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NEW BIRTH and THE HEART CENTER

For several years I've written about the Adventure of Life, which, among other things, includes the death of the old, letting go, allowing the collapse of the former system, and waiting for the new birth. Rarely do we like/desire this letting-go process. We don't want change, thank you: we like it the way it is. The collapse can be confusing, painful, humiliating, confusing, stressful, and even feel like it's 'driving you crazy'.

This collapse may be a major system upheaval, or it may be several smaller parts of our lives collapsing. And, sometimes, it seems like it takes an eternity to go through the process of the collapse. The truth is that it takes as long as it takes for the old to die, and a new clear space be created, so that something new can arise. My experience is that the soul is in charge of the process and the surface mind can't rush the process! If we're observant, we may get hints about the new birth and we can cooperate with the birthing/unfolding, but we are definitely not in charge. This process that I'm elaborating on is the transformational process that occurs again and again in our lives. As we become more conscious, we can recognize it and cooperate with these deeper patterns unfolding.

The Center for Conscious Living has just gone through the process of the collapse of the old. We cooperated with the collapse by having a Bulldozing Party and Letting Go ritual at the Seacliff Shopping Center office. We took crayons and drew pictures and wrote thank you's and goodbye's on the walls. We spoke of what had been important for us there. Then we let it go. I moved out, and haven't looked back. The past is prologue.

The New is appearing in the clear space created by the earlier death and collapse. I'd found this new office in January 1998, and loved it and very clearly saw myself there. However, at that time, nothing was working out to enable me to move to it. In meditation, I heard my inner intuitive voice say: 'Don't worry. It's not time and you're not ready!!' Now that's a direct message from the inner voice, if I ever heard one. So I went about my life.

Opening to the new typically requires a 'stepping out on skinny branches', following one's intuition about what's right, even through the fully manifested form isn't present. Nor is it apparent how it will manifest. Through this difficult process of trusting, stepping out, and hanging on, I became aware of two aspects of my psyche constantly battling for control of my thoughts/behaviors: Chicken Little and Pippa (from Robert Browning's poem 'Pippa's song'). The Chicken Little part of me was scared/terrified that we couldn't find an appropriate office and crying that the sky was surely going to fall and take me with it. Pippa kept reminding me that 'God's in heaven, All's right with the world'. I remembered that I had always been directed in my life and I had no reasons to assume that I wouldn't continue to be directed.

When two contradictory aspects of the psyche fight for control, it's best to activate your inner observer, and just notice the inner dance. Just observe the various opinions and feelings within and hold them in your awareness. Sometimes it's helpful to say 'Isn't that interesting!' You learn to 'hold the tension of the opposites'. Don't try to make anything happen. Be with it all. Hang out with the

whole inner drama and smell the flowers. Live life. So I held the tension, just noticing, until the energy shifted and the stress dissipated. Out of this deep knowing of the rightness of the process I was engaged in, I learned to quiet myself, and allow a step at a time to unfold. Chicken Little calmed down. I listened to the Pippa aspect of myself and awaited further direction from the intuition as to next steps.

In June, when I knew I had to move in the Fall, I went back to the office building, and there the suite was waiting for me!

When the time was right, the office was available and other therapists appeared. Everything began to easily unfold. The people who were to join me magically started showing up-- right on time. This is a perfect space to create a Center offering the best of traditional psychological care, as well as the best of holistic and psycho-spiritual opportunities.

People coming to the offices say they feel a sense of calm, of being at home, and of being in a sacred space. I've quite intentionally been creating a space filled with pictures, books, and objects that quieten the mind and body, inspire your soul, stretch your imagination, and set the stage for an inspirational/ healing experience. And quite appropriately, the street that provides the most direct access to The Center is El Corazon-- the heart.

The Heart Center

Our work at Center for Conscious Living is concerned with activating The Heart Center.

Among the thousands of energy centers in the body are seven primary energy centers that activate various types of awareness or focus. As you learn to activate the energy of the Heart Center (located between the breasts where the rib cages connect), you're reminded to attune to that energy of non-judgmental acceptance of yourself, to appreciate and accept the opposites within your psyche, and to know that out of this acceptance comes inner harmony, and an experience of healing presence and inner peace. The attributes of the Heart Center, from a psycho-spiritual point of view, are unconditional Love, compassion, inner innate harmony, a calm in the midst of the storm, healing presence, and peace beyond understanding. Out of this appreciation of the Heart comes an awareness of how to live in this sacred place of inner love and peace, no matter what's happening around you.

This is the focus of our work:

- To clarify the misperceptions which have clouded our thoughts and beliefs about ourselves,
- To come to a right understanding and cognitive awareness,
- To heal our woundings and emotional states of consciousness,
- To gather our inner resources now available from the healing of these wounds, and
- To live peacefully in a place of Unconditional Love within ourselves.
- To bring our relationships and work life into harmony.

It all begins within our own being.

We continue to emphasize a holistic approach including the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual aspects of well-being and learning to live consciously. Spirituality is a very personal process and we feel that conscious participation with

your own spiritual desires is important and can assist you to maintain health, happiness, and a sense of well being. We are not connected with any religious orientation. And as a group, we have knowledge/experience with a wide variety of religious/spiritual approaches to life. To the degree that you'd like, we include within the scope of our work some attention to our spiritual nature, especially what we'd call the psycho-spiritual dimensions.

The psycho-spiritual dimensions include a focus on your psychological concerns and life problems that have brought you to therapy. We may also assist you to gain awareness of unconscious aspects of your life that have been affecting your thoughts, feelings, and behaviors, as well as promote an awareness/ experience of the sacred within. *Psyche* comes from the Greek- **soul, spirit, and breath**. And *Therapeia* originally had to do with **'doing the work of the gods'**. Here 'gods' refers basically to the inner archetypes or dynamics of the psyche, the great stories of all time that continuously live through us, activating and giving meaning to our lives. We feel we're closer to the true work of psychology when we include the forces of the Soul as well as the dynamics of our thought, feelings, and behavior. Much depression, anxiety, confusion about the value and the meaning of our lives are best dealt with when we have a spiritual component congruent with our own spiritual path that has heart and meaning for us.

In this regard, in the heart center of the Office, I've hung a picture from The Egyptian Book of the Dead I bought in Egypt in 1988 called *The Weighing of the Heart*. This picture illustrates what most religions say in one way or another. This picture depicts a man who has died and been taken to the god Osiris. His heart is placed on one side of a scale that is balanced by the feather of Maat, the goddess of truth. Unless his heart is lighter than the feather, he'll be thrown to the jackal god... and that isn't a good place to be thrown!

Symbolically this picture emphasizes the importance of living in accordance with The Heart Center, knowing the transcendental space of unconditional love and living true to one's understanding of unconditional love and compassion. This isn't about conditional, romantic love between two human beings. It's an inner state of loving connection to the divine within where you know your own basic worth, value, and essence, and you live in this state as your path takes you through life. Unless you have a light/loving heart, your heart will be heavy, creating anxiety and depressions and feelings of lack of value of yourself. Connecting to the spiritual domain of life can assist you to deal with your woundings and difficulties. Knowing this connection can facilitate the experience of wholeness that comes with a loving interaction of your physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual aspects. In this state, things fit together. You feel like a whole person and you live in the state of peace, as you go through all the challenges, collapses, and rebirths of life.

The work with the heart center is a central understanding that you can utilize in your particular religious/spiritual path. Once your mind is able to conceive of the process of receiving unconditional love and living in this state, your own spiritual path becomes more enriched and life giving. I've been interested to find the emphasis on a loving heart in all spiritual traditions I've explored. There must be something to it.

Come explore with us.

Namaste,

Judith

