

Reconnect With Your Inner Radiance

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Much like the sun, our spiritual nature is to extend love to all of creation. We are the big bang, expanding infinitely and creatively. As children we often still exude and express this divine radiance. It shows up as unbridled joy, wonder, adventure, love, curiosity, creativity and a magnetic optimism. At that age our spirit is still able to shine uninhibited through our young human form.

Have you ever noticed that children usually don't walk; they *run* everywhere enthusiastically (aside from when they're ordered to go to bed)? Then, over time, we begin to contract against the pain and difficulty of life which unknowingly cuts us off from our inner light and deadens our spirit. As a result we become depressed, anxious and even ill as we squeeze ourselves off from the very life-spring that animates us at the core of our being. We contract into ego, and as Wayne Dyer says, "ego" is an acronym for "Edging God Out".

Why do we continue to shut down our true nature and cut ourselves off from Spirit well into adulthood even though we know this causes depression, anxiety and all sorts of addiction? Are we just crazy? No, it is a natural outcome of living in these sensitive earthsuits (bodies) in this often threatening world. Much like a snail that comes in contact with salt, we contract energetically, emotionally, and physically in the face of discomfort, even if we try not to. We automatically contract like the threatened porcupine defending itself. It is the nature of our nervous system to contract against pain and danger.

In childhood, maybe Dad was harsh when we were being too loud, perhaps Mom withdrew love to punish us when we didn't listen to her, or even more severely, perhaps the person we loved was abusing us or we were being bullied at school. As a way to survive, we braced against the pain of life. And the more we did so, the more it became habit. In Inner Bonding terminology, this choice to contract as a way to protect ourselves in the face of fear is also known as the "intention to control".

Interestingly, this instinctual reaction doesn't just apply to external pain, this is also how we often dealt with the internal pain caused by our very own unloving thoughts and beliefs. We contracted against and tried to push those unloving thoughts away, just like we did with the outer pain. While giving us temporary relief, this too muted our divine radiance. Instead of releasing the false beliefs, contracting against them only made them grow stronger. The result is that eventually our once powerful life-force becomes reduced to a tiny trickle, sometimes leaving us with barely enough energy to function at all.

Over time, the spark in the child's eyes dims as we grow up and "mature". Sometimes the wounded adult is so defended that the light of spirit is almost imperceptible. When connection to the inner light diminishes, we are forced to look for something "out there" in the world to fill us up and compensate for the lack of vital spirit. Whether it is something as benign as coffee or intense as cocaine, we try to find an external source of energy. Many of us also become "energy vampires", unconsciously attempting to draw energy from our environment because we can no longer access it from within.

When we contract against pain in order to block it, the root issues are never resolved and this has a cumulative effect over time. In the first half of life we can often still manage to function despite the growing number of blocks erected within the structure of our psyche. However, by the time most people hit middle age we are often limping along, exhausted and listless, with a volcano of suffering boiling beneath the surface.

The good news is that although we are biologically conditioned to contract against discomfort, we can also use our free will to choose to train ourselves to reopen our hearts, release the blocks and reconnect more fully with our spirit. Inner Bonding is an excellent technology to use for that reconnection. I have often enjoyed witnessing people coming home to themselves and watched as their spirit begins to re-emerge.

However, another powerful spiritual tool that can help release blocks and reverse the tendency to contract is the practice of mindfulness. The concept of "mindfulness" originally comes from the Buddhist tradition. However, I prefer the term "presence" because I find it more accurately describes the experience of being fully embodied and present in the moment. There are many forms of mindfulness meditation and presence practices available today. The point of mindfulness is to cultivate a new habit of staying kindly present with whatever arises in the mind, body and emotions without contracting against it. And if contraction does arise, learning to embrace and accept that as well, instead of contracting against the contraction (which is like trying to control oneself into not being so controlling!). Thankfully, this is something that we can all learn to do and become more skilled with.

There is an interesting story that illustrates this very well. There was a Tibetan meditation teacher by the name of Chogyam Trungpa who, during his Himalayan escape to India during the Chinese invasion, encountered a very large and ferocious dog. When the dog barred the path and began barking, everyone in the party froze in their tracks. Then, to their horror, the dog began to charge them. Instantly, Trungpa, who had been trained in meditation since early childhood, turned towards the rapidly approaching dog and *unexpectedly began yelling and charging right back!* The shocked dog skidded to a halt, abruptly turned and scampered away. Because he had trained for so many years to breathe into and face discomfort instead of contracting and freezing, Trungpa had automatically turned towards the fearful "object" and met it head on.

This story demonstrates that it is possible for us to free ourselves from the habit of contracting in the face of fear. It is possible to face and release those old blocks that keep our hearts closed. In

doing so, we can reconnect with our spirit, eventually living more from our spirit, even in very painful or scary situations.

Do you want to live more from your spirit and regain your childhood aliveness? Then in addition to doing Inner Bonding, I would strongly encourage you to practice mindfulness; practice turning towards the discomfort in your life, breathe into it and invite spirit to be present with you as you face it. Meeting those scary places with loving presence will change your life.

The more you practice doing this, the more you will reconnect with your inner radiance and regain the energy you need to live the life you were meant to live! Then, instead of feeling like a black hole desperately trying to suck energy from your environment, you will once again be as the radiant Sun. You will be able to meet life with an inner fullness, extending love to all around you. So I invite you to throw out your energy drink! And right now, in this moment, like Chogyam Trungpa, breathe fully into whatever is there, name it, feel it, face the dog head on with the help of your spiritual guidance. It will change your life.

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