

There Is Always Only One Problem

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There are many potential pitfalls in working as a therapist, but perhaps the one that I have found to be the most challenging is the belief that *there is a problem that needs to be fixed*. Whether the perception is that the problem is in outer life (my job, my relationship, my health, my finances, my physical appearance, my client), or the problem is with our own personhood (my low self-esteem, my depression, my fears), those "problems" are not the real issue and ironically the more we try to "fix"



these situations, both as client and as therapist, the worse it becomes. According to many of the world's spiritual wisdom traditions, the real problem is not really what we think it is, nor is the problem located where we perceive it to be. *Consequently, the solution is not what or where we expect it to be.*

The Real Problem

According to the world's spiritual wisdom traditions and mystics throughout history, the cause of our suffering, the *real* problem, is that we are caught in an illusion of separation. Separate from what? We feel separate from Love in its various forms: Divinity, God, Oneness, Great Spirit, Christ Consciousness, Buddha Nature, etc. There are numerous words to describe the One Loving Presence from which we all come and are still part of. For the purposes of this article I will use the term Divine Love.

Because we feel separate from Divine Love we become anxious, lonely, depressed, and angry. And perceiving ourselves as victims, we feel incredibly helpless and powerless. We mentally create a fictitious self (an avatar of sorts) to protect ourselves from "other", to fill our emptiness and to attempt to fix all the things that seem to be wrong. In Inner Bonding terminology we call this mentally-created avatar the "wounded self". In spiritual terminology it is usually referred to as the "ego".

Our varied experiences of Divine Love are ineffable and indescribable. Some people are fortunate enough to have had very dramatic and instantaneous experiences of divine bliss, but for most of us the awakening process is very gradual. However, we have all experienced Divine Love moments throughout life, but perhaps we have not always fully recognized them as such. It may have been that time when we fell madly in love with someone and our heart opened wide; it might have been during a moment of sexual surrender where we really let go and felt unified with our partner; or maybe it was, for just an instant, when we saw the needs of someone else as inseparable from our own. An experience of unity may have hit you while swooshing down the mountain on skis or while standing transfixed atop of a Hawaiian volcano as the morning sun broke through the clouds. Or perhaps it was the feeling that overcame you while looking deeply into the eyes of your furry four-legged friend or your newborn child. You may have found yourself letting go while relaxing to a beautiful piece of music as you lay back, gazing out at the vast mysterious ocean. These are all instances where we temporarily let go of thoughts of separation and allowed ourselves, however briefly, to melt back into the Love from which we come.

When we feel afraid, lonely, angry, depressed, or upset in *any* way it is because we are identifying with and unconsciously believing the "thoughts of separation" that are playing deep within our mind. Unless we have practiced sitting still and watching our mind in some way, as in meditation, we are usually not even aware that those thoughts are playing in the background and determining our reality. Instead, we experience the *effects* of those thoughts, which show up as our problems. The incredible thing is that those thoughts of separation not only cause unpleasant emotions but also *create our experience of reality itself*.

Modern science is beginning to concur with our mystics. Scientists are discovering that the world we experience is a sort of virtual reality, a very vivid dream, and that our seeming outer reality (which includes this separate body/rational mind) is actually a projection of our deeper mind which is our true Self. The spiritual masters tell us that when we experience a harsh and crazy world, it is because there are harsh and crazy thoughts playing in our mind (much like computer programming), which then manifest as our experience of the world. In other words, *the world we see is an effect of our mind, not the cause*. But because we are caught up in the illusion of separation, because we are caught in our wounded self, we try to fix the effects instead of resolving the true problem at the level of cause.

Paramahansa Yogananda, a famous Indian Yogi who brought Kriya Yoga to the western world, spoke of this understanding by using an analogy that went something like this: it is as if we are sitting in a theatre totally absorbed in watching a movie. We observe the images on the screen, identify with them and perceive them to be our entire reality. When we experience a problem on the movie screen we try to fix it out there on the screen instead of realizing that the cause of the images is the projector beaming out the light from behind us. Modern physics is beginning to prove him right, not just in theory but also in actual experiments, as a recent study demonstrates:

<http://www.spiritscienceandmetaphysics.com/new-study-confirms-universe-is-a-hologram/>

The Solution (in countless forms)

So if it really is true that the world we experience is a result of thoughts deep within our mind and that the fearful “separation thoughts” are creating our problems, then it must follow that to experience our True Self as Divine Love, those unloving thoughts must be dissolved. So how do we do that?

To help us remove the unloving thoughts, there are many different tools, approaches and methods available to help us. I would even venture to say there are as many approaches as there are people on the planet! There are trauma therapies, body-centered therapies, shamanistic approaches, self-help methods, dietary philosophies, life coaching methods, various types of yoga, energy medicine techniques, chanting and all sorts of meditation practices. There are so many tools in fact, that it can become quite confusing and overwhelming to the person on the path of awakening.

In my experience, any approach falls short when we attempt to “fix” the images on the movie screen, while any method can also be helpful with the right understanding and intention. Any technique can be effective when the intention is to surrender what appears to be happening on the movie screen and we allow ourselves to love again. Divine Love, in countless forms, is the cure for all of our ills.

When we remember the deeper intention behind using a spiritual tool, any of them can become effective. Here are a few key things to consider in working with your spiritual tools. Try these ideas on and see how they feel and how they may serve you:

- There is no problem to be fixed “out there” in the world.
- There is no problem to be fixed in me (there is nothing inherently wrong with me as a human being).
- There is no problem to be fixed in this person I am relating to (client, spouse, boss, employee, politician, mother-in-law, etc.). They are my soul mates playing characters in my movie and are showing me, when I am triggered, where I still feel separate from Divine Love.
- Divine Love is the answer to all of my problems. I can invite Divine Love to meet and dissolve all the separating thoughts that are showing up in my reality as problems. I can let go of identification with my wounded self and relax down into my source, the Divine Love within me. As the old saying goes “I can let go and let God”.
- Divine Love is not something I need to manufacture, create/manifest or even intend. Love is what I really *am* beneath the fearful thoughts and beliefs. I only need to be aware of and then let go of the unloving thoughts that are blocking my awareness of that truth.

When we apply any personal growth or spiritual technique with the understanding of the real underlying problem, miracles can begin to happen. Divine Love then begins to emerge in our lives

in mysterious and fun ways. I have found that when I choose to live from this perspective what begins to happen is that either the distressing situation magically transforms, or some sort of inspired loving action arises in response to the situation. The inspired action may even look very similar to what I may have done anyway; however there is now an inner peace and supportive loving presence that accompanies it. Then I no longer feel so alone, separate and anxious.

Remind yourself of what the real problem is and then invite Divine Love into your heart and into your life. You are resting safely in the arms of Divine Love watching a riveting movie that can be a horror flick, a romantic comedy or an epic adventure. Which version of your movie do you want to experience? You choose. You can take responsibility for your movie and come back home to Love. My suspicion is that regardless of the version you choose, you will not be disappointed! Enjoy the show...

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