

Lesson 98: Acquiring or Regaining Purpose and Intent

It is no secret today that there is a movement in the direction of an individual and collective conscious awakening. However, in as much as this movement has reached the ears of the mainstream, the majority of the population is not yet on-board, and although the shift is slow, it is nonetheless steady. Rising up to the level of a conscious awakening that develops the ability to see personal and collective reality through the veil of delusion and illusion, is to rise above the mental and emotional limitations of the human condition. This, in of itself is an endeavor that contains within it an element of fear that relates to the misguided perception of something lost as opposed to what is truly gained. Those who walk the path of mindfulness and the “middle way” know that nothing is ever lost, but that there is everything to gain, which so often exceeds imagination. The discussion in this lesson will focus on what is actually gained when one ascends conscious awareness, which is the achievement of clarity of purpose and intent. For many, this is a path of all new exploration; for some it is the denial of a purpose, let alone intent, for some it is a journey of acquiring purpose and intent and then for others it is regaining purpose and intent.

Before any discussions about purpose and intent can unfold in a meaningful way, it is necessary to put some related issues in its proper perspective. Getting misperceptions out of the way sets the stage for the discussions in this lesson to unfold in a way that is not only meaningful, but that the information makes sense and is realistically applicable to everyone, which otherwise would be a challenge if such obstacles to discovering purpose and intent were left unexamined. Therefore, the first issue to address is that the rising of conscious awareness in no way suggests losing touch with reality in such a way as to lose touch with being human or the human experience.

As nothing happens by chance, but happens by intent, every soul has chosen their physical experience for one reason or another. The purpose and intent of the experience is, of course, unique to every individual. While the experiences of life, which can sometimes be rather daunting and overwhelming, as well as painful and frightening is not the result of physical entrapment. While it is true that the soul may have incarnated to square up past life or past lives karma, the various causes and effects experienced in the current lifetime may or may not relate to karma, but may relate to mental and emotional causes and affects created in this lifetime. In any event, there are always lessons there to be learned so that the soul can move onto a higher plane of experience in this or the next go-around.

Most people desire an abundant life experience, whether it relates to love, relationships, material possessions, monetary wealth and good health and in any desired combination. However, each individual defines the experience of abundance from an entirely different context within an entirely different framework. The way one person defines and

approaches the acquisition of an abundant life experience is not the same measuring stick another person may use to gauge their own approach to achieving their desires for abundance, although there may be certain collective commonalities; desired things most people agree on or share in common. These differences, whether in definition or in approach determines the outcome of every experience, at every stage of a person's life, which when all is said and done may or may not evolve into some meaningful purpose and intent that truly accounts for one's own physical existence or at least enhances the experience of physicality. Thus, it is important at this stage of unfolding the focus of this discussion to take a closer look at the more common things people generally desire as a means of discerning where and how purpose and intent either is negated, is at least considered, is acquired or is regained, whichever the case may be.

Most people seek a life that is abundant in joy and happiness, as opposed to suffering. However, attaining to desired states of bliss, whether mediocre or extreme and, of course, everything in between and then actually achieving, and maintaining that desired state can be problematic for many people. Why is this? Well, first of all the nature of humanity is such that the experiences of life are all inclusive and for a number of reasons, which right off the bat relates to the current stage of human evolution, that being its first obstacle. You may be asking why is this. The answer ties back to the opening paragraph – the evolution of conscious awakening. The Bible not only speaks to the desire for humans to live life abundantly, it provides the means to its attainment, as do many other religious and spiritual texts. The Buddha's Noble Eightfold Path teaches a sure way to successfully walk the "middle path," which translates to keeping all things in balance and moderation. The desired result that comes by way of mindfulness and abiding by natural laws, spiritual in the sense that they cannot be seen accept in the material or non-material consequences of cause and effect, is the experience of an abundant life, sometimes right smack in the midst of undesirable conditions.

But there is far more to this business of living an abundant life that simply cannot be left unexamined because the implications and ramifications are many. Reverting to the nature of physicality with respect to its current stage of evolution, not so much with respect to its intellectual stage of evolution, although that counts and rather significantly, is the mental and emotional stage of evolution, which takes front and center stage. In a strange and twisted way, mental and emotional growth and spiritual development has to precede intellect, but also walk hand in hand with intellect at the same time. It is more like a balancing act that can only be acquired through personal growth, spiritual development and intellectual assimilation and integration of truly factual information, as opposed to misguided, misdirected or misunderstood information that acts as obstacles to clarity of thought. This will become clearer as the discussion unfolds.

Due to the current stage of evolution, the human experience tends to be overshadowed by limiting and disabling mental attitudes that either provokes or supports dysfunctional thought patterns backed by strong emotions. The ability to not react adversely or in destructive ways when gripped by strong emotions is a huge challenge for many people. Thus, humans find themselves caught up in a self-imposed cycle of inflicting and reinflicting all sorts of sufferings and hardships upon themselves. This is the result of a mental state of mind that is not yet conducive to the avoidance of such undesirable experiences, which incidentally, rewrites brain patterns and alters DNA, favorably or unfavorably. At this stage of evolution, humanity stands right on the cusp of moving forward or regressing backwards and will do so by individual and collective choice. The progression of cognitive and spiritual evolution moves in the same direction as the prevailing mindsets of the people inhabiting this plane of physical reality. In the meantime, suffering and hardship will prevail in the ways that it will in accordance with the laws of cause and effect, attraction and manifestation. It will remain exactly this way until every individual evolves onto a plane of mental equilibrium and emotional stability that corresponds to its intellectual and cognitive ability to assimilate process and integrate information that gives way to rising above the limitations of the human condition, thereby, affecting the nature of personal reality in a positive way.

Unfortunately, this prevailing condition also gives way to the prevalence of the Buddha's Four Noble Truths, which speaks to the aspects of human suffering (discussed in detail later). The Bible also speaks to the certainty of hardships and difficulties encountered in the course of life: "When you go through deep waters and great trouble, I will be with you. When you go through rivers of difficulty, you will not drown! When you walk through the fire of oppression, you will not be burned up – the flames will not consume you" (Isaiah 43:2, The Living Bible). The operative word in this verse is *when*, not *if*! This assures that such encounters are a sure thing at this stage of mental and emotional evolution, but the verse also conveys a message of hope, which is that humans do not have to perish in spite of their perils.

Just as the emotion of joy and happiness is a choice, so is any degree of suffering and hardship, whether it comes into your reality by way of external influences or by way of your own internal reactions. Either way, it comes down to making choices, that is, choosing to suffer or choosing not to suffer. However, you can choose all day to not suffer, but without a right understanding of the right information that enables you to act on the choice to not suffer, you are left without the cognitive tools to not suffer and will challenge your ability to do so. The answer is in evolving your mind and your emotions in conjunction with your intellect. You cannot evolve into anything more than what you are at any given stage until you have the right information and have the cognitive capacity to assimilate the information in order to process and integrate the information into the fabric of your being.

It is not that the things you desire in life are necessarily bad for you. Acquiring them becomes problematic when your priorities are misaligned or when you are reaching for things that you are not really equipped to handle the consequences or the responsibility of them when they manifest in your reality. Thus, some of the things you desire are not good for you at certain times in your life because you are not mentally or emotionally equipped for the experience of them. This condition exists because either you lack knowledge of the right information or you are not abiding by spiritual principles and, therefore, are not spiritually mature.

As no one stands outside of cause and effect, the things you desire can bring difficulties and sometimes-even sorrow into your reality to which you and others will pay the price for the choices made, having acted on impulse or without the benefit of right knowledge and experience. But as life has a distinct way of teaching valuable lessons by way of the school of hard-knocks, avoiding the undesirable effects from making choices that are premature to being adequately equipped or prepared is feasible and can be accomplished. The matter of choices comes right down to making good choices or making poor choices. However, the real truth, not perceived truth, is about making choices from a frame of mind and mental attitude that either is or is not at all conducive to the choice being made. Thus, clarity of mind is essential to making good choices, but even then, there are no certainties, as others can adversely influence your reality when they choose to act in accordance with their own free will. The trick is in knowing how to respond without wreaking any further havoc in your reality.

Circumventing adverse affects as the result of another person's free will requires clarity of thought and balanced emotions. This in no way suggests that you should not feel or express your emotions, but it does suggest that the sooner you can get your emotions under check and balance, the easier it will be to overcome an adverse situation. Once you verbally express strong emotions, especially in an accusatory manner of speech, as well as in your body language, the situation at hand is most always unrecoverable. The expression of strong emotions can quickly turn an anthill into a mountain, creating the condition of needless suffering, not just inflicted on you, but is unnecessarily inflicted on whoever is involved.

At this point in the discussion is it necessary to take a closer look at the fundamental principles of suffering, as the presence of internal and external suffering stands as an obstacle to acquiring or regaining purpose and intent. The Buddha described the fundamental principles of suffering as the Four Noble Truths, which are as follows:

“The noble truth of suffering, the noble truth of the origin of suffering, the noble truth of the cessation of suffering, the noble truth of the way leading to the cessation of suffering.”

The Buddha further expounded on these truths stating that “an exertion should be made to understand: This is suffering. An exertion should be made to understand: This is the origin of suffering. An exertion should be made to understand: This is the cessation of suffering. An exertion should be made to understand: This is the way leading to the cessation of suffering.”

It is obvious that suffering exists, that it has a root cause, that there is a cessation to suffering and that there is a way that leads to the cessation of suffering, but not without the effort of mental exertion. The Buddha’s antidote to human suffering is to walk the path of the middle way, accomplished by applying the fundamentals of the Noble Eightfold Path: “right view, right intention, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness and right concentration.” When these fundamentals are applied in your daily life, and become habitual patterns of behavior, thinking, believing, perceiving and expecting, it is a bulletproof means of attaining an abundant life and for all the right reasons. The desire for abundance must first be put in its proper perspective, so that when it is attracted and manifested in your reality, you are reasonably equipped to handle the responsibility that goes hand in hand with the materialization of any form of abundance. As there are no freebies in life, everyone is accountable and responsible for their own actions and reactions, mentally and emotionally speaking, as well as ethically and morally.

Socrates was noted for having said that the unexamined life is not worth living. The Buddha speaks to the tribulations of unreflective living. The Bible speaks to every facet of human suffering, as do many other ancient texts or books of wisdom. If you exert the energy to look for these truths, you will find them. So it follows that this discussion cannot help but to unfold yet another layer of obstacles that block the path to abundance just as it blocks the path to achieving or regaining purpose and intent as the reason for your existence in this reality.

A desire for an abundant life, in whatever form that it may take in your reality or is hoped for, rests on knowing what your priorities are at the various stages of your life, as priorities are bound to change over the course of time because change itself is inevitable. So many people experience an increased sense of dissatisfaction when priorities are not in alignment with their internal programming. Just because you desire something external to manifest in your reality that you think will bring you your desired abundance, does not mean you are in alignment with your internal self. Therein lies the challenge, and as Socrates said, “Know thyself.” Until you know something meaningful and purposeful about yourself, how can you hope to know what you want or do not want realistically speaking?

The things in life you think you really need are not the same as the things you actually need. The truthfulness of perceived needs, as opposed to actual needs are often miles

apart when the difference is clearly understood, but sometimes this takes the experiences of life to help make such distinctions, thus, the existence of suffering. Suffering will do one of two things, it will either move you further away from acquiring or regaining purpose and intent or it will motivate you in the direction of self-discovery. And as all things ultimately work for the good in the long run, but not without its cost to pay, humanity hopes to attain more abundance and less suffering in its course of mental, emotional and intellectual evolution. So knowing your priorities puts you in touch with what is really important to you at any stage of your life. Taking it a step further is to examine the underlying motives. It is not enough to just be aware of the obvious motives, the ones that appear on the surface, as they tend to be more superficial than realistic, but rather it is essential to be aware of the underlying internal motives, which is precisely where you risk being blind sighted, thus, invoking the wrath of unnecessary suffering.

Acting on internal motives that speak to unresolved personal mental or emotional issues is more often than not a recipe for personal disaster - suffering in various forms. Attempting to fill emotional voids that rise up from the residuals of an undesirable or unfulfilling childhood experience is not the antidote to achieving emotional bliss, as peace and contentment cannot be found externally. Such experiences tend to be temporary at best and provoke an ongoing sense of discontentment and dissatisfaction, not just with yourself but with whomever it is that you place this unrealistic burden on. The ramifications are endless and sometimes even brutal to the psyche. If nothing else, such undesirable experiences speak to failure or inadequacy and opens the door to issues of self-worth and self-esteem, all of which can plummet you into a darkened pit of disparity in which you lose sight of the value of your own existence because the value of your existence is reliant on someone, something or someplace, which too is temporary, as that is the nature of such things. This is very dangerous territory, psychologically speaking. However, there is always a silver lining in suffering, in sorrow or in dissatisfaction, but it can only be found when there is a willingness to look beyond the obvious and examine the layers of the unobvious, to venture past the veil of illusion and delusion – to know thyself.

But this is not an endeavor accomplished from a mindset that speaks to co-dependency, which is a reliance on others for the joy and satisfaction that must first come from within, not from without. Dependence on external means of acquiring happiness, joy and satisfaction guarantees the same mental and emotional downhill slide many times over until the realization enters into conscious awareness that a state of body, mind and spiritual well-being begins from within, not from without. There simply is nothing in the material world nor is there anyone, other than you and your own Higher Power that can contribute to a true sense of self, just as an appreciation of yourself, as a valid individual cannot come by way of instant gratification or external causes.

A balanced sense of self does not rely on monetary wealth or the accumulation of material possessions nor is it found in relationships. All these external influences can serve to enhance your human experiences, but they are not the whole of your experiences. Satisfaction is found from within, everything else is icing on the cake. When you place your focus on external sources as a means of being happy and satisfied with your personal reality that focus will eventually turn against itself because it is not in alignment with the true essence of your own spirit. The true essence of your spirit is not reliant on material possessions, monetary wealth or the *need* for relationships, which is very different from the desire for a relationship. Needs and desires are not one and the same. Needs are expressed in a mental and emotional state of reliance and co-dependency, whereas, desires are expressed in a healthy and balanced way. The evidence will clearly speak for itself, as illusions and delusions becomes a repeated manifestation of undesirable experiences.

So the story ends, having discussed many measures that when applied will not only cease the extent of your suffering in the present and in the future, these measures will help you identify the origins of your suffering, which is generally more internal than it is external. The application of all these spiritual principles, applied not from a religious context, as no dogma is professed, but applied fundamentally speaking, are the catalyst to the attainment of a true abundant life that is built from the inside and manifested on the outside. This is when the purpose and intent for your life, whether recognizing this for the first time or regaining a new sense of purpose and intent becomes crystal clear and that as you pursue your purpose with intent, it will fit like a glove.

With respect to the unexamined life as it pertains to past events, analyzing the contents of your past should only serve as a means to improve the quality of your present and future life experiences. If you have not yet accepted the contents of your past as an integral part of your overall experiences, especially emotionally, moving forward in a positive direction will not be an easy endeavor. The memory of unsettled past events has an uncanny way of triggering a host of misdirected thoughts, feelings, perceptions, beliefs and expectations. Examining past events is never for the sake of raking up painful memories, just for the heck of reliving them over and over. Recalling past memories serves no real purpose without the goal of improvement in sight, anymore than it should be to instill a victim mentality, as this is a self-imposed, self-defeating destructive state of mind.

Such deep and reflective examinations are for the sake of coming to terms with the roles you played in a past event, even if it was an emotional reaction to a real or perceived adversity. With the right knowledge, a change of attitude, altered beliefs, clearer perceptions and emotional stability the memories of past events can be changed and accepted for what it was, not what was perceived. You would be amazed to discover just how liberating it is when you put past events in their proper perspective. Emotional

reactions are typically followed by a corresponding and equally misdirected disabling belief, and on its heels are skewed or distorted perceptions of what occurred, as opposed to what actually occurred. Because there is a thin veil of reality between what is actual and what is an illusion, expectations of you and others tend to fall under the heading of being Realistic or Unrealistic, the latter can be quite damaging.

In closing, we hope that this discussion served you well, in that it brought matters to your awareness that might have been blocking the path to recognizing that you do in fact, have a purpose and an intention for your life in this existence. We hope that this lesson will encourage you to set out on your own journey of self-discovery so that your purpose and intent will become clearly evident to you, wherever you are on the path of your life. Please feel free to share your thoughts, experiences and comments or to ask questions.

Many Blessings,

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Recommended Reading:

In the Buddha's Words, An Anthology of Discourses from the Pali Canon, by Bhikkhu Bodhi