

The Value of Listening



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Before Setting Out

☸ **Archangel Michael:** What you are doing and what you're saying – and this is about you today – is [you are delving] into listening.

And the listening [we are talking about] is not just to your own guidance, which is very important. It's not just to listen to other beings, whether they are seen or unseen, whether they are your next-door neighbor or in the next Galaxy or the next universe for that matter.

But this sense of listening – what we would term “heart listening” – has been lost.
...

And so this is something that you're going to focus on. (“Archangel Michael on the Need to Expand Our Listening and Understanding,” Oct. 2, 2016 at <https://goldenageofgaia.com/2016/10/02/archangel-michael-need-expand-listening-understanding/>.)

☸ **Diane Dreher:** The Chinese word for a wise person, *sheng jen*, means literally "one who listens." ... Peace activist Joanna Rogers Macy has called listening "the most powerful tool in peacemaking and any other kind of social change work." (Diane Dreher, *The Tao of Inner Peace*. New York: Harper, 1990, 243.)

☸ **Matt Kahn:** Listening doesn't make you a part of someone else's narrative.

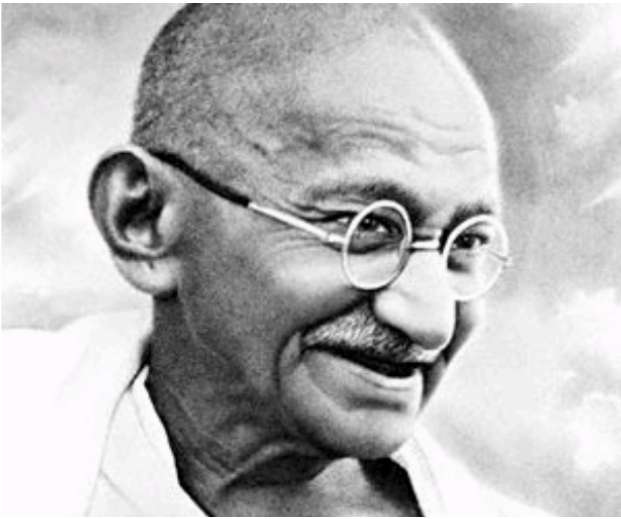
It offers a witness to someone's pain that uses the power of voice to ultimately set itself free.

Everyone needs to be heard in order for progress to unfold.

This is why we take turns in conversations, sharing and listening, until there is no distance separating one heart from another.

May we spend less time correcting and more time connecting — with ourselves and those around us. (“Matt Kahn: The Power of Listening,” Golden Age of Gaia, February 9, 2021, at <https://goldenageofgaia.com/2021/02/09/matt-kahn-the-power-of-listening/>.)

Introduction



All of us hear of the great orators of our times - Lincoln, Churchill, Gandhi, etc.,

But who hears of the great listeners?

Listening is something we say not *do* a great deal of but expect to *get* a great deal of. Many of us may not have really tried deep listening.

It's the hidden treasure which I think will make many relationships work (the other missing ingredient being real love). (1)

When we listen to another, what we're doing is allowing them to put all their cards on the table. They get to see the whole picture. Only by seeing the whole picture, are they enabled to see what's driving themselves and others, make the right decision, respond effectively, etc.

We mimic the process of realization. What takes us time, bliss gives us instantaneously: elevation.

Bliss uplifts us and allows us to see something from above it. One offers the time needed to see the whole picture; the other elevates us and allows us to see it from height.

Bliss is the turbotrain and listening ... well, it's not quite as quick.

But, until we live in the bliss of the higher dimensions, it's what we've got to help extricate another from their confusion and suffering.

I've tried to eliminate the repetition in these articles. Sometimes I'd lose the meaning if I did.

As a Sociology graduate student who stumbled on listening when others were not buying his therapeutic solutions, I thought I had fallen upon the universal curative.

I've expanded my horizons a little since then (I hear that med beds will even cure vasanas or the suffering caused by core issues).

But I still regard good listening skills as essential in work and relationship.

With that, enjoy yourself experimenting with your own listening. I'll soon be posting a "manual" on listening which will tell you a lot of things you could be listening for.

After Ascension, these books will be superfluous. We'll be able to read each other's aura and there will be no need for me to listen to know what your truth is. Our work concerns the time between now and then.

Footnotes

(1) What is *real* love? Real love is transformative love. See *The Lure of Love* at <https://goldenageofgaia.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/The-Lure-of-Love.pdf>

⌘ On the Value of Listening ⌘

The Value of Listening

August 17, 2012

<https://goldenageofgaia.com/2012/08/17/the-value-of-listening/>



What wants to be heard

I see around me people who so need a good listening, especially during these times and I don't think we fully appreciate what listening contributes to them. Again I suggest that listening is a most precious gift, the value of which I think perhaps few of us see.

When I listen to someone, I'm asking myself: What does this person cry out to communicate? What is it they're dying to have me understand? What is their message?

True listening has no truck or trade with judgment. It's completely concerned with understanding. Listening is like having a second self. That's really what we're missing, is it not? Our twin flame? Our other half? The original other that makes us One?

True listening is like having that second half, a person who loves us unconditionally, who'll hear whatever we need to say, who will stick around to get through the initial brushclearing and wait to see what shows up in the space.

I view each sentence I hear as a potential chapter heading. There's so little real listening that occurs in our society that people nowadays speak in chapter headings. Some only in book titles. Very little of what they wish to have communicated actually ever gets across.

If the speaker wants to unravel any particular sentence, I know there's value in me listening to it. There are no detours. Every line explored takes us closer to the heart of the matter, whether I can see how what that is or not.

Watch a person whom you've listened to for more than an hour. They become relaxed. They begin to unwind. To heck with meditation. Let's just listen to each other. Listening cannot be done except with an empty mind. The discipline of listening is itself a form of meditation, I find.

To listen to another, I have to put my ego aside. Every time that feeling of being clever arises that would have me make a smart response and show what a good boy am I, I step aside from it. That's a big part of the discipline of listening. So few people can resist the temptation to self-congratulate and distract.

Hearing another's pain, allowing their anger, getting to the root of their upset releases more than most medications and many therapies. It gives release to speak the truth. (The truth will set you free.) But it's doubly releasing to be heard (listening) and triply releasing to be known to have been heard (feedback, mirroring).

I dearly wanted to carve out a career for myself teaching listening. Why I didn't I don't know. (1) I wanted to create listening posts all around my country. But I guess I wanted to write more. My happiest moment teaching was the one class I did on listening at a company I worked for. Maybe when I can bilocate, the second me will devote itself to the propagation of listening.

Not being heard is painful. Not being listened to, not being paid attention to, being ignored, being told what one thinks or how one is.

In my soul contract, I was given the good fortune of being born the runt of the litter. I was totally ignored in everything. How else to create a writer and a listener? What good fortune it was for me because I can appreciate the pain of people who are not listened to and not heard.

I never tire of talking about listening because I know its value. Solomon said of the Divine Mother that knowledge of Her was more precious than rubies. (2)
Knowledge of listening is like that as well. Its value is inestimable.

Now, as we draw together in a unified field that will ascend as One, listening is going to play a larger and larger role. So don't be surprised if I return to the topic.

Heavens, do start experimenting with listening. You who may wonder what your mission is, until you know for sure, what better service can there be than listening?

Footnotes

(1) Yes, I do. A vision experience occurred on Feb. 13, 1987 and sent me off to the study of enlightenment. This subsequently led me away from my discipline of Sociology. See "The Purpose of Life is Enlightenment – Ch. 13 – Epilogue," at <https://goldenageofgaia.com/2011/08/13/the-purpose-of-life-is-enlightenment-ch-13-epilogue/>

(2) “She is more precious than rubies: and all things thou canst desire are not to be compared with her.” Proverbs 3:13-5.

The Power of Listening

August 7, 2012

<https://goldenageofgaia.com/2012/08/07/the-power-of-listening/>



When I studied counselling for my Sociology Ph.d. program in the 1980s, I relied on Jay Haley's *Problem Solving Therapy*. There I was at the side of the road trying to sell my solutions to other people, hawking my wares, and getting nowhere.

People didn't buy my solutions. They wanted to tell their story. They wanted me to listen. And if I didn't, they resisted and rebelled.

So, after frustrating myself no end trying to peddle my answers, I finally fell silent and began to listen. And I listened and I listened. Four hours of listening. Five hours. Once eight hours (just to prove a point to myself).

And what happened was that people's puzzles began to become pictures. Suddenly after talking and talking, a person would light up and go "Aha!" They now saw what they had been overlooking all these years.

With that, they were up from their chair and out the door. They just wanted to communicate what they had discovered. At last they now knew what had been

driving them all these years. All that was missing was for them to be able to put all their cards on the table and see what was what.

By the way, is this not what realization itself is? Bliss lifts us to such a height that we see the situation unbrageously and come to what would be an ordinary noticing at that height but is a realization at this height.

So where in the moments when we cannot have bliss, we can have listening.

You recall, perhaps, that I left my Sociology Ph.d. program because I had a vision of the entire journey of an individual soul, from God to God. That came about because I applied a notion of listening theory to life.

I'd been listening to people as a form of restorative therapy and saw that when they found the missing piece to their puzzle, the puzzle became a picture.

I said to the universe in general, "If it's true that people's early lives are a puzzle, which then becomes a picture, could it be that life itself is a puzzle? And, if so, what is the picture that life is?" (1)

I didn't expect an answer but instantly the front window of my car disappeared and I was left staring at a working model of life.

You can read about that vision here. (2) In summary, I watched an individual soul or small golden star speed away from God the Father, represented by a large golden Sun. It entered a cloud of consciousness that represented God the Mother and there went through lifetimes in matter before two stages of enlightenment saw it leave the cloud of consciousness and reunite with the golden Sun. (3)

The vision disappeared after I heard the words: "The purpose of life is enlightenment."

But what I'm saying here isn't about that vision, as pivotal as it's been for me (and thank you for listening to something that was important to me). It's about listening itself.

I've seen very few upsets that yielded to Problem-Solving Therapy, but few upsets that didn't yield to listening. To put the matter another way, in my view, "fixing" does not set us free, but the truth does. And the truth emerges through getting a full

chance to say what's so for us - to lay all our cards on the table - to a committed listener.

Listening is one of the rarest of gems. Very few people listen. And of those who do, very few really, really listen, I mean, listen for clues, listen to the tone of voice, to the feelings, watch the hand movements, look for hidden commands – there's so much to listen to and any one piece can be the one that completes the puzzle.

Like the woman who said that she used to walk into the ocean, found it cold, and would quickly run out again. Was that the way she was in relationship? And pop. She got why it was that she constantly left relationships after only a few months.

Or the number of people who have sicknesses that reflect statements like “pain in the neck,” “pain in the backside,” etc. Or all the people who've been called “lazy no-good good-for-nothings” and are now Type A personalities or “worthless tramps” who are now totally-indispensable members of any team they join. (How does that happen?)

And all unconsciously. (4) After being listened to and seeing what's what, they are now Type A personalities who have no guilt about it.

Kidding aside, some of the keys are that people have to have a long enough go at it; they have to have our undivided attention; they need feedback that shows that we're keeping up with them, they could use mirroring – not too much mirroring, not too many interruptions. They need something from us every so often to show that we have a hand in the game – so we may wish to share just a foreshortened version of something that reveals an aspect of us, just to show that we're a player.

So many people have never really been listened to. It's sad really. Enough listening to really follow some leads they want to pursue and a willingness to stick with it until the picture emerges.

If you listen well, people usually know nothing about it. They may say that they enjoyed having a conversation with you or that you're a brilliant conversationalist. Very often the speaker doesn't know what happened.

As writer Harvey Mckay noted:

“You'll know you've attained your goal when you can utter two sentences in an hour-long conversation and the other speaker thanks you for your input and adds, quite earnestly, ‘You always have so much to say!’” (5) ...

I can truly say that there are very few things I enjoy doing more than listening. It's one of the best gifts one person can give another. It's one of the most closely guarded secrets in human society. And it has more power to heal than anything I know of on the Third Dimension. If the cabal knew the power of listening, they might have patented it. Or censored it.

There's nothing more satisfying that I know of than looking at someone's face light up because the matter that has escaped them all their life and made their life hell they now know and understand.

Footnotes

(1) Steve in 2021: I can't believe that more than thirty years later, I can still remember what I said on that occasion word for word.

(2) "The Purpose of Life is Enlightenment – Ch. 13 – Epilogue," at <https://goldenageofgaia.com/2011/08/13/the-purpose-of-life-is-enlightenment-ch-13-epilogue/>

(3) The fact that I was drenched in bliss allowed me to “know” who the actors were and what was happening.

I have no idea what those exalted stages might be. In our discussions, Archangel Michael has indicated to me that we can return to the Father, if we wish, after we leave the twelve dimensions. Otherwise we exist in the Transcendental.

(4) It's called “living a script.”

(5) Harvey Mackay, Minneapolis Star Tribune, May 24, 2001

The Joy of Listening

November 19, 2016

<https://goldenageofgaia.com/2016/11/19/the-joy-of-listening/>



Listening is like Water to the Plant

One of the costs of being a lightworker, aware of what's transpiring, is that we want to tell others about it, but we get invalidated right and left when we do.

Either being ignored or ridiculed may cause us to close down.

In that event, a good, long listening proves to be like water to the plant. The plant blossoms - especially among lightworkers who've been doing so much clearing work anyways and are open to re-opening.

I watched it happen at the *Bridge to Now* when people really listened to each other. People unburdened themselves. Their faces changed.

It simply reinforced in me that listening has to be one of the most valuable gifts one person can give to another.

Around and around we go, looking for someone who'll listen to us. Movies are done ridiculing us as co-dependent, weak-willed, etc.

I personally don't think wanting to be heard is a neurotic thing. It can be in some people, I suppose.

But real listening is rare in our society so I can imagine people looking for it.

One Message: Simply Listen

If there was one message I wish got through from all my work, it would be: Don't talk. Don't advise. Simply listen. That thread runs through 40 years of my life.

The prevailing habit of our society is to equate "contributing" with breaking in to another person's share with a real game-changer that usually begins with "you should...."

We listen until we've made up our mind on our diagnosis and there our listening stops. We're now framing our statement of advice and awaiting our opportunity to deliver it. You can see it in our face. We've got a good one!

That isn't listening. Not even close.

And what does the speaker do having been so derailed? Closes down, saying to themselves, "Nobody listens to me." The advice usually falls by the wayside. If it was heard at all, it's usually rejected almost immediately. The speaker is now downcast and probably hiding it ... since no one is listening.

Counselling Experiences

When I was counselling in my Sociology doctoral years, I stopped advising when I saw that people weren't listening to what I was saying. Not a word of it.

They simply wanted to return to their story and finish. They seemed to want me to shut up.

Under those conditions, problem solving didn't work. I went with the flow instead, threw my agenda out the window, and simply listened. And, of course, being me, I really went at it, studying listening inside out and outside in.

I dropped all ideas of what I might get out of the exchange. I dropped any agenda that came up. I dropped the need to feel important, as in "I contributed the game-changer" - whatever it took to see what the power of listening was and could be.

Listening proved to me to be among the most powerful therapies, short of those that manipulate energy.

The hardest thing to do when listening is to drop the desire itself to make a difference because, unless we're free of Third Dementia, that can become another door leading back to advising.

- When that red-hot idea comes up of a bright thing to say, consider dropping it and just listen.
- When you wish you were doing something else, let that thought go too and sink down into listening.

Listening is Foolproof

Listening is foolproof. If we feed back to the other person our understanding of what they've just said, they'll correct us if we're wrong. Therefore we can't go wrong.

So little of the seemingly-important things in life are taught in school - relationship, sexuality, parenting, and communication, including listening. (Who will plan the new curriculum?)

That new curriculum needs to have a course on listening. It's a learned skill, just as not listening is.

Many people say that they won't go to a party or event because they have nothing to say. There are two perfectly respectable positions in any interchange: Speaking AND listening.

Everyone who speaks needs someone to listen to them. So there's no need to excuse ourselves from events because we have nothing to say. If we genuinely have nothing to say, we can listen.

We're missing out on the joy of listening - the joy of really making a difference in a person's life by putting aside our needs and simply hearing another. Plain, bare, neutral awareness. Reception without judgment.

This role that truly makes a difference is so inconspicuous and modest that when you and the speaker produce a breakthrough or emergence, the speaker usually doesn't know what just happened or how it happened. Very, very seldom did a person I listened to know how the breakthrough occurred.

Few see that it was the listening itself that allowed them to put all the puzzle pieces on the table and see the big picture. Our society does not consider mere listening a significant contribution.

But never mind that. I say it *is* a significant contribution.

Don't wait for a comprehending thank-you or acknowledgment. This is a selfless activity. You have to acknowledge yourself here.

The more we understand that we cannot force people, that they have free will, the more we'll understand the value of listening.

Discover the joy of it. Just sink down. Be present. Be neutral.

And simply listen.

Water in the Desert

May 8, 2015

<https://goldenageofgaia.com/2015/05/08/water-in-the-desert/>



A woman in a coffeeshop asked me the other day what I do.

What I didn't reply, and I should have, is: I listen to people.

In the last day, I listened to three people tell their life stories, in part or in whole.

There are two things missing in this world, as far as I can see: love and listening. And both are equally important.

The relationship between the two is that, for me, listening is love in action.

We probably all agree that we want people to listen to us. But what we may not give our attention to is whether we listen to others.

Listening to others doesn't mean cutting them off after two minutes and running away with their share. It doesn't involve fixing, counselling, or advising them.

All of those come from the ego's need to feel important. That's probably the biggest obstacle to listening.

If we can put the ego aside, or tell it to go outside and play, then we have the space to receive into ourselves what other people are saying.

And we do that - we accept into ourselves what they're saying. We let it in and try on their experience to see what it feels like.

And we mirror back to them how we feel, what we see, offering them a "second self," a compassionate and bonding connection with another.

We give them a good listening and a thorough understanding. I've seen people respond at the end of it by being startled. They say they haven't had the chance to say so much about themselves perhaps ever. It's a liberating experience to see the whole of one's life at one sitting. It makes things clear.

That's what Kathleen and I did on the West Coast Express: we listened to people. Yes, speaking is important. But speaking without being heard is close to futile.

There'll never be enough listening in the world.

Listening is what's missing in the world and it's born of love. Listening and love are as rare as water in the desert - and as necessary.

⌘ On the Practice of Listening ⌘

Realization: Turning Puzzles into Pictures

June 29, 2019

<https://goldenageofgaia.com/2019/06/29/turning-puzzles-into-pictures/>



Credit: Spectrum Women

I've just had an eery experience.

Listening to a friend, I heard details of her story that made the whole of her self-presentation at that moment shift from being a mystery to me to being clearly and instantly understandable.

Everything about the way she was in a certain area of her life was now crystal clear to me. Understanding shifted to realization at that moment.

I've been consciously listening to people for 43 years, since I discovered as a Sociology grad student that people didn't want my answers; they wanted my listening.

Many times have people had realizations as the result of listening. Realizations are the goal: Listen until the puzzle becomes a picture.

But never have I the listener had a realization about the other person. (1) So never have I had the occasion to test out my own theory.

That theory is that a single piece of information - a single puzzle piece - can transform what otherwise was a puzzle into a picture; could, that is, result in realization. It was very confirming.

And it wasn't as a result of what happened to the speaker, but to the listener.

I can't disclose the details unfortunately. But for me it isn't about the details anyways.

What I'm ecstatic about is the living proof that, if we share critical information about a determining traumatic event in our past, it can unlock mysteries about ourselves and the way we are, decades later. It tells us how the twig was bent, that explains how the tree inclined. (2)

In terms of my own puzzle, most of me is invisible to myself, though not to others. I'm busy putting one piece of a thousand-piece puzzle into another. It's a huge chore when one does it alone.

But listening provides new opportunities. Such as the opportunity to lay all the pieces placed so far on the table. The opportunity to collaborate, to be heard.

We have few insights when we're down in the dumps. Having someone listen seems to raise our spiritual pulse rate, our emotional temperature. We can actually get up to mild interest, strong interest, and even, in the face of really good listening, enthusiasm.

It seems to me that it's in those vibratory ranges that insight arises. Maybe it's where an important piece goes. Or maybe it raises to conscious awareness a piece of the puzzle that the subconscious has been raising and hasn't been noticed. I don't know.

By whatever process realization works, in this case, here in one synoptic go was a person's original bend or decision laid bare, making the inclination of the tree totally understandable.

There's a whole literature that talks about paradigmatic breakthrough coming as a result of cognitive dissonance. (3) I think the two lines of inquiry are looking at the same thing.

Is that the end of the significance for me of turning puzzles into pictures - has it only professional significance?

Not by a country mile. It has spiritual significance as well.

You remember, as I drove down the road on Feb. 13, 1987, I asked the universe: If our early lives are a puzzle which turns into a picture, could it be that life itself is a puzzle? And, if so, what is the picture that life is? (4)

Following that I received - while behind the wheel of my car - an eight-second vision of the purpose of life. (5) So this has profound spiritual significance for me. Life itself is a puzzle. The picture that life is - the Mother's design of life - can be seen.

The process of realization is seeing the picture that the puzzle represents, while the most effective way I've seen to trigger one is through selfless listening. (6)

Footnotes

(1) Perhaps it was because I didn't know the people I listened professionally to very well so I had to simply accept whatever they said about themselves. In this case I knew the person well.

(2) I have to warn against a tendency in some people to jump to conclusions, to arrive at a premature conclusion when they haven't really listened to other person or listened long enough. I'm not trying to feed that tendency.

(3) See *Paradigmatic Breakthrough: Essays in New Age Philosophy* at <https://goldenageofgaia.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Paradigmatic-Breakthrough-6.pages.pdf>

On the principle that cognitive dissonance can precede and lead to paradigmatic breakthrough, see “The Principles of Largescale Employment Projects – Part 2/2,” February 23, 2016 (c. 1995), at <https://goldenageofgaia.com/2016/02/23/the-principles-of-largescale-employment-projects-part-22/>

(4) See "The Purpose of Life is Enlightenment – Ch. 13 – Epilogue," at <https://goldenageofgaia.com/2011/08/13/the-purpose-of-life-is-enlightenment-ch-13-epilogue/>

(5) I know this area of Vancouver well. I grew up there. When I emerged from the vision after around eight seconds, I looked to my right and left to see how far I had travelled in the time I'd been "out." I hadn't moved an inch. That was eight second outside of time.

(6) Service-to-others listening, not service-to-self.; i.e., seeking affirmation for insight, helpfulness, generosity, etc. I hesitated to call it "therapeutic" because it isn't the property of professionals, but it is more focused and intentional than "ordinary" listening.

It's a fundamental error, I think, and a misunderstanding of the role of listening to only listen to what we ourselves are interested in.

One of the Tools to Get from Here to Love is Listening

December 19, 2020

<https://goldenageofgaia.com/2020/12/19/one-of-the-tools-to-get-from-here-to-love-is-listening/>



I was just listening to a friend who was never listened to as a child. I had that same difficulty so I could relate.

One of the major ways a child experiences a parent's love is by hearing words of love in loving intonations. The parent who doesn't listen to a child probably ... well, I really don't know.

But what a funny way of speaking: "Listening to a friend." So unused to thinking about listening am I that to talk about it that way sounds strange. I was listening to a friend. But I was.

It's strange, I think, because our society doesn't seem to stress the need for listening. Or emphasize its value.

In my view, listening is what the world needs most. Everyone is speaking and no one is listening.

We interrupt this program for a radio station YNOT News Bulletin.

An anti-listening viruses has spread throughout the Internet. Known as Meme-20, the virus is alleged to have been manufactured as a bioweapon in a secret Greenland lab of a "foreign power" and is rapidly spreading.

Trolls were seen secreting it onto the Internet.

People are showing symptoms, chief among which is a refusal to listen. Encouraging people to wear masks, social distancing and lockdowns only seem to increase the chances of catching it and ... not listening.

Other symptoms are shortness of temper, projection of feelings, hatred of others, all leading to spiritual atrophy and death due to Meme-20. This is worse than the Black Plague. What will become of the world?

(Pause) Our news reporter has left the station.

We now return you to our normally-programmed programming.

Listening is missing. I know. I know. I know. It sounds so simple. It can't be true. Well, love is also missing in our world, yes? Looting, murdering, drive-by shootings, cartels.... No love there. And love is also so simple.

If we all loved, I wouldn't be discussing this subject. But we don't and one of the tools to get us from here to love is listening. In fact, in the situation the world is in, I'd consider it THE major tool - or I wouldn't be writing this.

I've written a great deal in past years on listening. I even have a manual tucked away in a drawer somewhere. Teaching listening skills to companies could very well have become an alternative career for me.

Just enter "listening" in the GAoG search box and much will come up.

My entire approach to vasanas is based on listening to oneself. We listen to Michael, Sanat Kumara, Ashtar, the White Winged Collective of Nine. We can also give ourselves a good listening.

What are we listening for? The truth.

Why are we listening for the truth? Because the truth will set us free.

Free from what? Illusion.

Into what? Into our original Oneness with God, with all that that means.

Sounds like a path.

Listening (to self or another) is an exercise in awareness and, I believe, awareness is a path to God.

Listening is the Hardest of the 'Easy' Tasks



Harvey Mackay, Minneapolis Star Tribune, May 24, 2001

Ask people if they are good listeners, and usually they'll say yes. And they'll say it's easy to be a good listener. Business publications are full of articles about the sorry state of communication in today's workplace. The chief culprit is always "poor listening skills". If being a good listener is so easy, what's the problem?

To answer that, we must identify the skills that make up good listening.

Many people think that communication means getting others to do what you want them to do. For them, good listening means, "I talk, you listen." Such an approach might work. These folks get their point across by shouting, "Didn't you hear me?" Or by moralizing, "This is the only fair decision we can make." Or by pulling rank: "It's my way or the highway."

Managers who use such tactics might get the staff to follow instructions. But these managers complain that their best staffers always seem to leave. "I had no idea there was a problem until I got the resignation letter," they whine. "After all, we communicated so well!"

These people have forgotten the basic truth about being a good listener: Listening is a two-way process. Yes, you need to be heard. You also need to hear the other person's ideas, questions and objections. If you talk at people instead of with them, they're not buying in B they're caving in.

Believe it or not, being a good listener is more important in sales than being a good talker. Ben Feldman, the first insurance salesman to pass the sales goal of \$25 million in one year, had a simple formula for his success. He was New York Life's leading salesman for more than 20 years, operating out of East Liverpool, Ohio, a city of 20,000. His secret? Work hard. Think big. Listen very well.

Good listeners steer conversations toward other people's interests. This is what good conversationalist is. And remember, you can't learn anything when you are doing the talking.

More than a century ago, a young woman who had dined with both William Gladstone and Benjamin Disraeli explained why she preferred Disraeli: "When I dined with Mr. Gladstone I felt as though he was the smartest man in England. But when I dined with Mr. Disraeli, I felt as though I was the smartest woman in England."

Being a good listener also means paying attention to context as well as content. A listener who can paraphrase what you've said without changing your meaning is a great listener. A listener who merely can repeat your words is a parrot.

It takes skill and determination to be a good listener, but the effort yields terrific results. Perhaps the biggest reward of being a good listener is that you also become a better talker. You learn the best way to get people to hear what you're saying, and you find that you don't need to force-feed your ideas and opinions to others. You'll know you've attained your goal when you can utter two sentences in an hour-long conversation and the other speaker thanks you for your input and adds, quite earnestly, "You always have so much to say!"

Mackay's Moral: Easy listening is a style of music, not communication.

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Maximum Danger; Minimum Risk

August 23, 2014

<https://goldenageofgaia.com/2014/08/23/maximum-danger-minimum-risk/>



The Golden Ear Award

I had a reading with Archangel Michael on Friday and he said we'd emerge from the Tsunami of Love "addicted to love." The next wave is being called "the perfect storm."

But a lot of what'll come up for some people during some of that process – me included – are their core issues, major vasanas, etc.

The most important skill at this time that I can think of to assist anyone who's hurting is listening. And there's more to listening than meets the ear. I'd like to discuss some aspects of it, in this and perhaps future articles.

Listening has the power to turn the puzzle into a picture and cause a realization ... and more. It has the power to set the speaker free from the unwanted condition.

When I was studying listening back in the 1980s, I used to say that what we aimed for was allowing the speaker to present their most basic upsets, conundrums, etc. (maximum danger) in a manner that posed the least possible risk (minimum risk). Maximum Danger: Minimum Risk. MXD:MNR

What does it mean to listen in a manner that poses minimum risk? It means to serve as a Second Self, a “sacred partner,” we’d say these days. We double, or quadruple, the person’s ability to see into themselves by seeing along with them, feeling along with them - and realizing along with them. It means to listen closely but with a light touch. And it gives them the feeling of strength and courage to look at things (MXD) they might not have been willing to look at before.

The Second Self that we act as is outside the upset and holds the space for the speaker to turn the puzzle into a picture. It allows the speaker the opportunity to put everything on the table and see what they’ve been missing up till now.

Very few people get the opportunity to be listened to long enough to get out all that’s really troubling them. Most people interrupt after a few sentences. Or they take the ball and run with it (“run away with another’s share”). Or they succumb to a need to feel useful and important and give in to the desire to counsel, console, advise – everything but listen.

When I was practising to be a counsellor in my Sociology Ph.D years, I followed Problem-Solving Therapy but quickly saw that very few people were buying my solutions. After much frustration, I saw that most people simply wanted to be heard.

So I threw my solutions out the window. No one was buying them anyways. I may as well have been selling water by the river. And I began to listen.

I threw away my need to feel important and instrumental in the success of their inquiry, which they were perfectly capable of running themselves, if only someone cared to listen. I simply set about following what they were saying and “recreating” (creating anew within myself, experiencing) whatever it was they

wanted to look at and feel. I might mirror back how it felt to see things the way they did. But just briefly.

I had a commitment to the truth but I also had a commitment to acting naturally. Being myself. Being who I am.

Everything they said to me was a chapter heading. I could have encouraged them to unroll any heading and had to be watchful for what was being said that was really the key. A word, a metaphor, a conclusion, a decision – you never knew when the one thing would be said that was crucial to their release from the unwanted condition.

Periodically I'd share something myself, a very small intervention, just to show that I had my hat in the ring. I didn't redirect them. I didn't take over their process. I didn't say to them "Go into your heart. Get out of your head." Everyone goes into their heart once they get a head of steam going. Their heart is where they want to get to. No one needs to be schooled in that. We're love-seeking machines.

I simply got each thing that was said and waited for the one key piece to mirror back to them.

I'd mirror back from time to time my understanding of what was said, how they looked, what they seemed to be feeling. I'd watch gestures, body language, listen to tones, the rise and fall of their voice. I might periodically hear a favorite expression or hear a significant pause, which I'd mirror back. Anything could cause the breakthrough.

Feelings are particularly important to mirror back because our mind files our upsets under "feeling" headings.

Mirroring is foolproof because, if I get it wrong, they correct me. So whether or not I get their drift the first time, I'm sure to get it as a result of their correction.

Everything they said I held in confidentiality. Nothing they said would I bring back to them in a way that was confrontive.

Never would I disagree with what they were saying because I felt in my bones that they knew what they wanted to say. They only lacked a listener, not a sense of where they needed to go with things. It wasn't that they lacked understanding of

what was happening. It was more that they lacked someone who cared enough to invest the time to hear them completely.

If only they could get the whole story out, they could see what they were dealing with.

Listening is the greatest gift one person can give another. Listening is the alchemy of transformation and the speaker is himself or herself the alchemist. We're simply the catalyst.

Listening is a very humble act. If the person got their "Aha!" all they really wanted to do was to rush out the door and tell their loved ones what they had seen. Mission accomplished. Some left without saying thank you.

Good listening is invisible. The number of people who said I was a brilliant conversationalist was legion, when all I did was listen. What conversation? Listening is not a conversation. It's the other person speaking.

Once they achieved release, I never took them back into the upset. To do so would have been to recreate the unwanted condition all over again. Release was what we aimed for and the truth of their situation was what would set them free.

The secret, if there is one, was to have a light touch, be non-threatening, be Maximum Danger: Minimum Risk. I am the listener. I think of this as "having a light touch" or "being light." That is my mission. To be Light.

Hearing the Truth of Another

Oct. 13, 2015

<https://goldenageofgaia.com/2015/10/13/hearing-the-truth-of-another/>



In building Nova Earth, we're going to have predictable disagreements. Some of them drain energy significantly and are unnecessary.

One is our disagreements over "what's the truth here?"

Supposing I were to say to you that the wait lines at the bank today were outrageous. A half-hour wait with only six customers ahead of me and three tellers, sometimes four.

And supposing you were to say to me, the wait line wasn't that long. Besides there were sometimes two tellers there instead of three or four, and anyways some tellers were doing wire transfers and other complicated matters.

We'd probably end up pulling each other's hair out.

The listener has responded with what they conceive to be the true picture of what occurred.

But what they've failed to do is to get that what the speaker said is *their* truth, what is true for them in that moment, and that that truth has not been heard and acknowledged.

How many fights occur because the listener does not get that the speaker wants their truth to be heard and acknowledged, however we may feel about it? Instead what happens is that the two dispute what may be true. They end up presenting two versions of the truth, neither of which may prove to be totally correct.

And no one knows why so much resentment has been generated. The listener wonders why the speaker is so hot under the collar? Aren't they interested in the truth?

This is one predictable fight that I see happening around me with regularity. It's one that could be left at the door, so to speak, if we'd simply hear and acknowledge another's truth as *their* truth. We don't have to agree with it.

When we're building Nova Earth, we may need protocols for getting along. And hearing and acknowledging the truth of another needs to be right up there at the top of them.

The Emotional Truth

June 6, 2018

<https://goldenageofgaia.com/2018/06/06/the-emotional-truth/>



Who's the fool who told you not to cry? (Michael Jordan weeps upon being honored in 2009.)

So often when we're communicating, we're stating, not the actual or the whole truth, but what is for us the emotional truth - what we feel to be true.

The typical exchange that occurs then is that the listener may say, "That's not true."

No, it isn't the complete truth. It's the truth of how we feel.

If the listener holds out for the complete truth - which the speaker is often not aware of and which communication of the emotional truth is a step towards - he or she is missing a valuable piece of the puzzle.

We miss a bet in not accepting the emotional truth as an important step in seeing the other person's total message.

Moreover, any road in can be the spark that ignites the "Aha!" moment that listening so often results in.

When I listen to another's upset, I listen in stages - vertically and horizontally.

Vertically recognizes that most of us talk in chapter headings. Any one sentence, I find, can be unfolded profitably. What the listener does is keep in mind the totality of what's been said so far and weigh which chapter headings would best repay unpacking.

Horizontally means I listen in passes for aspects of the truth. The first aspect is for me to get the story. (1) After hearing the story from beginning to end, I then circle back, asking the speaker "How do you feel about all that?"

We then work our way through the emotional truth on the second pass.

The third pass may be to see what conclusions the speaker has reached and what decisions flow from that.

At any point in the listening, the speaker may have an "Aha!" moment. Once they've seen the picture that the puzzle was, I usually don't go further. To do so risks plunging the person back into the upset.

I know I'm repeating myself in what I'm about to say next. I'm doing so because the point is so important that I think it needs a bit of repetition to really impress itself on our minds and hearts.

In my considered opinion, what is most important to human beings - more important than anything else I can think of - is how we feel.

Some might say that money is more important, or having a house, or marrying and having kids.

But I think that everything we do is overshadowed and shaped by our desire to feel a certain way - loving, blissful, joyful, peaceful, etc.

My favorite example is the couple who pay \$6,000 for a vacation in Hawaii, all for that magic moment when they stand on the balcony and look out at the land and sea: "Ahhhhh."

For that "Ahhhhh!" has the \$6,000 been spent. (2)

I know that the divine qualities reside in my heart. As a result, I don't need to spend \$6,000 on setting the stage and hoping for the result.

The result would be me drawing bliss up from my heart anyways, \$6,000 or no \$6,000.

The other scenario is that we stand on the balcony in Hawaii after spending much of the \$6,000 and we *don't* feel bliss. We didn't draw it up from our hearts for whatever reason.

After all, that bliss does not reside in Hawaii, in the airlines, or in the restaurant we had our last supper at. It isn't a characteristic of the landscape or seascape. In the final analysis, it's what we bring to the party.

So the *emotional* truth just may in the end prove to be more important for us as listeners than the *actual* truth.

Unfortunately, as far as I know, we're not trained in school or anywhere else these days to get in touch with our feelings. Most people I've run across, when asked, do not know how they feel.

Or they say "I feel that..." That's not a feeling. That's an idea.

After the Reval, I'll be trying to kickstart the human-growth movement again for the purpose of allowing us opportunities to actually get to know how we feel.

Feelings are part of the experiential level of reality, which is juicier, more alive, and more rewarding than the intellectual level. In my view, we need to discover or recover the ability to know and contact that higher level of existence.

Next stop after that: The realizational level of existence.

Footnotes

(1) Many listeners often look down on the story, considering it a "head trip." I think that everything a person communicates in an upset is important to unlocking the meaning of the upset.

(2) And then we furiously snap photographs to remember this magic moment, even though the act of snapping the photographs interrupts the very feeling state we've worked so hard to stage.

A Contribution to New Spiritual Partners - 1

Nov. 11, 2013

<https://goldenageofgaia.com/spirituality/communication-sharing-and-listening/a-contribution-to-new-spiritual-partners-1/>



The best listener

Archangel Michael said in *An Hour with an Angel* that the Company of Heaven is bringing spiritual partners together ... and not gradually but as quickly as people can handle. (1)

I look at what he says and want to serve that part of the Plan.

And so I say to myself: how can I contribute to that? And the way in which I see I can contribute is to share about listening and sharing. Because adequate listening and sharing is for me the basis of a successful relationship.

Let me begin with listening.

My Mother's Listening

I can't remember a single word my mother ever said to me or to anyone else. But everyone loved her.

Why? Because she listened.

Everyone loved her and came over to Mrs. Beckow's house when she "put on a pot of coffee." (2)

She could get right down there with you through all your trials and tribulations because that's what her listening was: feeling what you were feeling, getting what you were getting, getting it down to her bones. As deep as one could go. A deep recreation of another's experience.

When somebody listens to me that way, I'm able to get everything out on the table, all the pieces, all the chapters of the book. I see what the lay of the land is, what I've been missing or what's eluded me for as long as it has.

I have a sunburst of understanding, an "Aha!" moment and realization. The pieces of the puzzle fall into place. And I feel a great deal of release. The truth has set me free. And you've facilitated that process through your listening.

That's what listening is for me.

Magic Happens When We Listen

As far as I know, the vast majority of people turn their ear to their partner and listen while going over the shopping list in their mind. Their hearing doesn't amount to much. It doesn't lead to anyone's understanding. And it doesn't lead to release.

Their partner ends up feeling that they haven't been listened to, no one cares enough to listen to them, etc. And then the arguments start.

To really listen to another, one has to put aside one's ego and agenda and that is hard for most of us to do. We inject our opinions. We advise the other. We intrude ourselves into their process. We don't give them much of a turn. That's standard in our society.

But when I as a listener find myself able to put my ego and agenda aside and really hear another person, I know something magical occurs.

Sharing that flash of understanding with another, that release from problems that may have been plaguing them for years, that's truly a magic moment for me. Isn't that what most psychiatrists and psychologists are hired to do? Help us release ourselves from our pain? ...

How to Listen

I say it's time for us all to start listening this way.

Listen to the words. Listen to the tone. Look at what the eyes and hands say. Listen for patterns - motifs, themes, persistent complaints. Allow the full shape and weight of what's happening to dawn on us. And feed back the real deal-breakers.

Really get your partner's experience, as far as is safe. Be there with your partner as long as they need. And then mirror back your understanding to them, sparingly, pointedly.

Regard each sentence as a possible chapter heading. It may take several passes before they finish: one pass for the story (what happened); one pass for the emotions (how you feel); one pass for review (what you may have missed). Stop at any point realization comes.

Listen without an agenda save serving your partner. Listen neutrally. Don't jump in with your opinion. Refrain from advising. Let your partner solve their own problem. Just get them.

Allow them to get the full story out, until they have that sunburst of understanding, that moment of recognition of what is really going on here.

Then you can stop.

Listen that far and I'd call that superior. Probably more remains, but I'd call that a great starter! (3)

I'm not aware of anything more important or a greater gift that could be given. I draw the attention of new couples first then to what I consider the very valuable contribution of listening.

(Continued in [Part 2](#). Readers are welcome to read ahead.)

Footnotes

(1) "Archangel Michael: I See You! I Love You! I Will Engage," at <https://goldenageofgaia.com/2013/11/notes-from-archangel-michaels-discussion-of-sacred-partnership/>.

(2) I can remember her saying that! "You come over and I'll put on a pot of coffee."

(3) In many cases, our listening will be invisible so don't expect anyone to thank you. The more invisible it is, the better. Let your partner go the moment they've reached release. Don't engage them in more conversation and don't go back into the upset. The contribution of this kind of deep listening makes it well worth the effort. You can see I'm enthusiastic about it.

Only the Modest Need Apply

January 16, 2016

<https://goldenageofgaia.com/2016/01/16/modest-need-apply/>



I really need someone to listen to me, as a second self, putting their agenda aside. Will you do that for me?

Listening is Not Advising

For a lot of us, our exposure to listening is with professionals like doctors who listen for a short time and then give us their professional advice. Tell me your symptoms and I'll recommend a treatment strategy.

We may therefore approach the idea of listening as a practice where someone tells us something until an idea occurs to us and we offer a piece of advice.

That's not listening as I use the word. It's perhaps the opposite of listening.

Please, can we agree as we go forth in our united lightworker efforts, not to use that particular model of listening any longer? If we're to take up communicational patterns that reflect our rising frequencies, listening should top our list.

Our Unannounced *Modus Operandi*



I do feel a little bent out of shape. It's a puzzle that I can't figure out. Do you listen?

Let me go into our current model of listening a little more deeply.

The way things are now, we approach listening with the unannounced *modus operandi*: "Tell me what's happening with you and I'll listen up to the point that I get an idea of how to 'make you better.' Then I'll give you my advice." (1)

As soon as I get a thought, my listening is over and you need to entertain and probably follow my advice. If you don't, after a while, I'll get grouchy and uninspired and stop "listening." "What the heck? I gave you my best ideas. You didn't want to fix the problem. You don't *want* to get better."

Does this not sound familiar from our Third-Dimensional drama days? In actual fact we haven't been listening very much at all, except to our own minds.

None of this is what I'm looking for when I suggest that we need listeners.

If you're responding to the call for listeners, please, take off your counsellor's hat. Leave advice aside and simply, only, just, listen. Plain bare awareness. Naked consciousness. Pure, 100% listening. (2)

If we had someone who would simply listen to us, staying conscious, feeding back in very small doses what they see and hear, we'd be able to put all the puzzle pieces on the table and see the picture that the puzzle becomes.

Only the Modest Need Apply

Listening is only for people who've handled their ego needs to feel self-important, to have reassurance that they're OK, etc. If listeners use the session to get their own ego needs met, well, that has little to do with listening.

Listening is only for mature and modest people. It takes a lot of humility or modesty to set one's own agenda aside again and again and again and just be there for the other person.

What's the purpose of listening?

The purpose of listening is to provide the speaker with a second self, a partner who can set aside their own agenda for a brief time and hear everything the speaker wants to communicate, allowing them to go where their train of thought and feeling leads them to, committed to remaining till the "Aha!" moment of realization occurs. (3) (And exceptions do apply.)

It's a doubly-modest task in that, the minute the "Aha!" moment occurs, all the speaker usually wants to do is to run out the door to tell their loved ones what they've just realized, what breakthrough in understanding they just had, in their "Eureka!" moment of inspiration. All because someone cared enough to listen.



History's most famous "Aha!" moment: Archimedes's "Eureka!"

If they even know what just happened, it's unusual. Does anyone know that this breakthrough came about as a result of listening? Not many. They simply talk about it as if they realized or saw something in a conversation.

And yet many of them, I think, wonder to themselves at night: "What just happened?"

Good Listening is Invisible

In my view, good listening is invisible. My favorite joke about listening is the number of times I've been called a brilliant conversationalist when all I did was listen.

I may have said a few sentences feeding back to them what I saw or heard. In what way was I a conversationalist? Listening is brilliant but it's not a conversation for the listener. It's service.

Listening is not about me in any way, shape or form. It's about the speaker. The rewards are small from the ego's standpoint. Rather than being gratified or reinforced, the ego has to be set aside repeatedly.

But the rewards are great for those who actually, really do want the other person to be free of their predicament and know that their freedom can be purchased through our listening. Yes, it takes time. But that's our investment in having the world work.

Space doesn't allow going into the art of listening. But that's a whole other subject for a rainy day.

So please, if you're absolutely terminally married to the thought that you're going to advise the person you're listening to, don't listen. Perhaps seek out another line of service. No fault, no blame.

A person coming to us for listening wants just that: listening, for as long as it takes for them to lay the puzzle pieces on the table and see the picture. "Aha!" They want to be free. And listening is the best way to serve their freedom.

If I was granted one wish that I could have as the product of my entire work and reward for it, what would I wish for? I would wish that our entire planet learned how to listen to each other. I wish that listening was taught in grade schools everywhere and that people prided themselves on really listening.

Footnotes

(1) People, especially lightworkers, are not broken and don't need fixing. They simply need to be heard.

(2) As a spiritual discipline, listening, I think, is part of karma yoga, seva, or service.

(3) If we're committed to the person having a realization, then we'll find a quiet space for listening, turn off our cellphones, decline to be interrupted, not space out, and clear the decks so we can remain until the result it produced. Goodbye to the fifty-minute hour.

The Listener Wins

Michael Purdy, Monster Contributing Writer, n.d.



A crazy thing about communication in American society is the strange power of the listener. A song isn't good unless the listener says it is good; audiences determine music's success.

However, it is equally true that we aren't serious listeners until we have educated our ears. If we don't critically train our listening tastes, we could be a mindless consumer of whatever the music industry pushes our way with big ad budgets and slick promotions.

As in music, good listening counts in business. Donald Carstensen, vice president for educational services at ACT, surveyed a group of business leaders about the skills businesses are looking for in new hires. Seventy-three percent rated listening an "extremely important" skill. When Carstensen asked business leaders the percentage of high school grads with good listening skills, the result was only 19 percent.

Other studies over the past few decades indicate that business leaders consistently rank listening among the top five skills they expect employees to have. Naturally, listening is critical in the business environment where a mistake in understanding

can cost thousands or millions of dollars, or listening to a customer or employee can make a product better and increase the bottom line.

Good and Poor Listeners

What are the characteristics of good and poor listeners? A study I conducted of 900 college and military students ages 17 to 70 in the late '90s showed the following traits of good and poor listeners (in order of importance).

A good listener:

- Uses eye contact appropriately.
- Is attentive and alert to a speaker's verbal and nonverbal behavior.
- Is patient and doesn't interrupt (waits for the speaker to finish).
- Is responsive, using verbal and nonverbal expressions.
- Asks questions in a nonthreatening tone.
- Paraphrases, restates or summarizes what the speaker says.
- Provides constructive (verbal or nonverbal) feedback.
- Is empathic (works to understand the speaker).
- Shows interest in the speaker as a person.
- Demonstrates a caring attitude and is willing to listen.
- Doesn't criticize, is nonjudgmental.
- Is open-minded.

A poor listener:

- Interrupts the speaker (is impatient).
- Doesn't give eye contact (eyes wander).
- Is distracted (fidgeting) and does not pay attention to the speaker.
- Is not interested in the speaker (doesn't care; daydreaming).
- Gives the speaker little or no (verbal or nonverbal) feedback.
- Changes the subject.
- Is judgmental.
- Is closed-minded.
- Talks too much.
- Is self-preoccupied.

Gives unwanted advice.
Too busy to listen.

Similar studies done over the last two decades by Fortune 500 trainers and business consultants have found similar results.

Be Active

On the way up the career ladder, your listening skills should improve. Hourly employees may spend 30 percent of their time listening, while managers often spend 60 percent, and executives 75 percent or more.

Does effective listening lead to promotion, or do higher-ups learn to listen better because they must? It is probably a combination. Essentially, to be more successful, you must be a better listener. Better listening is also active listening.

To be an active listener, you must begin with awareness. When do others get angry with you for poor communication? When do you have problems communicating? How were you listening at these times?

It takes guts, but ask others what you could do to become a better listener. Others see our faults much better than we do. Learn about effective listening: read books, visit the International Listening Association's Web site for tips, or take a workshop or class on effective listening. Then be sure to practice what you learn.

Power Listening

To be a successful listener, you must also believe that listening is power. Because our society places so much emphasis on speaking as the way to win friends and influence people, good listeners can quietly have a powerful and subversive impact. You should also remember that speakers have little power without listeners. Speakers share their wisdom and try to persuade, but listeners make meaning of what is heard -- they make the ultimate decision to act on what they hear.

Michael Purdy is the coauthor of *Listening in Everyday Life*.

Listening Within

March 25, 2014

<https://goldenageofgaia.com/2014/03/25/listening-within/>



There are whales who hunt schools of herring by creating a wall of bubbles which the smaller fish won't breach. It drives the herring into tighter and tighter circles and forces them to the surface. The whales then rise from below and scoop them up in their massive mouths.

That's a little like how a social paradigm works. Those who create or enforce a social paradigm erect a screen of bubbles around us, composed of injunctions ("shoulds") and control us by ridicule if we question them and an ascending ladder of sanctions, each harder to bear than the one before.

At last we don't stray beyond the wall of bubbles and behave in ways that those who work the paradigm want us to. Our lives become shaped by these confining walls constructed by our own minds.

One example happened to me some years ago. After the vision I had in 1987, in which I was shown the purpose of life (enlightenment), (1) I went to numerous

university departments to see if I could do my doctoral dissertation on enlightenment. No one was willing to sponsor it.

At one point, I went to the Religious Studies Department and asked them if I could do it there. They replied that a subject like enlightenment was outside the purview of the University's Charter.

So the purpose of life was outside the university's purview. The reward for all action (enlightenment) was too. God meeting God as well. In what way was it a religious-studies department? And what more valuable subjects could the university keep us from?

The paradigm of empirical materialism (that only what we could touch, hear, smell, etc., is real) invited us to ridicule life after "death" and communication with the "dead." It required us to laugh at the notion of angels or risk ridicule. It caused us to deny that a human being had an immortal soul. And, at the time, it was the paradigm that informed – or rather enclosed – the university.

When we break free from a social paradigm, we leave the community of agreement. We're vulnerable to being ostracized. We've left the protection that society offers to those who conform. It can be lonely and stressful.

At this time, we're leaving many confining paradigms – by common consent. Social darwinism (that only the fittest survive), Christ as our only possible road to salvation, what a woman's place is, our repugnance for social welfare programs as being somehow "socialist," a debt-based society, rugged individualism – all these paradigms are falling around us.

And, yes, we breathe easier. And yes, we're finding support for this process from sources we seldom used to consider – like the Company of Heaven.

But it can also usher in a time of uncertainty, confusion, and anxiety.

When that arises, what might we do?

In a time of rampant paradigm change, I believe we need to turn our attention from external sources to internal sources. Everyone urges that – Archangel Michael, Jesus, Matthew Ward, every terrestrial sage I can think of.

The inner sources I'm referring to are the Higher Self or soul, the Company of Heaven, our guides, and even the Queen of Heaven, the Divine Mother. They all use the same telephone line that runs through our hridayam or heart doorway to our inner listening apparatus.

The way matters seem to have been arranged in an orderly cosmos is that this inner channel of communication is exactly where the answers to our questions are to be found.

It can take two forms: (1) a simple aid in making our everyday decisions in the absence of confining paradigms and (2) a much deeper fount of wisdom that assists us to resolve the mysteries of life and leads us home. Let's look at both.

To help us with our decisions, some people may hear voices. Others may see angels showing them pictures. Still others may feel a "yes" or a "no" to a question they have. That's the channel I use.

For instance, I was about to make a purchase online today and consulted the inner voice. It surprised me by saying "no." I was about to post an article yesterday and the inner voice said "no" until I reworked the article and then it said "yes."

It actually didn't say "yes" or "no." I felt an exhilaration (yes) or a glumness (no).

The second and deeper form of inner guidance, the fount of wisdom, has the scope and ability to lead us home.

Reliance on this deeper guidance will help us remain more generally stable and balanced while the false grids, archaic belief systems, and inadequate paradigms fall.

It has so many names – the inner voice, the voice of conscience, the inner guide, the still, small voice, the Guru within. Ultimately it emanates from God. Passed down from God, it passes to us through archangels, ascended masters, and guides.

When I studied life on the astral planes in *New Maps of Heaven*, (2) I saw all spirits relying on communication from the higher dimensions to guide their actions and reveal the mysteries to them. There, inner guidance was a fact of life and well-accepted. It's only here that we look at it askance.

The way to access the inner voice is to listen within. And “listening” doesn’t simply imply listening. It means opening ourselves to whatever inner sense or conduit that brings us wise guidance.

The more we listen to it, the easier it becomes to hear and feel it. I call it a lifeline. I’m sure it brings an expansion in humanness.

Footnotes

(1) “Ch. 13 Epilog in *The Purpose of Life is Enlightenment* at <https://goldenageofgaia.com/spiritual-essays/16244-2/the-purpose-of-life-is-enlightenment/ch-13-epilogue/>.

(2) *New Maps of Heaven* at https://goldengaiadb.com/New_Maps_of_Heaven.

Video & Transcript ~ Universal Mother Mary: Heart Listening – The Primary Element of the Ascended Self

January 26, 2018

<https://goldenageofgaia.com/2018/01/26/video-transcript-universal-mother-mary-heart-listening-the-primary-element-of-the-ascended-self/>



The Divine Mother, who incarnated as Mary the Mother of Jesus, reminds us that our journey has brought us to the awareness that our birthright is listening with the heart of our ascended selves.

[Saturday Conference Call January 20, 2018](#)

Greetings, I am Mary, Universal Mother, Mother of hope, Mother of change, Mother of love, and yes, I always wish to remind you, Mother, sweet angel, of who you are. There can be no separation...it has always been thus. And the illusion of isolation, of separation, of distance, of loneliness, of yearning, has been of human manipulation.

No, I do not say this in the way of judgment or critique, but simply the acknowledgment of the journey that you have been on.

Let me make it more clear...I, Father and I, Source, One, Spirit, All have never separated from you, from thee. We have never separated from the collective. Such a fissioning is not in my heart, it is not of my creation, and it, most certainly, is not of my love.

Many of you are parents, and those of you who have chosen a different path in this lifetime have also been parents many times, and in fact, you may be parents in many different ways to very many different people in this life.

There are times, as parents, that you have stood back to allow your beloved children to find their way, to claim their authority, to find their power, to find their passion, to find their sense of self. And this is a necessary part of their growth... and sometimes the hardest task of parenting...because that artificial sense that is sometimes introduced, of separation, is not of truth and it most certainly isn't of the heart of how you feel. Sweet angels, that is how it is with us.

There have been times when you have been allowed your scenic detours, the power of your rightful birthright of decision making and choice, free will. We do not interfere with this. But that never meant that we went anywhere; it never meant that we were separated. Perhaps how you felt was that we were quiet, that direction was not so clearly given...

And that is why today I wish to speak to you about heart listening.

Hear what I say...heart listening is the beginning and primary element of the ascended self!

Yes, that is quite a statement, but as we begin this journey of recognition, of acceptance, of surrender and expansion with you, you have need to know, understand, accept, what this New You looks like and what it feels like...and heart listening is the starting point.

So often you have said, "I wish I could hear you, Mother" or "I wish I could hear you more clearly." How you do this, bright one, is through listening with your heart. That is why we have activated all the receptors in all your chakras and all

your bodies. And yes, this meditation that we have just completed reinforces that activation and attunement.

When I say “heart listening” I am not merely referring that you anchor in your heart, which is the starting point, but that you don’t just listen with your heart, you listen, you receive, and you perceive with the entirety of your being, that you allow the love. That is all. Yes, as I have repeatedly said to the channel...“Powered by heart, fueled by love” ...so your motor, your instrument is your heart.

But think of it in this way...your entire being, all of your quantum fields, all your chakras, all your meridians, every sensory point on your body, on your skin, is a receptor for listening. What is listening other than receiving? And how do you give, how do you share...even in accordance with Universal Law? You do not share unless you have received. You cannot give with the fullness of who you are unless you are receiving.

When you listen with your heart, you are receiving the full portent, the amazing portent, not only of everything that I, and we, have to share, you are receiving the full, amazing, phenomenal portent, content, of everything that your higher and above that, your universal self has to share.

Because each of you perceive and receive in different ways, it is not just words, it is love. And that love comes as visions, as scent, as knowing, as intuition, as a clarity. I have been flooding you with my clarity and grace, my purity and awe, so that the flow of this unified field of your receptor self is wide open...the Tsunami flows through you and back again and again and again and again.

In this, the clarity of truly hearing, not just information, but of listening, of receiving, and from that of being able to hear what individuals, what small groups, and what the collective is asking for and telling you becomes clear. And in your ability to be the answer...to be the answer, to be the wayshower, to be the transmitter, to be...the fulfillment of My Dream...flows clearly.

Beloved daughters, sons, angels of my heart...heart listening...let us begin. It is already underway. Claim your ascended self; claim your ability to truly listen with the fullness of who you are.

I am talking to you and I anticipate that you are listening.

Farewell.

Channeled by Linda Dillon

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⌘ On Sharing ⌘

A Framework of Communication

April 10, 2013

<https://goldenageofgaia.com/spirituality/communication-sharing-and-listening/a-framework-of-communication/>



[Raven meeting hall at Cold Mountain Institute resident fellowship without people](#)

I'd like to begin the work of creating a communicational framework that may serve us as lightworkers in the cooperative work that lies ahead.

The framework I use here was developed by the growth movement and was proper to the awareness path. We used to call the work we did on that path "the awareness game."

The photos that accompany this article are of Cold Mountain Institute on Cortes Island, British Columbia, where three-month resident fellowships were staged and people were trained in the awareness game. And the discussion that follows is what we learned about the awareness path in a typical three-month resident fellowship program at CMI.

The awareness path has certain agreed-upon features that I'll be drawing on in discussions from here on in because, in a nutshell, I think these concepts do the

job. They're the precipitate of the collective wisdom of many workshop leaders or what we used to call "circuit riders."



... and with people

Sharing

First, in the awareness game, our communications were called "shares." I imagine the name reminded us that this was not a competitive or conflictual exercise but a cooperative and collaborative one. We were sharing ourselves with others.

In the same way that the universal greeting is an open and upraised palm, showing that we had no weapons in our hands, so the universal communication was to share information about ourselves that it was important for others to have, rather than holding it back or hiding it.

The word "share" reminded us of the basic move in the awareness game – the act of sharing. Sharing set the tone, defined the action, and predicted the outcome of much that occurred on the awareness path.

Sharing was seen as the great leveller. All shares were born equal. The share of a prince was as meaningful and important as the share of a pauper. Where we met was in our shares and listening to the shares of all never ceased to interest and enrich me.

Staying with Myself

In the awareness game, we generally stayed with a discussion of “me.” That may be why its adherents were ridiculed as the “Me Generation.” The reason behind that resolve was that we were weaning ourselves from minding our neighbor’s business and placing the attention on our own.

What I had to share about was me and what you had to share about was you. What I’m the expert in is me. What I have to give is me. No one knows as much about me as I do and I’m the last word in what is true for and meaningful to me. All of these matters were accepted as self-evident on the awareness path.

A second reason we stayed with me was that we realized that the object of life was to know ourselves and the more we studied and knew about ourselves, the more we advanced the real work of life.

After a while followers of the awareness path felt increasingly interested in seeing their own ways and raising their own investments and agendas to awareness. Even their rackets and vasanas became endlessly fascinating. While some people might collect baseball cards or china figurines, the followers of the awareness path collected noticings of themselves.

Being Responsible for Myself

I recall distinctly that the more a person could be responsible for their deeds and misdeeds, their accomplishments and dropped balls, the more people generally looked up to them on the awareness path. I remember being amazed at what some people were willing to be responsible for and share.

Newbies to encounter groups would be found to hide and deny things, to stutter and stammer when asked a question about their responsibility in something.

But oldie yogis were acknowledging things that made my cheeks burn and “owning” things that I ordinarily would regard as my deepest, darkest secrets.

Fairly soon into an encounter group, the boundaries of what were kept secret shrank and shrank until it seemed there were no boundaries left. What a person said outside the group, how they made love, what their intentions were – nothing was off-limits to be revealed and be “called on.”



The Dining Hall

If we wanted to hold onto feeling victimized, then we denied our responsibility in things. But that was a powerless position. If we wanted to experience our own power, then we needed to acknowledge our responsibility in matters.

Gradually we began to experience our responsibility for the state of our being, our neighborhood, our city, our province, our world. And as we did so, our sense of personal power grew.

Stating How We Feel

Special importance in the awareness game was placed on communicating how we felt. That was the piece that most of us ordinarily left out of our communications and the piece that most of us most dearly wanted to know.

We said what we thought, what was right, what seemed appropriate, but we dropped out on saying how we felt. And it's how we felt about something that seemed to drive what we did.



Most dorms were co-ed

And if you really look and listen to other people, you'll see that they take action or respond to us once they know how we feel. So how we feel often shows up as what's missing in most of our conversations and sharing our feelings voluntarily, like taking responsibility, was viewed as the mark of an experienced practitioner.

I remember running down the path at Cold Mountain Institute six weeks into the program suddenly aware that I was out of touch with my feelings. It was like a revelation from God and I was shouting at the top of my lungs "I got it! I'm out of touch with my feelings!"

From that point on I could become aware of more and more of how I felt, just as a child becomes aware of more and more words. Life suddenly got very exciting and interesting. I entered a world of self-observation which has fascinated me ever since.

The Rule of Four

Another matter we dropped out on was that we often considered what we wanted and didn't want and failed to canvas what the other person wanted and didn't want. We got to see how preoccupied we were with self.

Or we may have canvassed them on what they wanted and considered what we wanted as well, without considering that there might be things they didn't want.

In sharing communication, we made sure we considered all four positions before making a final decision. We didn't leave one of the four positions out.

Listening

When we listened to another, we didn't interrupt them with advice, cut them off, tell them what they should do, etc. We didn't try to fix or improve them. We allowed them to speak their piece and accepted that what they said was how things were and would be for them. If it wasn't how things were for them, that was too bad for them. It wasn't something we "took on."

The deeper the listening, the deeper the sharing. We treated what others said as chapter headings and allowed them to go into as much detail as they wanted. What were they driving at? What cried out to be said? What was the communication in its fulness? Listening became as enjoyable an activity as sharing.

For every person who shared there had to be someone who listened. Without listening, there really could be no sharing.

Acceptance

We extended to them acceptance for the ways they were and the ways they were not. We didn't require them to be a certain way, hold a certain belief, endorse what we endorsed, or avoid what we avoided. We allowed them to be just as they were and just as they were not.

Equanimity

And finally we allowed the choices of others to be OK if they did do something and OK if they didn't. We didn't force an outcome on them.

I'm not saying I lived up to all these ways of being. I fell and failed as often as the next person. But I still regard these as desirable goals.

A Common Communicational Ground of Being

May 3, 2013

<https://goldenageofgaia.com/spirituality/communication-sharing-and-listening/a-common-communicational-ground-of-being/>



Working on the world's communicational problems shows up for me like work I have a deep and special connection to. I see workable communication as the *sine qua non* of every form of successful lightwork.

I know I could participate in projects designed to bring medicine to Africa or free-energy technology to the world. But I think there's work that needs to be done before we take up these tasks. It's my belief that, if a team does not have a sound basis for communicating successfully, the difficulties it encounters seem to multiply. ...

Let's look at what can happen on a lightworker project when we don't have a common, agreed-upon approach.

Everything is fine as long as no disagreement arises but, when something does arise, we can be in trouble. We may find we have few adequate ways of communicating through the difficulty. And the deeper the difficulty gets, the scarier the dialog can become.

Perhaps our response to it is to go away for a while and then return hoping that the difficulty has passed. Perhaps we give in to others. Perhaps we take the lead and impose an agreement.

Perhaps we paint a rosy picture and hope that everyone buys it. Perhaps we paint a dismal picture and hope everyone buys it. The ways we meet these difficult situations will vary but what we don't do is we don't necessarily or perhaps even often deal with the issue that arose in the first place – in and through communication.

We seem to be at different places generally with things communicationally. Some of us are positive thinkers. Some of us see only sweetness and light. Some of us are hiding things. Some are depressed.

Some of us are so deeply into a constructed self that they may not see what is artificial and what is real. Some are frustrated with not knowing who the other is in the matter. Some are afraid. On and on the combinations and permutations go.

We may find ourselves lurching from crisis to crisis, losing people along the way, and not providing a really strong and stable platform upon which to deliver our services as lightworkers.

Others may disagree with me. I'm not saying that I know what I say is true. I'm just following my gut on this one.

I'm determined to solve this problem: what is an adequate common communicational ground of being for lightworkers and how would it operate?

Some Suggestions on Communication

November 1, 2011

<https://goldenageofgaia.com/2011/11/01/some-suggestions-on-communication/>



As we prepare to play our roles in upcoming events, I'd like to take a look for a moment at a few communicational strategies that may help us express ourselves as effectively as possible while in a disagreement or other situation of potential conflict.

I've certainly relied on them and they've saved me in some situations where the going seemed rough and yet communication was still expected. Where I've failed, I've usually chosen not to follow one of them, to my regret.

So here are some suggestions from me. Any suggestions you care to share on the subject would be welcomed.

(1) Use Neutral Language

Does not so much of our drama and turmoil come when we use words with a strong valence, pro or con? What Archangel Michael called Perro, the ancient diplomatic language that is based on neutrality, was devised to repair the damage from the intergalactic wars. It was found that speaking in ways that were simply descriptive and true caused the least amount of fallout

When we're giving impactful feedback, we seem to cause the least amount of damage, residue or fallout if we use neutral language. We always have choice in our selection of language. We can choose positive, negative, or neutral words.

If we choose positive or negative, we're actually biasing our communication (which is fine if that's what we want to do), but if we want to leave readers free to choose for themselves, then the best choice may be neutral words.

Let's see if I can give an example. I can say a person lies but the use of the word "lies" seems to rankle friend and foe. Foe because no one likes to be called a liar; friend because, I suppose, no friend wants to be dragged into a battle unnecessarily and calling someone a liar is at least likely to trigger a battle.

Or I can say that I personally don't believe what the other person says, although I defend their right to say it. To say "I don't believe you" seems to give far less offense. The second one is the neutral and less offensive way to say something that is pretty difficult to say and hear.

I actually observe myself these days when I write looking for the simplest (1) neutral word I can find when I write. I spend time over each sentence and watch for a little alarm bell going off as I read the construction. If I find a word that's negative, I swap it for one that's neutral. I personally think the investment pays off.

(2) Stay Away from Absolutes

Stay away from absolutes by making each statement as specific as possible. Is it specific to you? To a time or place? To a realm of discourse or a range of concepts? If it is, state the parameters. "In my opinion." "If you live in the Western World." "To a person of Christian background." Etc.

To use the words "is" or "are" without modifiers or qualifiers often has our listeners or readers hear the statement as an absolute. And we tend to feel uncomfortable in the face of absolute statements, except from Jesus or Buddha (and most of us are not [yet] Jesus or Buddha). "Politicians are crooks." Absolute statement. "The charge of corruption has been leveled against a large number of politicians lately." The latter is more specific in terms of time, allegation, context,

etc. There are other ways we can be as specific as possible, such as using words like “usually” or “around here” or whatever tends to give an idea of extent in time or place.

Thank you to my high-school science teacher who taught me to make relative statements wherever possible rather than absolutes – to leave room for doubt. He taught me to say “it seems” rather than “it is.” If we say “political debate today seems to bring little comfort” rather than “political debate brings little comfort,” somehow that makes the statement go down easier in the ears of listener or reader. In *almost* all [avoiding an absolute] situations, it seems [leaving room for doubt] to work better if we avoid absolutes.

(3) State the Status of Knowledge

I personally like to avoid statements that don’t give the status of my knowledge. I had the value of that shown to me when sitting on the refugee bench. If I made a statement that suggested I *knew* something when I’d only *heard* it or *surmised* it, I could be overturned by the courts that supervised our decision-making. So I always had to state the status of my knowledge and state it precisely and carefully.

Here are different statuses of knowledge: “I know,” “I heard,” “I feel,” “I think,” “I believe,” “I guess,” “I intuit,” “I sense.” The most common fight over anything arises because another person says “How do *YOU* know?” And off the argument goes. These arguments can be avoided by saying what the extent of our knowledge is, where it comes from, etc.

It also seems to lessen the impact of a statement, and I’m chiefly concerned here with so-called negative statements such as allegations and the like, to add “in my opinion,” “in my view,” “the way I see it.” That way we’re not only giving the status of our knowledge but we’re also showing that we’re not trying to state an absolute.

(4) Share

A “share” is something specific. It’s a statement made that tells us something about us. It doesn’t usually tell us something about the other guy. It doesn’t usually convey simply bloodless, juiceless information. It reveals us to others.

A share comes from transparency. It allows us to be known. So much of what is said today is designed to prevent us being known, to hide our true intentions, to fool others or throw them off the scent.

But a share makes the content of our heart known. It clears away the rubble and debris and allows our love to flow between each other. It makes us known and making ourselves known promotes emergence, unfoldment, blossoming. Tell me who you are. That is all I want to know. I want to know you and be known deeply. The time is past for hiding. The time has arrived to be known.

When we make negative allegations, as sometimes we must, it's wise to remember that blame and shame create residue. Instead of blaming and shaming, we might want to state how a matter affects, impacts, or rests with us. We might want to share the difficulty it creates for us. Or share about ourselves, rather than about the other.

Blame can usually be detected by a "you" statement. Quite frankly, I do my best to eliminate the word "you" from my vocabulary (except where I'm talking to you, as here) because many if not most people automatically prepare themselves for blame when they hear "you." I tend to use "we" instead.

Sharing increases transparency and really, in the last analysis, I think we want to make ourselves known rather than to stifle or harm another. So why not frame our communications transparently and make ourselves known by sharing ourselves? The first poem I ever wrote, which I'm sure was channeled, began with the line: "I want you to know me deeply, truly as I am." I still share that same valuing of transparency.

Sharing is the alternative to blaming, shaming, fixing, counselling. The equivalent of sharing when you're the receiving partner is listening. And again the unworkable alternative to listening is fixing, advising, counselling, etc. "You should do this." "You need to look at that." No, just listen. Get the other person. And then feed back what you think you heard to get confirmation and (2) to show you actually did hear the other. Don't feed back so often that you're interrupting, as I did with AA Michael, at which point he said, kindly: "Yes, I would *like* to respond to that."

For me, listening is the most precious and the rarest commodity in the world of communication. It's largely an undiscovered commodity and I've waited what seems like my whole life to hear that it has been discovered – but I haven't heard or seen that yet. Hopefully in the New Age, listening and sharing will become the new order of the day, the new paradigm in communication.

[By now, in this article, you should be able to pick out me using neutral language, avoiding absolutes, stating the status of my knowledge, and sharing.]

Talking and writing in these ways, to the best of my knowledge [status of knowledge, avoiding an absolute], seems [avoiding an absolute] to lower the temperature in our written and spoken communications. And I think [status of knowledge, sharing] we badly need to lower the temperature, whether speaking to friends and wanting to avoid being misunderstood or speaking to “foes” and wanting to avoid a nasty battle.

Footnotes

(1) On choosing the simplest word, I had a neighbour when I worked in a personnel department who would throw his banana peel over the divider if I used a Latinate word and say to me, “Steve, Peter Rabbit English!” Thank you, Don, for training me.

Very Best Practices

August 5, 2012

<https://goldenageofgaia.com/2012/08/05/very-best-practices/>



Apparently we're moving through a time of maximum exposure of everything negative in ourselves, in society, in our families, in our work places.

All the more reason why we try to make the very best mileage by following the very best practices.

I have my own idea of what some of those very best practices are. You will have your own idea. Let's share.

(1) Use neutral language.

[Incorporated under "Some Suggestions on Communication."]

(2) Share

[Incorporated under "Some Suggestions on Communication."]

(3) Take a stand

Under this planet's former management, much depended on being flexible, not committing oneself, being master of the cut and fill. But when a new world is a-building, much depends on what we can be accountable for, what we're committed to, and what we support from principle and under all circumstances.

We now need to be known by our stands. What do we stand for? What is our life a demonstration of? What are we here to support? And what can we count on each other for in realization of our purpose? What is our stand? Who are we as a stand?

(4) Breakthrough

All that holds us in our shell is overcome by our own efforts. The ways in which we break free of our shell are unknown to us, just as how we ride a bicycle is unknown to us. We know them when we do them and once we know them we never lose our ability to do them.

Emergence or breaking through is one of those arts that cannot be described in words but is known once we do it. We have a will, which cannot be touched or seen, but has its own laws of movement.

And when we exercise that will to come out of our shells, we break through our suppression and inhibitions. Break through. Emerge. Come out of your shell. Now is the time when we need you, unimpeded, in the fulness of your glory. Break through your resistance by the exercise of your will. Become a player in the creation of this new world, however you do that, whatever role you choose.

(5) Love

Love is the universal solvent of difficulties and the universal glue of relationship. Love holds the atoms together. It holds people together. Love stimulates growth more than the sun does. The very nature of light is love. We are given the free will to reject love, but only a failure to thrive then results. Nonetheless love will not let us die as beings. Love is eternal.

Love assumes all roles and plays all parts. Only love lasts. Anything we create with love that is grotesque breaks down, falls apart, and returns to its native state.

All our processes – thinking, feeling, and acting – informed with love cause us to unfold and the world to progress. And all the world's progress only leads back to the unveiling, the revealing of love.

So why fight the way life was designed? Why cause the engine to falter because we won't use it the way it was intended to be used? Simply love and we conform to life's design and purpose. Love, love and more love and we return to our original state of purity and innocence.

If the purpose of life is to know our true nature, and to be our true nature is to know our true nature, then let's be our true nature, which is love.

Sharing – What, How, and Why?



March 4, 2009.

I thought Lucille hit the benefits of “sharing” right on the head the other day when she said:

“This sharing brings up loving feelings.” (1)

Emergence itself brings up loving feelings and emergence happens when we share our little guts out.

But there can be a fly in the ointment. Suppose we want to share something like Tony did:

“I finally ‘awoke’ a couple months back and realized that I’m an Indigo Starseed. I’m scared right now because I don’t know where I came from and even more so, especially being unemployed, I’m scared that I don’t have a direction in life. Nothing. Nada. Ask me what I’d REALLY like to be doing and I couldn’t tell you.” (2)

Tony is grappling with a condition that is not generally considered “positive” (fear), touches off discomfort in some, triggers concern and a caring response from others, and results in replies that have as their purpose what some psychologists call “fixing” the speaker.

Fixing responses generally say to the speaker, “You should (do/think/say) this and then you’ll (feel/be/do) better.”

But, if you really look deeply, fixing responses come from the underlying assumption that the wheel is broken and needs fixing – that there is something wrong with the person that needs being made better.

What the people whose advice I follow say is that “fixing” responses tend to shut down the process of further sharing.

First of all, people do not want others to think there is something wrong with them and may back away from sharing further.

Or they may back away from sharing something that might be interpreted negatively and so they don’t swing out and tell the full truth. Sharing becomes dressed up in “positive,” Polyanna garb.

Or they hear advice that may be irrelevant or upsetting and stop sharing because they don’t want to have to disagree with the person making the suggestions.

I know some of us work with people and believe that we are being compassionate and helping people by telling them what they “should” do.

But on a board where we’re preparing for a New Age by cleaning some of the rubble (unfinished business) out of our lives, the depth to which we can go, I think, will be determined by the length to which people listen and respond without fixing.

Another response I’d like to avoid is the one-liner response that expresses sympathy. I can go along with one line of sympathy if it is an intro to your own share. (I don’t favour it, but I can live with it.)

But I’d most recommend just leaving the other person with their share. Leave them having been heard by us.

If we do, we create a clean and safe space in which that person will go as far towards self-revelation and ending unfinished business as they are ever going to do.

Now notice Lynn's response to Tony. (3)

Lynn replied by sharing her own fears after having found out that she was a Starseed. Now that is an outcome I would hope to see from sharing – that it triggers another person to look deeply into their own situation and clear away some rubble of their own.

A workable response to a share is to share yourself. What does the original share trigger in you? What did you see? That's perfectly fair game.

Say it without including any advice on what the original speaker "should" do. If you really want to keep it clean, drop the expression of sympathy too. Just share what the original share triggered in you, knowing that all shares, positive or negative, are a step towards completion.

Just listen to the person sharing and "get" where they are coming from or, if it triggers something in us, share what got triggered without judging, evaluating, or advising the original person.

If we approach sharing in this manner, we'll go as deep in our communications here as it's possible to go.

Will you join me in an experiment for three months? Try the approach out that I just described and let's see at the end of three months how it worked.

If a share comes in that has the quality of telling a person what they "should" do, "fixing" them, or sympathizing with them (without adding a share of one's own), the moderators will ask you to send that response to the person directly.

At the end of three months (June 4), let's talk about whether the experiment provided useful results or not. Sound good?

I'll add a few more points about sharing later because it is a fascinating process. It's our main means of emerging here.

If there are members who work with people and know what I'm talking about, perhaps you could share your knowledge on the subject as well.

Footnotes

(1) Message 323, GRT-CIP. This discussion group has now been taken down by Yahoo.

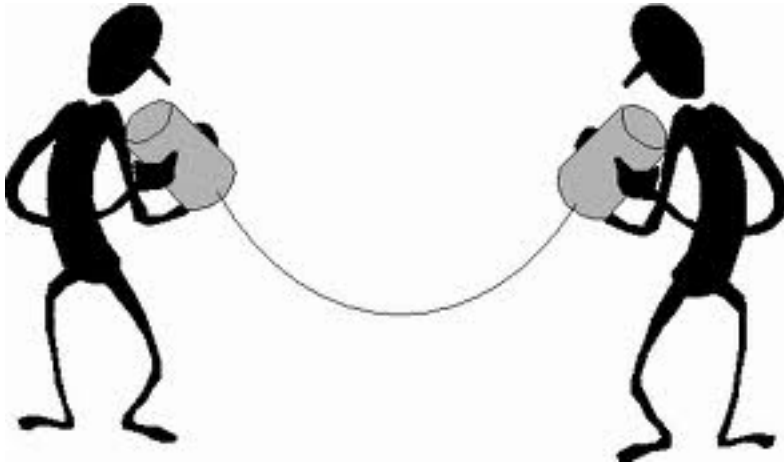
(2) Message 1698, GRT.

(3) Loc. cit.

Sharing = Communication + Listening

October 23, 2010

<https://goldenageofgaia.com/2010/10/23/sharing-communication-listening/>



Sharing involves communicating and listening. One person communicates and the other person listens and, when the speaker is done and has been heard, they reverse positions.

What's there to communicate is anything that's there for us. The brass ring in communication is emergence; that is, stepping out of our shells and saying how things are for us.

The booby prize is telling another person how it should be for them. That will only start a brawl and does not forward the action in any way that I'm aware of.

However, listening and feeding back what we hear forwards the action.

If we're triggered, perhaps don't respond to another from that space for a number of reasons.

First, if we're triggered, almost guaranteed that our awareness is down, especially our self-awareness. Tension and awareness vary inversely to each other.

Second, almost guaranteed that our judgment is impaired.

Third, almost guaranteed that our response will be offensive and just lead to a feud, one that will grow and grow and take in everything, until a major falling out results.

Is that not how we've done things for perhaps most of our lives? Isn't that why things have not worked out for us if they haven't?

If we're reactivated by what someone says, it's probably certain that a vasana (or core issue) has been triggered – a behavioral pattern that's anchored to some past event, some ancient hurt, which the other person's witting or unwitting statement has jiggled loose.



Given the rising energies, we can expect more and more of our vasanas to rise to the surface to be cleared, but they won't be cleared by identifying with them, projecting them onto others, and starting a war. They'll be further energized and we'll become more rigid as a result.

They'll be cleared by owning them, standing in the face of them, observing them, locating where they're anchored to our past, and allowing them to play themselves out until they're gone.

We're lightworkers here, using the time together to bounce off each other, clear ourselves of our rigidities, keep abreast of what's going on and prepare for the busy and exciting times ahead.

Our egos served their purpose when we were cavemen; they helped us stay alive and divide work into roles and tasks and so on. But they're relics now and have lost their usefulness.

They will survive into 5D in the sense that we'll retain individuality but they won't survive as devices that keep us separate.



I'm biased in this area because, between communication and listening, I think the least understood skill and the one that brings the greatest benefit is listening.

Listening means, for me, getting what another says and feeding back our understanding so that the other gets that we got them. I value listening and I know that others do as well because they say so. It's the greatest gift I can give another.

In communication, I value transparency and depth. I want you to know me deeply and I want to know you deeply as well. Shallow fights and disagreements are valued on TV and in films but in real life they lack juice. Deep sharing has juice.

So it's my intention that this [discussion group] be a space for deep sharing, deep listening, deep communicating. Harmlessness, compassion, and most of all depth are what I value.

A Contribution to New Spiritual Partners – 2

Nov. 11, 2013

<https://goldenageofgaia.com/spirituality/communication-sharing-and-listening/a-contribution-to-new-spiritual-partners-2/>



The goal

(Continued from [Part 1.](#))

Now let me share about sharing, if you would.

Sharing

By “sharing,” I don't mean equal giving and receiving. Although I do in part.

I mean sharing ourselves, making ourselves known to each other, getting across who we are in the matter.

Archangel Michael called it standing there “etherically naked.” (1) It involves being willing to be open, neutral, and transparent before our partner, without hiding.

We agree to share everything important about ourselves. It actually gets to be fun. We use our sharing to go deeper and deeper into relationship. We peel back the layers and reveal ourselves.

But not many people do this today. It sometimes looks like a lost art.

How to Share

We often don't share this way and we don't know what we're missing. So much of it is don't know don't know.

We share news. We share encouragement. But we don't really get down to brass tacks and share ourselves.

Share your more profound thoughts (not all your thoughts) but all your emotions. Actually say "I feel sad" when you feel sad. Give your partner the information that they need to see to your needs.

I've noticed that a great number of people don't know how they're feeling. Or if they think they know, they express a thought in the guise of a feeling. "I feel that you should." Not a feeling. Not even a share. Does not give the needed information and tells the other what to do.

Most people will only take a step on our behalf after they know how we feel about a situation. Sharing our feelings, as feelings, is perhaps the most important aspect of sharing for me.

The very first poem I wrote began with: "I want you to know me deeply, truly as I am." That's always been my motivation behind sharing. And that's always been what I've wanted to share. Myself deeply. (And that's what I try to do here.)

We need to know each other deeply and to be known deeply as well. And that can only come from self-revelation matched by equal self-revelation from the other. No hiding here.

Or ask ourselves what are we hiding? Why are we hiding it? What is left unexpressed? What is consciously and continually dropped out on? Who are we in the matter of our own life? And then share it. All this needs to be known and explored.

I'd say most of us know about 15% of our partners. But this is now slated to change. We're moving into a higher-dimensional life where sharing ourselves will be natural. It's just this in-between time we need to navigate.

Just Share Yourself

When people start sharing, they find out that everyone's share is equal. Sharing is the great leveller. The prince and the commoner are equal in their shares.

Everyone's share is verifiable only by themselves. It isn't a case of anyone being wrong. Everyone's share is their share.

I don't care how we share ourselves - whether it's through words or hugs or whatever. Just share yourself. If we do, then I'm happy.

That combination of listening and sharing is for me the *sine qua non* of successful relating - that without which, there is nothing. It's a firm foundation and an indispensable tool.

That's what I want for myself. That's what I'd wish for anybody. This way of communicating is for me a human being fulfilling their promise to the Mother around relationship. It's the New You, as Linda calls it, and the way of the future.

Footnotes

(1) "Archangel Michael: I See You! I Love You! I Will Engage," at <https://goldenageofgaia.com/2013/11/notes-from-archangel-michaels-discussion-of-sacred-partnership/>.

The Design Principle that Underlies Sharing

July 26, 2011

<https://goldenageofgaia.com/2011/07/26/the-design-principle-that-underlies-sharing/>



In my opinion, sharing the truth is the process of Fifth-Dimensional communication, is an important matter related to Ascension, and is the new paradigm in communication. Of course, as always, I could be wrong. And if I am, I'll be corrected and the whole game will be taken ten yards further down the field by the correction.

By the way, it's articles like this one that I see as my real contribution. And my aim is to free myself up to be writing these.

I was saying on this site [*The 2012 Scenario*] recently that life has a design. There are principles that underlie that design and we can know those principles.

I suggested that one of the design principles of life is a longing for liberation that keeps the individual moving through lifetime after lifetime towards God, seeking God, thirsting for God.

Another design principle is reincarnation, which sees an individual incarnate, “live” for a while, leave the body, rest for a while on the Astral or Mental Planes, and then reincarnate.

A third principle is that life is designed to return to us what we do to another, for our education. This principle is called a natural law, the Law of Karma. But all of these are design principles of life.

The design principle I’d like to discuss here is the one that underlies the process of sharing and ensures that sharing has its effect on us.

That design principle is encapsulated in the following sentence from Jesus: The truth will set you free.

Sharing means sharing the truth about yourself, or about a situation you’re in, or something else personal to you. It doesn’t mean sharing about Joe or Mary. “Hey, Joe cheats at cards. Hey, Mary is married and has a lover.” Not sharing. Gossiping.



Why does the truth set us free generally? Because it reflects the fact that what life is all about is finding out the truth about ourselves, which, if we do, sets us free from needing to exist “separately” from God.

Apparently God wanted to know Him/Her/Itself and so He/She/It created life forms and assigned them the purpose of knowing themselves. Each time a life form knows itself, God meets God, and for that meeting was all of life created.

This I know from my vision experience in 1987. (1) I know only one thing in life and that is this: The purpose of life is enlightenment. I know that for certain and that’s the only thing I know for certain. I knew that as communicated by Someone,

accompanied by bliss, and known without doubt. But it is the only thing in life I know without doubt.



The purpose of life is that we should know the truth of our authentic nature, our original face. We are God. You are God. I am God. That plant is God. Everything is God.

God so designed life, in my opinion, that each time we discover more about the truth of ourselves, we're set more free from some unwanted condition we're in.

More truth, more freedom, until we realize the Absolute Truth and we are Absolutely Free.

Let me repeat that because it's important: If we share a small truth, it will set us free from a small condition; a big truth and it will set us free from a big condition; the Absolute Truth and it will set us absolutely free from all conditions. Previously that was one way for the individual to become enlightened and, I presume, eventually to ascend to a higher dimension.

Sharing is telling the truth. No truth, no release. If I want to know if what I shared was the truth, all I need to do is see if I feel increased relief or release. No release, no truth.

It's very simple to do and very simple to check. Hey, I shared? Any release? No, well, that wasn't the truth. What is the truth? Let me look.

So the object of sharing is to introduce truth into matters. Here is the truth about me, as far as I can see it, as far as I'm aware of it, etc.

When I share the truth about me, when I share the dirty little secrets about me that I hide (as Werner Erhard used to put it), which are dirty only because I refuse to share them, I am set free from ignorance, or withholding, or suppression, or inhibition.

Werner used to say: Put the truth in the place of the truth and the unwanted condition disappears.

So one of the values of a discussion group, especially one on Ascension, is that I get to share about me in here.

“Hey, I’m scared to share.”

“Hey, I have this important job and, when I do it, I don’t know what I’m doing and I think I’ll get fired if I reveal that.” (You probably will.)

“Hey, I think tomorrow I’m going to wake up and the world will be gone.”

Whatever the withheld information or the deep, dark secret is.

Our power is tied up in our secrets. They run us. They keep us small. We tie up a great deal of energy in deflecting attention from them instead of just acknowledging them. We use up a lot of energy hiding from the truth.

“Hey, I think I’m gay.”

“I’m afraid of burning in hell.”

“I’ve actually been aboard a spacecraft.”

“I’m not from this planet.”

Whatever. Our power is tied up in our secrets. Sharing the truth should, if I’m correct, set us free from inhibition, suppression, fear, denial, drama, make-believe, and any other condition that has us be out of alignment with ourself, the truth, and the world.



Very young children don't know how to lie.

Now for the caveats. First caveat: You don't want to share where sharing will place you in jeopardy.

I'm not going to go to the airport, approach the TSA, and shout: "There is no war on terror. There never was a war on terror. 9/11 was a CIA, black-ops, false-flag operation. Rogue elements of the government are the 'terrorists.'" Not smart. Don't share with the TSA.

Not smart to share what will bring you ridicule. "Hey, I'm from the 115th Dimension." Not smart to share. Guaranteed to bring ridicule.

And there are other shares, secrets, and situations that are not smart to be shared. So one does need to be prudent. And the individual is responsible for exercising that prudence.

Second caveat: If you share from a victim place, you're only perverting the process of sharing. If you share and your share is a lie, if you'll forgive me for being blunt, but no pass.

For me to lie and then say, "Hey, I experienced no release, but I shared." No pass. No "Go." No \$200.

I have to share the truth or this process will not work. To represent myself as a victim, unless I really am a victim (say, of crime), is not the truth of my situation. For instance, "you made me do it": not usually the truth. No release, no pass, no \$200.

And there are other caveats, which I'll share whenever I remember them. I just know there are others.

Sharing the truth (the meaning of "Share11," by the way) is, in my view, the way of the Fifth Dimension, of Ascension, and the new paradigm. At least I'm willing to bet my last paper dollar on it.

We've heard the Company of Light say that Fifth-Dimensional beings speak only the truth. Here is SaLuSa on the matter:

"Would you really expect us at our level to tell other than the truth? I doubt it, as you are sufficiently evolved to recognize the truth in what we give you. We are your mentors and in a dimension that you are soon to rise up to, where only the truth exists. It is such that the truth is naturally spoken in all matters, and even if we could speak otherwise it would be immediately recognized for what it was.

"That will be one lesson that you could work on now as humans are prone to talk around the truth, or present it in such a way that it is hardly recognizable. Try it until you never give it a second thought, as it is clearly not easy to suddenly change the habits you have developed.

"Remember also that in the higher dimensions it is impossible for a lie to be undetected in as much that your thoughts can be read. It is easier to be truthful once you are there and find that no one is judging another person, as Unconditional Love does not seek to condemn or find fault." (2)

Well, QED, huh? (Quod est demonstratum: This is shown, demonstrated, or proven – I think!)

So, if I'm recommending sharing the truth in here, it's as a preparation for all that comes later.

No, we cannot see your aura to know if you're telling the truth. But you can feel the impact of your share on yourself and so *you'll know* if what you said was the truth or not.

Share the truth about yourself. And, for those who listen, don't fix, don't counsel, don't commiserate. Don't take someone's truth and fiddle with it. Acknowledge the

share and allow it to raise a share in you, which it's then your turn to communicate. Sharing together, we emerge from a culture of secrets and lies together.

Footnotes

(1) Described at <https://www.angelfire.com/space2/light11/epilog.html>

(2) SaLuSa, Apr. 20, 2011, at https://www.treeofthegoldenlight.com/First_Contact/Channeled_Messages_by_Mike_Quinsey.htm

All Shares Are Born Equal

March 6, 2009

<https://goldenageofgaia.com/spirituality/communication-sharing-and-listening/all-shares-are-born-equal/>



A “share” occurs when I tell the truth about myself. That truth may be a felt truth, a believed truth, a known truth, a perceived truth, etc. What one share holds in common with another is its relationship to the truth – my truth.

I use “shares” as the major tool of my emergence. I use my shares to strip off layer after layer of the onion of self-protection until what is left is nothing but transparency.

I retreat from sharing when I feel my survival, or the survival of anything with which I identify, seems at stake. The more I’m into survival, the less I share, unless I break through (i.e., emerge).

Usually when I haven't shared, the reason is the same: I fear you. I fear what you will do to me. I fear giving you information about myself. I'm protecting myself from you.

A share is not a download of factual information. It's not a scientific assertion. It's not the "truth" about someone else. A share is the truth about me, from me, to you. Your share would be the truth about you, from you, to me.

My share is neither more nor less important than yours. As far as I'm concerned, all shares are born equal. Shares are the great equalizer. King or commoner, everyone has a truth to tell. I seldom tire of listening to your truth.

A share is only "verifiable by me." I'm the expert on what I'm feeling inside this rental unit. You may know my habits, my acts, my opinions, but you'll probably never know the truth for me.

And even if you think you do, whether or not that's actually the truth for me is something only I can say. Even if I lie, I remain the last word on what the truth really is for me.

Where I'm at with my life is where I'm at. It is neither better nor worse than where you're at with yours. All of us go through the same steps from God to God. Some of us were released as sparks earlier than others. But all travel the same general road to the same specific Destination.

If I am in Seattle and you are in Chicago, if my time zone is Pacific Standard and yours is whatever it is, what difference? The same with shares.

Something shared is past. Release comes only from the next share. The value that I receive from sharing is not something I can put in a piggy bank. Yesterday's share is gone. Everything now rests on the share of this moment.

I know when I've shared the truth because I feel release. The truth has set me free. I know when I haven't shared the truth because I feel stress. Moving away from the truth has further bound me.

My share, to be of any value, does not rip your face off. Since a share is about myself, staying with myself is one sure way to see that harmlessness prevails. Sharing maximizes harmlessness. If my sharing harms, there's no value to it.

Sharing takes me away from blame-based communication by centering my attention on me. I hear your share. I acknowledge it and mirror it back to you. Then I respond with how it is for me. After a while, I no longer mind your business. The increasing release I feel from sharing captures my attention.

Hopefully you will no longer mind my business too, but the bigger gain is simply for me to keep on sharing no matter what you do.

Shares have their time and place. The traffic cop and the bus driver may not want to share with me. Air traffic controllers do not share with each other. I wouldn't want a medic to collapse in tears at the sight of suffering, sharing how it is for him or her.

Not all the world's business can be conducted through sharing, although an increase in sharing probably wouldn't hurt.

Emergence is the name of the game for me. Your emergence is what I'm here for (mine too). I'm a space to receive your share and in which the truth of mine arises.

Sharing the Truth

Dec. 8, 2009

<https://goldenageofgaia.com/spirituality/communication-sharing-and-listening/sharing-the-truth/>



No matter how much truth I see, hear, or know, there is virtually always more truth to go.

Life is arranged in dimensions of truth. The dimension of truth that my awareness is centered in at the moment is known as the “Third Dimension” or “Third Density. Having my being centered there limits the degree of truth that I’m able to become aware of.

In all of my wanderings through dimensions of truth, what is important to me is my truth.

That is not to say that another’s truth is not important.

But the arena in which my knowing of truth expands is inside myself. As Jesus said, “the Kingdom of Heaven is within.” To know God, I must first know myself – the truth of myself – which, in the end, turns out to be God.

The aim of my communications to others, at least in the beginning of my establishing relations with them, is to share the truth of myself as transparently and deeply as I can.

I think of a “share” as being the communicating of the truth of myself.

A “share” is not my view of you. It isn’t my advice for you. It has nothing to do with you and everything to do with me.

Why is this exercise so valuable? Here again I turn to the Master. Jesus said: “The truth shall make you free.” My telling the truth about myself releases me from the grip of any unfinished business I have in the area in question.

The truth causes release or relief. Why it is that way you’d have to ask the Creator. For the Creator made the world so that truth releases and falsehood ensnares.

Since the purpose of life is enlightenment, or the knowledge of ultimate Truth, which is the knowledge of the Creator Itself, I can well imagine why life would be designed so that the Truth would set us free.

But, just as in the big picture, knowing the ultimate Truth sets us free from the need to be reborn and unites us with God, so in the small picture of my own life, the simple truth of my circumstances sets me free from the unwanted conditions that a lack of truth has set up for me.

That’s what makes the process of sharing my truth so valuable.

The way out of unwanted conditions and old business is to tell the truth – my truth. That truth will set me free.

In that process of sharing, I experience more and more release. Who I am, underneath the masks and the repertoires, becomes revealed. I stand forth as the One I am.

Later, once our relationship is established on the basis of the truth of who we are, we take up our tools and create what we came together for.

We work as a team to make workable an element of the world’s unworkability. We serve the Divine Plan, in some way that our relationship makes possible.

Having shared the truth together, having “gotten to know each other” as our truths, having smoked the peace pipe together thereby, we have a solid foundation for our work together.

Share Until You Feel it

August 25, 2012

<https://goldenageofgaia.com/2012/08/25/share-until-you-feel-it/>



For me, the brass ring in a discussion group is sharing and listening and perhaps I can expand a wee bit on what I mean by both.

Sharing is me sharing myself. I could have said sharing my truth. And the value of my share for me and for others goes up the deeper the share reflects my truth or the deeper the truth I share.

Some mentioned here that their molecules were vibrating and perhaps I could coattail on that and say that sharing until my molecules vibrate is what I seek to do. A deep share can literally shake the rust off my metal.

So for instance I get down into my deeper truth when I say that I so want the world to work out. And the way to have the world work out, for me anyways, is to lessen everything unworkable about myself. So my sense of entitlement, of me-first, of wanting my share or my cut, of wanting be known and liked – all these are facets of unworkability that belong to me and compete with my interest in having the world work out.

The more I reveal myself in here, the more I move myself and perhaps even move you. The more transparent I am, the more often things work out. What I'm in here for is to tell you who I am deeply, the deeper the better.

And the converse is also true. What my mission is in here as far as you're concerned is to hear you, get you, listen to the deepest truth you want to share and make sure that you know that I heard you.

I'm not here to reassure you (not really) or to advise you or fix you. I think very, very few people actually need fixing. At essence, none of us is broken. What we do need is to have an opportunity to unconceal ourselves, to be known for our deepest truth, to have that truth be heard.

When I've spoken my truth deeply, I emerge from my shell. I stand forth as my truth or my stand, in the strength that is native to me and simply remains for the most part concealed by my withholds and image management.

I could try to "look good" in here but of what value is that? That's the way of the world and at most it results in applause. But it does nothing for me in terms of the real purpose of life, which is to know myself as I really am and to be known as That to others.

So I encourage people not to hide in here, not to present us with an image, but really to reveal ourselves and risk the buffeting that can sometimes come from that. Our participation here is not trivial. It's not mundane. It's preparation for Ascension. It's polishing the inner statue until it shines forth.

That's different from applying makeup to the statue or dressing it up. It's letting the native sheen of the statue shine forth.

Tell us who you are. Who you really are, deep down. Share until you feel it. Tell us what you've longed to say and have never had a place to say it.

And for our part, let's hear you without advising you or fixing you but with bare listening and ample comprehension.

Normative Requests and Effective Communication

August 28, 2012

<https://goldenageofgaia.com/2012/08/28/normative-requests-and-effective-communication/>



The kinds of discussions we'll soon be having will put a premium on effective communication

I've written in the past about the process of sharing and listening as I see it. As we come together in meet-ups, discussion groups, and lightworker projects, we'll be encountering more and more situations in which we'll need to communicate effectively with each other.

Avoiding disagreements in person or flame wars in discussion groups will become ever more important, especially as events unfold, we become flat-out busy and Ascension approaches.

I've already discussed the desirability of using neutral language and stating the status of our knowledge. (1) These are very important techniques to cut down on the number of disagreements we have.

Here I'd like to discuss the desirability of avoiding "normative" requests wherever possible (and I acknowledge that they are also desirable in certain contexts, as will be discussed below).

A normative request is a request made of someone that says what they "should" do. It may be phrased as a response to truth, a virtue, higher dimensionality, God, our angels, etc. No matter how it's phrased or on what basis it's made, it requests that another behave or speak a certain way and not another way.

Just as people often bridle or rebel when we use loaded or charged words or when we say something we're guessing about as if we absolutely know the truth of it, so people may also bridle when we "tell them what to do." Very few people enjoy being told how to think or speak. And, as we move toward a period of individual sovereignty, fewer and fewer people will want to be told what they "should" or "shouldn't" do or say.

Many people are so used to speaking in terms of shoulds (or injunctions) that they don't even notice they're doing it. In some cultures it's an established way of communicating and would be all but invisible to speakers.

But we quickly find, when we join together in groups, and more so when our groups are cross-cultural as they are more and more with Internet connectivity, that telling another what they must or should do elicits hostility, resentment, and resistance.

I mentioned some time ago the system of communication that involves judgment, blame and sidebarring. Normative discussions are a part of that way of communicating.

In my view, that style of communication has never worked in our society and is responsible for the undoing or breakdown of most good lightworker projects. It will never work in the future and, if I understand the matter correctly, will not accompany us into the new world.

It also kills off the process I call "sharing" and that is a shame because sharing is juicy, alive and nourishing. Normative requests and the discussions they lead to are so often dry, dead, and draining.

There are two responses which are consistent with providing fertile ground for sharing. One is to feed back to the speaker our understanding of what was said. “I hear that you’re concerned with X.” “You sound irritated.” “I understand that you look upon such-and-such a situation in such-and-such a way.” Feeding back gives the speaker the sense of being heard, received and understood.

And the other response is to share ourselves in response to the first person’s share. By “sharing ourselves” I mean to share how we ourselves see a matter or to share about ourselves – but, in both cases, without resorting to blaming or judgmental comments on another.

To be mature and responsible, as I see it, is to choose to remain with ourselves when we look at matters such as who is responsible for an outcome. It’s to choose to see ourselves as source of the outcome, not because we absolutely are but because looking at our input is the best possible contribution we can make to the success of the outcome. It’s to see our input as crucial to the outcome for the value that contributes to the overall effort.

Now having said all that, let me now say that normative discussions may also serve a purpose under certain circumstances. To use norms in some cases may be useful to, as Ramakrishna might say, use a thorn to remove a thorn – after which we throw both thorns away. For instance, we sometimes have to use normative behavior to eliminate unnecessary or excessive normative behavior.

For instance, in encounter groups, we used to suggest to a person who was blaming another to “stay with yourself.” Or in a discussion group, a moderator may need to intervene with a member to ask them not to make normative demands on other members lest they dry up sharing. Both these interventions are themselves normative.

Spiritual teachers justify them by saying that it’s necessary to build a fence around a seedling so that the cattle will not trample it. We may have to intervene normatively to stop normative discussions.

And we also may need to enforce some norms to protect freedom of speech generally. Interestingly when we as moderators do that, the discussion-group member concerned often responds that we are violating his or her freedom of speech so let me look at that allegation for a moment.

I was obliged to reflect on matters like these as an adjudicator of refugee claims. I feel comfortable saying that the protection of the freedom of speech of one person often, if not always, involves a restriction on the freedom of speech of another.

There is no freedom that I'm aware of that is not purchased without a restriction on some word or deed. If there were, there would be no need to protect that freedom; it would just be the way things are and therefore invisible. We wouldn't need charters of human rights, conventions, declarations, laws, etc.

To allow person A to speak freely may mean prohibiting the freedom of speech of person B who advocates, say, death to people of one religion, sending people of one ethnic group "back to where they belong," burning someone's house down, and similar threats. Freedom of speech must be protected and protection involves restricting the freedom of speech of those who would harm others or take away from them freedom of speech, assembly, religion, etc.

So, yes, we as a society actually do put restrictions on freedom of speech to protect freedom of speech. It isn't somehow contradictory to be somewhat normative to eliminate from discussion normative demands or to protect freedom. It's probably unavoidable. At least that's the way I see it and I could be wrong.

It's my greatest hope that we as lightworkers can leave behind the way of speaking that draws on excessive norms, judging, blaming and sidebarring and take up the way of speaking that draws on sharing, listening, and feeding back. I hope my request is seen to be reasonable and that you join me in wanting to transition from the one way of communicating to the other.

Footnotes

(1) Further discussion of a lot of these points can be found in the articles listed here: "Communication: Sharing and Listening," at <https://goldenageofgaia.com/ascension/communication-sharing-and-listening/> There are discussion of the use of some of these techniques such as the status of knowledge and use of neutral language to be found in the articles listed under "Starseeds and Other Lightworkers" at <https://goldenageofgaia.com/lightworkers/>

See also Archangel Michael on “Perro: An Ancient Intergalactic Language of Diplomacy,” at <https://goldenageofgaia.com/creating-a-global-conversation/perro-an-ancient-intergalactic-language-of-diplomacy/>

Triangling

Oct. 17, 2013

<https://wp.me/P9PUrx-Pn4>



Given the extent to which we're rising into new vibrations and the extent to which lightworkers are meeting and making connections, one subject arises that I feel the need to broach. And that's the subject of "triangling."

Triangling is a situation that can arise and needs to be considered, especially at a time when we may experience increased ability to meet people and greater love within ourselves that may lead to new relationships.

Triangling is a word that group therapists use to denote three people in a relationship built for two. The third person is usually an ex-spouse or a former lover. My discussion is restricted to those three-people relations that are clearly dysfunctional, not to healthy relations. If three people can get along in a healthy and mature manner, then this article is not about them.

As lightworkers, we're called upon, and will be more and more called upon, to be doing service work and, I think, we cannot afford to be enmeshed in circumstances that are deadening and disabling.

A triangle is deadening. I'm not saying that one should not be in relationship with a former lover or spouse. Not at all. But if the "ex" inserts themselves into a relationship and makes mischief, it can become a tar baby that cannot be gotten rid of and takes everybody down with it. Which in certain circumstances (getting fewer these days, I acknowledge), some people may wish to have happen.

A triangle takes the simplicity out of relationship and makes it complex. Instead of there being one conversation between two people there are now three conversations (still) between two people. Complexity goes up geometrically, so to speak. And, unless the three people are in one room together, the ability to relate what was said, get all three to act in a common way on decisions arrived at, etc., etc, can bring matters to a standstill.

And, while most of us are mature adults as well as lightworkers, and would not insert mischief into our former relationships, some of us are not. Triangling is one of the most common pitfalls for people generally, but it can be crippling for lightworkers.

A triangle (as opposed to a non-triangling three-people relationship) is founded in drama. If we cannot have what we want, then having drama in our lives at least maintains our connection with the people we see ourselves as having "lost" and provides diversion, color and interest. But for the couple wanting to consolidate their new connection, it can be an ongoing obstruction and prevent the bonding that's so necessary when two people meet.

That means that the new relationship is off to a shaky start and may never "set." Which again may be what the third person wants and in triangling is certainly what they want.

The number of people who can lose someone and make the adjustment in a mature manner is certainly smaller than we might wish. It's growing larger, surely, but there still are some who have trouble with the adjustment and resort to triangling.

The blandishments that are made to keep the triangle going, the subtle blame, the manipulations, and so on, can neutralize a lightworker's ability to love or serve.

A triangle is inherently stable for people whose relationship is in trouble. The man with a mistress is more able to tolerate his wife, for instance, if he can bleed off the

energy by seeing his mistress. Seeing the mistress is what allows his marriage to continue.

But if the married person is seeing another and the other wants a stable and permanent relationship, the triangling is guaranteeing that that may never happen. It is in fact having the opposite effect of allowing the married person to get by by bleeding off bad energy and making bad conditions bearable.

Why do people in a new relationship resort to or allow triangling? Many people do because it results in what they think is the lowest cost for themselves.

Married men may have a mistress. (I'm not suggesting anyone do that, by the way. I'm just using the example). They may do it because it results in the triangling man not having to divorce his wife and pay a heavy divorce settlement. It may allow the man to remain married "for the sake of the kids." It may provide him with enough love to stay with a person he genuinely cares for. There are all kinds of reasons for triangling.

Some former lovers and spouses prevail on others to continue a triangle because they want to keep hold of an "ex" and appeal to the goal of remaining friends, being spiritual, etc., where they really aren't as concerned with remaining friends as keeping their hold over their "ex."

It's not my place to advise people. I have no shingle outside my door. I have no expertise. I don't want to be considered a spiritual teacher, which I'm not and am not qualified to be. But I'm just cautioning people, and especially lightworkers, that, if you see yourself getting embedded in a triangle, to get out of the triangle (not saying out of the relationship).

Hopefully these days a former relationship can appreciate a couple's desire to avoid triangling. We should be by now able to see and hear when a connection is becoming a triangle and be fully committed to the success of the new couple and willing to stand aside to avoid anything like that even theoretically occurring.

I would hope that a circumstance like this, which was ablaze in the early Seventies, during a period of "free love," which was a crippling disaster for many people and their relationships, has quieted down and is no longer a problem. But, as Graham is fond of saying, I just wanted to "name it."

3D vs 5D Communication Revisited

April 13, 2012

<https://goldenageofgaia.com/2012/04/13/3d-vs-5d-communication-revisited/>



As we begin to create our teams and projects, the whole subject of how we work together becomes important, which is why I'm discussing matters like communication at this time.

Whenever the discussion of communication is raised, the sticking point seems to be around what is and what is not "gossiping." I've just had a long conversation with a reader about the subject, which I've had with others as well. Let me see if I can describe what is 3D about gossiping and what a better way would be.

Third Dimensionality is all about duality, polarity, separateness, division. Fifth Dimensionality is all about unity, commonality, collective endeavor.

Communication that erects barriers among us, that divides us, separates us, stresses what keeps us apart, etc., is what allows Third Dimensionality to continue and prevents us from moving on to Fifth Dimensionality – or is one of the things that prevents us.

In Third Dimensionality, what we do is criticize and complain about each other, but usually we don't do that to the person we have the criticism or complaint about. We do it with our friends, associates, family, etc. and the criticism or complaint

seldom gets to the only person who can do something about it – the person the criticism or complaint is about.

Operating in this way erects barriers in the office, fractures teams, and inhibits projects. But the practice is all but invisible because we think that we should have the right to criticize and complain about others as part of our generalized free will. Well, we certainly do have the right to conduct ourselves as we wish. It isn't that we don't.

It's more that the impact of conducting ourselves in this way is to introduce unworkability into our team and project processes. What is that unworkability, specifically?



(1) The person being complained about usually never knows what the basis of the complaint is and therefore cannot do anything about it. They are often subjected to containment, obstruction, rejection and ostracism without knowing that they are or why they have been. Nothing is done in the light of day. The fact that they only wake up gradually to the fact that barriers have been erected against them leads to disillusionment and distrust. It often sees the one treated in this way departing the team and never knowing exactly why that outcome seemed advisable or came about. All remains simply speculation and reaction to the feeling of not being wanted.

(2) One by one, the people with whom we have disagreements are hived off from the circle of our good regard and lose their place upon the team, until the team is degraded. The team's abilities shrink. Good personnel are lost. And the team itself subjects itself to the politics of hostility and unworkability rather than the prospects of collegiality and workability. Ultimately the team can fail or be destroyed and people scratch their heads, wondering how that happened.

This is a "normal" occurrence with offices, teams and projects in Third Dimensionality.

There's nothing amiss in discussing another if the discussion is empowering, ennobling, cooperative, etc. These discussions forward the action and contribute to the team's or project's success. They promote unity and therefore unity consciousness and are, in my view, consistent with where we're headed into Fifth Dimensionality.

But "gossiping," or what I call negative sidebar discussions, are disempowering, debasing, uncooperative, etc. They promote disunity and disharmony and are old paradigm. They tend more towards keeping us anchored in the same divisive or polar ways of being predominant in Third Dimensionality.

For me, therefore, a better way is to refuse to gossip with or about another. As it happens, at present, when I tend towards gossip, the inner voice intervenes and gives me a jolt – and I stop my forward motion. If the criticism is indeed something that stands between me and another, then I take it to the other to get the matter cleared and out of the way. But I don't deliver it to anyone who can't do anything about the matter. I deliver it to the one who has that power – the person concerned. I find that works best for me.

I may still choose to associate with some and not with others, work closer with some and not with others. But the matter is a choice and not the result of persistent barriers I've erected as the result of gossip. I can change that choice at any time whereas, when gossip sits in the space and is withheld, I'm usually bound by my decision to gossip and withhold. I've erected an invisible barrier which then dictates to me what comes next.

The last comment on this subject: I don't know if it's the same for you, but whatever comes out of my mouth, I usually make right thereafter. If I say that I

don't like X or Y, I usually bind myself forever after to making that assertion right. I remain consistent with my statement. I justify it. I excuse myself from taking a second look at the matter.

Thus, when I say I don't like someone else or criticize them, I tend to make that statement right as well. But if I refrain from criticizing, the matter in question can recede into the background of forgetfulness and I haven't made a bookmark around it or a record of it. That to me is another reason for refraining from criticizing others – to deprive me of that bookmark or record.

Sharing and Listening as Steps to Unitive Consciousness

May 5, 2013

<https://goldenageofgaia.com/2013/05/05/sharing-and-listening-as-steps-to-unitive-consciousness/>



Sharing promotes love

The primary reason I share is to persuade others to share. Hiding would be far easier and more comfortable.

According to me, sharing and listening are what are missing in our world and I say that as a person who's had first-hand experience in the area.

The three-month residential workshop that I did at Cold Mountain Institute (the Canadian equivalent of Esalen) was a crash course in sharing and listening. If I were to boil down to the one common denominator that potpourri of workshops was about, sharing and listening is what I would say.

What do I mean by sharing? Well, I don't mean gossiping or judging or advising or persuading. I do mean describing how it is for you. Sharing is descriptive. Here's where I am. Here's what's happening for me, Here's how I feel. Here's what pains me. Here's what makes me bliss out.

And by listening I also don't mean advising, coaching, persuading, etc. I mean hearing deeply what the other person says and mirroring back our understanding. Nothing more. Who cares for my opinion or my advice when they're hurting?

When I was training to be a group leader, I saw early on that people who needed to talk did not care a fig for my solutions; they wanted me to listen. So I dropped problem-solving therapy and just began to listen. I threw out the fifty-minute hour and just listened as long as they needed it

And voila! I stumbled upon "magic" therapy. The people who left my door had huge smiles on their faces. They didn't know what I did. And they just wanted to get home to tell their spouses what they discovered.

Most people, whatever they think they're doing, do not listen (period). I don't make many absolute statements but I do make that one.

Such a way of being with each other as sharing and listening is like water on the desert. People come alive in the face of it. That's why we create discussion groups. The informative aspect runs a far distant second. Sharing and listening comes first.

When people share themselves with others, love flows. When a person shares their breakdowns, their breakthroughs, or their puzzlement, just by the act of sharing, often, whatever it is that eludes them shows up.

Most people do not need advice. They need the listening space to say how it is for them – in an adequate amount of time and with someone getting what they're saying – and the answer automatically arises for them in the space of their sharing and being heard.

I often say that I hear the truth of myself as it goes past my ears. I hear it at the same time you hear it and before that I did not know it any more than you did. My shares are often just as much news to me as they are to you.

I know that I can listen for hours to people without interrupting other than to show them that I understand what they said (so they can go on to the next point) or to share a small thing so that they get the sense that I'm not hiding by listening but have my ante in the pot.

The most I listened to another was eight hours. Others four hours. And I listened for those many hours without advising them once. Whatever it takes for them to get what it is that eludes them is fine with me.

Sharing is the great equalizer. The feelings of a prince are worth no more and no less than the feelings of a pauper.

Watch what happens when the owner of a large company shares with a customer. The minute the owner says how he feels, he places himself on an equal footing with the other. That information is exactly what the customer wants and makes the owner visible and vulnerable. And visible and vulnerable is where we need to go, I say.

I think that's why folks in positions of authority, like policemen, will not be caught dead saying how they feel. And I also think that's why the steady diet of crime dramas on TV keep us in our male, logical brain and is probably designed to do so. No one says how they feel.

Feelings are what people want to know about most. They tell us how we're taking something. They give our point of view. They push us to act. They tell what direction we'll go in. So they're a totally important piece of information and one that most people leave out of their share.

Our shares are born equal and sharing makes us equal. And being equal is just a hop, skip and a jump from being one, I'm willing to wager. So I think sharing is a step towards unitive consciousness.

So tell me how you feel. Tell me what's there for you. What's coming up? And let me do the same. I want you to know me deeply, truly as I am. And I want to know you in the same way. I really do.

Sharing as a Sacred Activity

August 19, 2012

<https://goldenageofgaia.com/2012/08/19/sharing-as-a-sacred-activity/>



A lot of my life recently has been about what I call “sharing.” Many people may think I mean “giving” by that, but that’s not what I mean.

Sharing is the process of sharing ourselves, making ourselves known to another in important ways, conveying our truth of the moment to another.

I know that people have their eyes on the skies at the moment. But I’ve been given a different assignment and that involves going inwards and sharing what I see. It’s coupled with a second assignment, which all of us have, which involves clearing and a process of clearing also often involves sharing.

Sharing is for me an eternally-interesting process because it brings king and commoner together, on the same level. Your share is as important to you as my share is to me. And your truth is as valid as my truth. Sharing our truths is the great leveller. Everyone is equal in their share.

And you see that in so many movies, for instance. There is action. All is up and all is down. Fortunes rise and fortunes fall. And then comes the scene in which two actors share and all inequality is lost for the moment. They’re equal in their shares.

All shares are born equal because all shares are rooted in truth. Truth, it seems to me, has no shades or degrees. As Gandhi said, truth is truth. It's digital, not analog. On or off. Yes or no.

And what is true and important for you is what I want to know.

I actually don't care all that much for what another likes and doesn't like. But isn't that the content of many conversations? I don't like purple but I do like green. I hate garlic but I crave curry.

The second most common conversation I call "howdidido?" We sit around the lunchroom and rehearse how we did with the boss, or coworkers, or our spouse. We manicure our stories until we have them just right and then we substitute them for the truth. Our object is to "look good," rather than know the truth.

Ho hum. Nothing much elevating or liberating there.

Life doesn't boil down to what we like and don't like. It isn't about what the Buddha would have called our cravings and aversions. It also doesn't boil down to our estimations of how we're doing.

But a share will set us free because the truth will set us free. Life was designed that way, in my view.

What's true for you and me and what ground we stand on – life is shaped by topics such as these. The truth I know. My "stand" is what I can be counted on for. Truth and stand – these two are what's there for me to communicate.

Some time ago, I wrote the following about shares and it remains true for me:

I use my "shares" as the major tool of my emergence. I use my shares to strip off layer after layer of the onion of self-protection until what is left is nothing but transparency.

Something shared is past. Yesterday's share is dead. The value that I receive from sharing is not something I can put in a piggy bank. Release comes only from the next share. Everything rests on the share of this moment. And this moment. And this moment.

I know when I've shared the truth because I feel release. The truth has set me free. I know when I haven't shared the truth because I feel stress. Moving away from the truth has further bound me. I can use this fact to navigate towards the truth: more stress and I'm moving farther from the truth; less stress and I'm moving closer to it.

My share, to be of any value, cannot rip your face off. If my sharing harms, there's no value to it. Since a share is about myself, staying with myself is one sure way to see that harmlessness prevails. Sharing maximizes the chances of harmlessness.

Shares have their time and place. The traffic cop and bus driver may not want to share with me. Air traffic controllers don't share with each other. I wouldn't want a medic to collapse in tears at the sight of suffering, sharing how it is for him or her.

President Obama may, on occasion, not want to be transparent for the good of the nation. Not all the world's business can be conducted in the open and through sharing, although an increase in sharing probably wouldn't hurt.

Emergence is the name of the game for me. Your emergence is what I'm here for (mine too). I'm a space to receive your share and in which the truth of mine arises.

And, finally, something completely different! Meet the witchdoctor known as “the listener.”

Body Ritual among the Nacirema

Horace Miner, *American Anthropologist*, June 1956, pp. 503–507.



Women pass time while attendants arrange their hair in elaborate designs using impressive machinery, in a body ritual of the Naciremans.

The anthropologist has become so familiar with the diversity of ways in which different people behave in similar situations that he is not apt to be surprised by even the most exotic customs. In fact, if all of the logically possible combinations of behavior have not been found somewhere in the world, he is apt to suspect that they must be present in some yet undescribed tribe.

The point has, in fact, been expressed with respect to clan organization by Murdock^[1]. In this light, the magical beliefs and practices of the Nacirema present such unusual aspects that it seems desirable to describe them as an example of the extremes to which human behavior can go.

Professor Linton^[2] first brought the ritual of the Nacirema to the attention of anthropologists twenty years ago, but the culture of this people is still very poorly understood. They are a North American group living in the territory between the Canadian Cree, the Yaqui and Tarahumare of Mexico, and the Carib and Arawak of the Antilles.

Little is known of their origin, although tradition states that they came from the east. According to Nacirema mythology, their nation was originated by a culture hero, Notgnihsaw, who is otherwise known for two great feats of strength—the throwing of a piece of wampum across the river Pa-To-Mac and the chopping down of a cherry tree in which the Spirit of Truth resided.

Nacirema culture is characterized by a highly developed market economy which has evolved in a rich natural habitat. While much of the people's time is devoted to economic pursuits, a large part of the fruits of these labors and a considerable portion of the day are spent in ritual activity. The focus of this activity is the human body, the appearance and health of which loom as a dominant concern in the ethos of the people. While such a concern is certainly not unusual, its ceremonial aspects and associated philosophy are unique.

The fundamental belief underlying the whole system appears to be that the human body is ugly and that its natural tendency is to debility and disease. Incarcerated in such a body, man's only hope is to avert these characteristics through the use of ritual and ceremony. Every household has one or more shrines devoted to this purpose. The more powerful individuals in the society have several shrines in their houses and, in fact, the opulence of a house is often referred to in terms of the number of such ritual centers it possesses. Most houses are of wattle and daub construction, but the shrine rooms of the more wealthy are walled with stone. Poorer families imitate the rich by applying pottery plaques to their shrine walls.

While each family has at least one such shrine, the rituals associated with it are not family ceremonies but are private and secret. The rites are normally only discussed with children, and then only during the period when they are being initiated into these mysteries. I was able, however, to establish sufficient rapport with the natives to examine these shrines and to have the rituals described to me.

The focal point of the shrine is a box or chest which is built into the wall. In this chest are kept the many charms and magical potions without which no native believes he could live. These preparations are secured from a variety of specialized practitioners. The most powerful of these are the medicine men, whose assistance must be rewarded with substantial gifts. However, the medicine men do not provide the curative potions for their clients, but decide what the ingredients should be and then write them down in an ancient and secret language. This

writing is understood only by the medicine men and by the herbalists who, for another gift, provide the required charm.

The charm is not disposed of after it has served its purpose, but is placed in the charmbbox of the household shrine. As these magical materials are specific for certain ills, and the real or imagined maladies of the people are many, the charm-box is usually full to overflowing.

The magical packets are so numerous that people forget what their purposes were and fear to use them again. While the natives are very vague on this point, we can only assume that the idea in retaining all the old magical materials is that their presence in the charm-box, before which the body rituals are conducted, will in some way protect the worshiper.

Beneath the charm-box is a small font. Each day every member of the family, in succession, enters the shrine room, bows his head before the charm-box, mingles different sorts of holy water in the font, and proceeds with a brief rite of ablution^[3]. The holy waters are secured from the Water Temple of the community, where the priests conduct elaborate ceremonies to make the liquid ritually pure.

In the hierarchy of magical practitioners, and below the medicine men in prestige, are specialists whose designation is best translated as “holy-mouth-men.” The Nacirema have an almost pathological horror of and fascination with the mouth, the condition of which is believed to have a supernatural influence on all social relationships.

Were it not for the rituals of the mouth, they believe that their teeth would fall out, their gums bleed, their jaws shrink, their friends desert them, and their lovers reject them. They also believe that a strong relationship exists between oral and moral characteristics. For example, there is a ritual ablution of the mouth for children which is supposed to improve their moral fiber.

The daily body ritual performed by everyone includes a mouth-rite. Despite the fact that these people are so punctilious^[4] about care of the mouth, this rite involves a practice which strikes the uninitiated stranger as revolting. It was reported to me that the ritual consists of inserting a small bundle of hog hairs into

the mouth, along with certain magical powders, and then moving the bundle in a highly formalized series of gestures.^[5]

In addition to the private mouth-rite, the people seek out a holy-mouth-man once or twice a year. These practitioners have an impressive set of paraphernalia, consisting of a variety of augers, awls, probes, and prods. The use of these items in the exorcism of the evils of the mouth involves almost unbelievable ritual torture of the client.

The holy-mouth-man opens the client's mouth and, using the above mentioned tools, enlarges any holes which decay may have created in the teeth. Magical materials are put into these holes. If there are no naturally occurring holes in the teeth, large sections of one or more teeth are gouged out so that the supernatural substance can be applied.

In the client's view, the purpose of these ministrations^[6] is to arrest decay and to draw friends. The extremely sacred and traditional character of the rite is evident in the fact that the natives return to the holy-mouth-men year after year, despite the fact that their teeth continue to decay.

It is to be hoped that, when a thorough study of the Nacirema is made, there will be careful inquiry into the personality structure of these people. One has but to watch the gleam in the eye of a holy-mouth-man, as he jabs an awl into an exposed nerve, to suspect that a certain amount of sadism is involved. If this can be established, a very interesting pattern emerges, for most of the population shows definite masochistic tendencies.

It was to these that Professor Linton referred in discussing a distinctive part of the daily body ritual which is performed only by men. This part of the rite includes scraping and lacerating the surface of the face with a sharp instrument. Special women's rites are performed only four times during each lunar month, but what they lack in frequency is made up in barbarity. As part of this ceremony, women bake their heads in small ovens for about an hour. The theoretically interesting point is that what seems to be a preponderantly masochistic people have developed sadistic specialists.

The medicine men have an imposing temple, or *latipso*, in every community of any size. The more elaborate ceremonies required to treat very sick patients can only be performed at this temple. These ceremonies involve not only the thaumaturge^[7] but a permanent group of vestal maidens who move sedately about the temple chambers in distinctive costume and headdress.

The *latipso* ceremonies are so harsh that it is phenomenal that a fair proportion of the really sick natives who enter the temple ever recover. Small children whose indoctrination is still incomplete have been known to resist attempts to take them to the temple because “that is where you go to die.”

Despite this fact, sick adults are not only willing but eager to undergo the protracted ritual purification, if they can afford to do so. No matter how ill the supplicant or how grave the emergency, the guardians of many temples will not admit a client if he cannot give a rich gift to the custodian. Even after one has gained and survived the ceremonies, the guardians will not permit the neophyte to leave until he makes still another gift.

The supplicant entering the temple is first stripped of all his or her clothes. In everyday life the Nacirema avoids exposure of his body and its natural functions. Bathing and excretory acts are performed only in the secrecy of the household shrine, where they are ritualized as part of the body-rites. Psychological shock results from the fact that body secrecy is suddenly lost upon entry into the *latipso*.

A man, whose own wife has never seen him in an excretory act, suddenly finds himself naked and assisted by a vestal maiden while he performs his natural functions into a sacred vessel. This sort of ceremonial treatment is necessitated by the fact that the excreta are used by a diviner to ascertain the course and nature of the client's sickness. Female clients, on the other hand, find their naked bodies are subjected to the scrutiny, manipulation and prodding of the medicine men.

Few supplicants in the temple are well enough to do anything but lie on their hard beds. The daily ceremonies, like the rites of the holy-mouth-men, involve discomfort and torture. With ritual precision, the vestals awaken their miserable charges each dawn and roll them about on their beds of pain while performing ablutions, in the formal movements of which the maidens are highly trained. At other times they insert magic wands in the supplicant's mouth or force him to eat

substances which are supposed to be healing. From time to time the medicine men come to their clients and jab magically treated needles into their flesh. The fact that these temple ceremonies may not cure, and may even kill the neophyte, in no way decreases the people's faith in the medicine men.

There remains one other kind of practitioner, known as a "listener." This witchdoctor has the power to exorcise the devils that lodge in the heads of people who have been bewitched. The Nacirema believe that parents bewitch their own children. Mothers are particularly suspected of putting a curse on children while teaching them the secret body rituals.

The counter-magic of the witchdoctor is unusual in its lack of ritual. The patient simply tells the "listener" all his troubles and fears, beginning with the earliest difficulties he can remember. The memory displayed by the Nacirema in these exorcism sessions is truly remarkable. It is not uncommon for the patient to bemoan the rejection he felt upon being weaned as a babe, and a few individuals even see their troubles going back to the traumatic effects of their own birth.

In conclusion, mention must be made of certain practices which have their base in native esthetics but which depend upon the pervasive aversion to the natural body and its functions. There are ritual fasts to make fat people thin and ceremonial feasts to make thin people fat. Still other rites are used to make women's breasts larger if they are small, and smaller if they are large.

General dissatisfaction with breast shape is symbolized in the fact that the ideal form is virtually outside the range of human variation. A few women afflicted with almost inhuman hyper-mammary development are so idolized that they make a handsome living by simply going from village to village and permitting the natives to stare at them for a fee.

Reference has already been made to the fact that excretory functions are ritualized, routinized, and relegated to secrecy. Natural reproductive functions are similarly distorted. Intercourse is taboo as a topic and scheduled as an act. Efforts are made to avoid pregnancy by the use of magical materials or by limiting intercourse to certain phases of the moon.

Conception is actually very infrequent. When pregnant, women dress so as to hide their condition. Parturition takes place in secret, without friends or relatives to assist, and the majority of women do not nurse their infants.

Our review of the ritual life of the Nacirema has certainly shown them to be a magic-ridden people. It is hard to understand how they have managed to exist so long under the burdens which they have imposed upon themselves. But even such exotic customs as these take on real meaning when they are viewed with the insight provided by Malinowski^[8] when he wrote:

Footnotes

1. Murdock, George P. 1949. *Social Structure*. NY: The Macmillan Co., page 71. George Peter Murdock (1897-1996 [?]) is a famous ethnographer. [↓](#)
2. Linton, Ralph. 1936. *The Study of Man*. NY: D. Appleton-Century Co. page 326. Ralph Linton (1893-1953) is best known for studies of enculturation (maintaining that all culture is learned rather than inherited; the process by which a society's culture is transmitted from one generation to the next), claiming culture is humanity's "social heredity." [↓](#)
3. A washing or cleansing of the body or a part of the body. From the Latin abluere, to wash away [↓](#)
4. Marked by precise observance of the finer points of etiquette and formal conduct. [↓](#)
5. It is worthy of note that since Prof. Miner's original research was conducted, the Nacirema have almost universally abandoned the natural bristles of their private mouth-rite in favor of oil-based polymerized synthetics. Additionally, the powders associated with this ritual have generally been semi-liquefied. Other updates to the Nacirema culture shall be eschewed in this document for the sake of parsimony. [↓](#)
6. Tending to religious or other important functions [↓](#)
7. A miracle-worker. [↓](#)
8. Malinowski, Bronislaw. *Magic, Science, and Religion*. Glencoe: The Free Press, page 70. Bronislaw Malinowski (1884-1942) is a famous cultural anthropologist best known for his argument that people everywhere share common biological and psychological needs and that the function of all cultural institutions is to fulfill such needs; the nature of the institution is determined by its function. [↓](#)