no escaping or avoiding unresolved personal issues because they will continue to surface time and time again, appearing in many different forms, often embedded in symbology, metaphors or outright blatant means, all for the sake of getting your attention. Therefore, the attempt to define a clear and precise set reality is an exercise in futility because reality has no clear-cut and precise patterns nor is it easily defined. Reality is what you make of it; it is a perfect reflection of your own thoughts, feelings, emotions, beliefs, perceptions and expectations, which forms the basis of your mental attitude and becomes well established over the course of time. Consequently, your reality is only as wide or as narrow as the borders, perimeters or the fences, that by choice, you erect which will either enhance or limit your personal experiences; likewise you either enhance or limit the potential for personal and spiritual growth. Reality is always subjective to the observer's thoughts, feelings, beliefs, perceptions and expectations which results in an experience that is, more often than not, an illusion rather than a real thing. The illusion itself can be reshaped simply by observing a situation from an entirely different perspective, thus making it subjective to altered beliefs and expectations as well as a change in thoughts and feelings. So to settle down into a life expected to stand outside of change is to escape, avoid and stagnate from the illusion of what you believe is a clearly defined safe and set pattern or lifestyle. This illusion, a fabrication at best, ultimately limits your potential for personal and spiritual growth which occurs by contact, process and integration, not by avoidance.

Personal growth is an ongoing mental and emotional quest that leads to the discovery of many truths. A quest of this nature results in attaining a higher level of self-awareness, which in turn, leads to the transformation of your reality. As the level of your self-awareness increases, the exterior conditions that have been shaping your day to day life experiences, starts to take on a whole new look; you actually see your circumstances from a very different perspective and do so without blame focused on anyone or anything. This on-going transformation occurs, not as the result of avoidance through

denial or complacency, but as the result of having engaged in mental and emotional contact with underlying personal issues as they surface into your conscious awareness. When you come in contact with your feelings and emotions and allow them to be processed and integrated internally, regardless of whether or not they are rooted in actual experiences or perceived experiences, not only will you will begin to see the truth of them, but you will also be able to trace your current and past experiences to its source. As the truth concerning your personal situations and conditions surfaces and becomes apparent, you will begin to see with more clarity which of your experiences were real and which were perceived as being real. You will start to see the illusions of the realities you created in the confines of your mind as you acted in accordance with your own beliefs, thoughts, feelings as well as your expectations. As the debris along the path of your life slowly begins to clear away, your reality slowly and subtly begins to transform, and as it takes on a new appearance, your feelings and emotions become more balanced.

Processing and integrating your feelings and emotions do not produce the same results as when you choose to avoid them. Suppressed feelings and emotions that remain out of sight, and likewise, also out of mind, by choice of course, limits the potential for personal enhancement and the expansion of your self-awareness. Although you might fool yourself into believing that you are justified in suppressing your feelings and emotions, thereby avoiding your unresolved issues, the bottom line is that not only are you deceiving yourself but you are locking in limitations that are not only going to adversely affect your current experiences but are also paving the way for certain future probabilities to occur that are equally undesirable. There is a relevancy between your past, current and future experiences, which basically mean that the conditions of your life will remain on the same track until something causes a switch in the track. Avoidance is not the answer to this dilemma because like will continue to attract like. Regardless of your determination to dig your heels in and avoid exploring your personal issues, actually having contact with your feelings and emotions is the antidote to this dilemma.

Another beneficial aspect of an increase in self-awareness is that as your reality transforms into desirable experiences, your true identity also begins to surface, consequently, you are more in touch with the real you as opposed to the conditioned you. Your individuality undergoes a significant change as you reevaluate your own values and belief systems to determine whether or not your values and beliefs are actually enhancing your life experiences or are hindering them. In addition to the benefit of evaluating personal beliefs and values is the benefit of exploring what appears on the surface to be natural inclinations or tendencies towards certain behaviors. Most often, inclinations and tendencies are not at all natural but are actually the result of environmental and social conditioning, the roots of which are in infancy. Conditioned inclinations and tendencies are not permanently etched into the fabric of your being, but

rather they can be reprogrammed as you become more aware of your true identity. Identities themselves are often clouded by criticism and judgment not just from others but from yourself too and can be sufficient to skew or suppress your true identity, sometimes for a lifetime. Consequently, the purpose and the meaning of life becomes very distorted when your true identity has been buried under the rubble of harsh criticism from others in your personal environment or in the case of a lack of support in your desired endeavors that you were not successful in overcoming such a challenge. Becoming consciously aware is to symbolically sweep away the mental and emotional debris once it and its sources have been identified. The end result is the rising of what appears to be a new identity that brings with it a newfound meaning for life and the skills, talents and abilities, that were lying dormant just waiting to surface, to assist in fulfilling the newly discovered purpose for your life.

The development of personal growth opens the door wide to exploring potentials and possibilities for current and future experiences. Contrary to popular opinions and beliefs, individual personality traits are not written in stone, nor are they permanently embedded in genetics. Personality or characteristic traits that were learned in response to your personal environment can be changed or altered when you choose to change the conditions of that environment. This means being open-minded and willing to view the matters of your life from different perspectives. When you limit yourself to only one narrow perspective you automatically block out other possibilities that could actually enhance your life experiences. The emotion of fear is usually behind the need to avoid viewing the conditions of your life from any other perspective than the one you are accustomed too. Facing your fears enables you to overcome your own self-imposed limitations if you are to ever to extend your experiences beyond your familiar horizons.

Personal growth not only enhances the quality of your life, it is the catalyst to realizing your dreams and achieving your goals, that is, the dreams and goals that are actually meaningful and purposeful. The benchmark that determines personal growth, objectively speaking, is the inward and outward manifestations of marked changes in your reality. As is always the case, changes of this nature occur internally before they are experienced externally and then are witnessed by others. Changes in your reality first occur internally because it is at this level of your being where you will experience the break-up of habitual patterns of behaviors. Milestones are often reached by way of becoming more aware of your behaviors which were exhibited as they were in response to how you were conditioned, whether environmentally or was self-imposed. As the pieces of the puzzle start coming together, you cannot help but to undergo an internal change that is being constructed on a more solid foundation. Even the Bible speaks to the idea of trying to put new wine in an old wine skin. Building a new foundation means taking down the old one which was built in response to the conditions of your personal environment. The strength of your internal structure must rest on a firm foundation, not a foundation that was previously built on sand or straw and is therefore unable to

withstand the winds of life. The breaking up of old ways, in terms of habits, behaviors and even lifestyles must change in order to make way for the new construction, that for many people, is rebuilt from the ground up.

The path to personal growth involves a process of reprioritizing your needs, desires, dreams and goals. Sometimes this process occurs by osmosis, that is, in response to a higher level of self-awareness whereas other times priorities change by way of a dark night of the soul experience or experiences, as the case may be. Your priorities are typically in a state of flux anyway, that is, they tend to be self-adjusting so that they correlate with the most current conditions of your life, thus you often adjust your priorities without even being consciously aware of having done so. Consequently, as the conditions of your life change, both internally and externally, your priorities will likewise change automatically. But sometimes you might be inclined to want to hang on to certain needs, desires, dreams or goals that you deem are still very important to you regardless of the fact that aspects of them no longer fit into the fabric of your life, if for no other reason than the simple fact that by your willingness, you are being transformed and as such, so are your circumstances. It becomes more like trying to fit your foot into a shoe that is one size too small and is therefore, a painful experience. If you find yourself attempting to wear these shoes, it would be in your best interest to process and integrate not just the priorities that no longer fit, but to examine the underlying reasons for their continued position of relevancy. A deeper examination might be necessary because there just may be underlying issues that have not been processed and integrated only because they have not yet been revealed.

The journey to a heightened self-awareness is not an overnight success story, but rather it is the unfolding of many different aspects of your reality that will surface and reveal themselves over the course of time. So even though you might be inclined at a certain point to think that the journey is over because all is finally well in your world, it is right at the moment you think you can kick back and relax that an unforeseen and very unexpected issue suddenly pops up, seemingly out of nowhere, and suddenly there you are plunged right back down into the proverbial bunny rabbit trail again. When you embark and remain committed to a journey of self-discovery for the sake of elevating self-awareness, there will always be those occasions where you will inevitably step on a landmine that will blow up in your face. Don't panic because these rather unpleasant occurrences are underlying personal issues that surface from time to time when the conditions are right. The best approach is to confront them, process and integrate both the experience, as unpleasant and undesirable as that might be, as well as the feeling and emotions that will arise from the depths of your being. Sometimes it will seem as though your eyes are being flooded with tears that on the surface seem to have absolutely no basis for them; not that you are incapable of formulating a few reasons if left to your own devices! You may be experiencing a cleansing process on a psychic level which actually does not require any input from you except to allow the process to occur

uninhibited. This psychic cleansing might even require extra sleep in which case it is best to just go with what your body is telling you to do. The process of attaining higher levels of self-awareness is not limited to the confines of your wake state but can actually produce more favorable results during your sleep state. Even attempting to meditate can actually hinder the process, given that this too is an attempt to control a situation that simply does not need your conscious control. Psychic ships are quite capable of charting and navigating their own courses and do so rather successfully when unhindered by unnecessary obstacles.

The pursuit of personal growth facilitates many desirable characteristics which not only serve to enhance your personal experiences; it also contributes to the development of your spiritual growth. It is a personal and spiritual journey of self-discovery that never really reaches its end but is indeed an ongoing process of learning and application. Although a journey of self-examination does typically require a great deal of stamina and sometimes even nerves of steel in the face of every little karmic nook and cranny of your entire being coming under microscopic scrutiny, the benefits derived are immeasurable and priceless as opposed to a life lived under mental and emotional oppression and suppression. The pursuit of personal growth not only increases self-awareness, it expands self-knowledge because it promotes the development of your true identity. Individuation becomes an ongoing process as latent or dormant skills, talents and abilities rise up to the surface, that you not only become consciously aware of but are afforded the opportunity to integrate them into the fabric of your daily life, thus expanding potential possibilities, thus shifting and transforming certain probabilities that are now very likely to occur. For some people, the transformation of otherwise unbelievable possibilities into concrete realities might manifest in the acquisition of material possessions or monetary wealth, which without a selfish basis, can be a very desirable and productive experience.

The benefits of improving the quality of your life far outweigh any annoying difficulties and inconveniences you might have to experience, especially if you are inclined to go kicking and screaming nearly every step of the way. The degree of your resistance in accepting certain truths as they are being revealed will indeed dictate the investment of your time, effort, patience and diligence. Although your lifestyle is surely enhanced as the result of your personal growth, it is the development of your ability to tap into your higher mind which is really the catalyst to personal and spiritual growth. There are many voices out there preaching the need to abandon the human ego as the means to spiritual growth, discounting the obvious fact that life, in 3-D, is experienced by means of the five senses which just happens to be interpreted by the ego, that is, the lower mind. But the ego is far more pliable than what it is given credit for. The ego can be remolded and reshaped by the very same means that it gives shape to reality or the illusion of reality, tangible or intangible, the five senses, along with feelings, emotions, thought patterns, beliefs, perceptions and expectations. Therefore, the ego can be raised

up to perform its same functions but on a higher level of operation resulting in a higher degree of integrity and accuracy in its interpretations.

Personal growth also results in the fulfillment of aspirations, some of which may have been long forgotten because they were perceived as unattainable dreams or goals. But given that you are now traveling on a new path it is far more likely that you will experience new aspirations that are more in keeping with the revised order of your own priorities that correlate to the changes that are occurring in your life. And because you are alleviating psychological stress, your physical body will likewise respond to its improved environment which is conducive to your overall well-being. Therefore, it is very likely that those aches, pains and other ailments or disorders, whether diagnosed or not, will eventually fade away as both your physical and auric bodies calm down and heal over time. While you are reaping all these benefits, your personal autonomy is also undergoing significant changes. As your mental and emotional state of mind shifts from being codependent and the instability of your personal environment begins to stabilize, you become more and more independent and self-reliant but this too is a process, after all, the undesirable conditions of your life did not get that way overnight. Maintaining your personal autonomy also means the right to not allow others to influence your reality but your responsibility does not begin and end there because you are also accountable for the choices and decisions you make, therefore, you will want to be sure to make choices and decisions that are actually going to benefit you, not harm you or others in the long run. As you continue to grow, both personally and spiritually, the desire to define and execute personal plans will lean more towards an alignment with the mission or purpose for your life. The two will just seem to go hand in hand and will be in harmony with one another. The same can be said about your relationships, which will also, be much more harmonious. As you remain in the constant pursuit of personal growth and spiritual growth, you will find that anything which hinders your growth will fall away almost without any effort on your part. Over time the attraction to certain possessions, desires even dreams and goals will lose their place of significance and priority. Because you are vibrating energy on a different frequency, the degree of attraction is likewise affected. The higher is your vibrational frequency, the greater is the degree of differences of the experiences you will attract and consequently manifest in your reality.

Although the discussions in this lesson were lengthy and even somewhat intense, it is our sincere hope that you will refer back to this lesson as a source for reminding yourself of the many aspects that lead to personal and spiritual growth and that you will use this lesson as a benchmark from which to assess your own progress. Please feel free to share your thoughts, questions or comments.

Many Blessings,

Linda, Z and the Collective We

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