

I received a request to write a paper on Gratitude, and I was inspired this morning so I wrote out a bunch of stuff which I will now read to you. I was asked to comment on the prayer of St. Francis, some of you may be familiar with this prayer. We are talking about that great Buddhist teacher and sage St. Francis of Assisi who lived in the 12th century. So some of you may be familiar with this prayer which goes:

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace;
where there is hatred, let me sow love;
where there is injury, pardon:
where there is doubt, faith;
where there is despair, hope
where there is darkness, light
and where there is sadness, joy
O Divine Master,
grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled, as to console;
to be understood, as to understand;
to be loved, as to love;
for it is in giving that we receive,
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
and it is in dying that we are born to Eternal Life.

A beautiful prayer. I actually say this prayer every morning. Wayne Dyer likes it too? Oh good I'm glad, I like Wayne, glad that he appreciates the sentiments. I had a couple of comments. There is a line I wanted to add if I may be so bold and presumptuous, and that is:

It is in gratefulness that we are gifted in every moment.

That's one addition, and then there is one replacement. There is the line that says, "Where there is despair, hope." Some of you have been to the dharma talk where I talk about hope. Hope is actually the enemy or an obstacle to spiritual progress, because hope is an attitude, a belief in the idea that there is something from outside of us that is going to save us, going to help us become whole. That is going to ease our suffering, bring us out of our misery.

The only thing that is going to ease our suffering us or save us or bring us out of our misery is the realization that we are whole and complete in and of ourselves. There is really nothing outside of us. So if there is nothing outside of us what is there to hope for? The more you hope the more you foster the illusion of separation and keep yourself from realizing the truth of who and what you truly are. So I think that that word hope should be replace with the word Truth. Hope implies that something from the outside is going to come and save you, where the truth is that you already are the salvation that you are seeking from

somewhere else.

So that's my comment on the Prayer of St Francis and the two lines I wanted to tinker with.

So I was asked to address the question why gratitude? Why is it in giving that we receive? Why do thanks need to be expressed and received?

This is what I wrote:

The true power of intention, meaning intention to create something or manifest some good in your life is not about controlling, it's about letting go. The ego, meaning the dysfunctional ego, wants to hold on to its manipulative plans and tactics in order to reinforce the illusion that it has gained and is maintaining control over a situation. And if that's the vibration that we create then the conscious loving source energy of the universe will bend itself to our will against its true nature which is to flow freely and in abundance.

At some point in our evolutions we humans realized that the images or thoughts that ran in our heads are abstractions of what was in our external experience. And that those thoughts could be manipulated to accomplish real-life tasks and activities. With that realization came incredible potentials but also catastrophic pitfalls. Thoughts alone cannot apprehend or appreciate the miracle of creation. Because they are separate from the object or condition that they represent they give rise to desire. Desire is the feeling that you're missing something .. you're missing something being here and wanting to be there.

While we are experiencing what is called our normal waking consciousness we usually have the desire to be almost anywhere else but there. This is the source of most of our misery and suffering. Suffering is actually the growing pains of spiritual progress, when that spiritual progress is being resisted..

Every time we experience pain it is both a discomfort but also an opportunity for us to identify and release the inner resistance that is the source of the pain. in order for us to realize our true nature. If something on the outside is hurting us we remove ourselves from that source of pain. When something on the inside is hurting us, we look to something from the outside to remove the pain. That can't work. Pain from the inside is inner resistance, and the only way it can be truly removed is to release resistance, not to do something to avoid or deny or numb the pain.

Letting go requires a tolerance for discomfort. Each one of us must do this for ourselves. No one else can do it for us. All therapy needs to be self therapy.

Here is the truth:

You are made of conscious joyful loving energy in condensed form and you are swimming in and being showered by the same conscious loving energy in expanded form in every moment.

There is no separation between the condensed and expanded energies.

You have created a wall between the energy that is your body and the energy that is surrounding you – the entire rest of the Cosmos, the energy that's surrounding you.

The wall which is your ego is the dividing line between the condensed and expanded energies.

You have created the gates in that wall to let that energy in only when certain conditions are fulfilled.

You have identified yourself as being the wall instead of the energy. And you are only aware of the energy that is who and what you really are when those conditions are met and you grudgingly open the gates and allow yourself to experience its fullness.

So there is no free flow of energy, no give and take, between the dense you and the expanded you.

And you are unwilling to dismantle the wall and the gates for fear that you will then have nothing at all.

Solid objects are not solid but are pure energy coming into and going out of the appearance of solidity in every moment. It is like a fantastic fountain that can create all sorts of beautiful shapes out of flowing water. At each successive moment it is different water creating the shape, but the appearance of the shape remains stable to the observer.

So the miracle of creation is occurring in every moment and enlightenment is simply the total openness to, and is the joy arising from witnessing, participating and collaborating in the creation of everything that is and is happening in each and every moment, moment by moment.

The water flows out of the jets, creates the forms, and then drops back into the pool in a joyful and never-ending cycle. There's always more energy coming back so there's no reason to fear that you will ever be in a state of lack or detachment. The only way to join with the endless and abundant flow of our true nature is to let go, to drop that wall.

Most people believe that gratitude is the result of desire fulfilled, but that is not true -- that's just the relief from craving. Gratitude is the recognition that you are giving to and receiving from the Cosmos in abundance and in every moment. It is realizing the fullness of creation and the creator. Gratitude is the

gift that we give back to Source in return for the gifts we have received. It is the joy that is we experience when we drop all resistance and join the free flow of energy between us and outside. It is the natural result of opening up and realizing that what is being gifted in every moment by the conscious loving energy of the Cosmos, and not a forced sense of appreciation for some material object received or sense of relief because the object or service received averted some unpleasant circumstance.

True gratitude is understanding that everything is a miracle. Miracles are miraculous only to the ego. Many people wish and pray for a miracle to happen, and when it does then they are grateful. But they are ignorant to the fact that the miracle is happening all around them and within them all the time. They just need to stop believing that miracles are something out of the ordinary, but instead are the natural order of things, which is a quote from The Course in Miracles.

When they do not occur, then something has gone wrong. Miracles can only occur when you create the space in which they can manifest. Don't wait for a miracle. Don't pray for a miracle. Live the miracle that you already are right now, and then every moment is a miracle. True gratitude arises from the realization that miracles are not only possible, they are inevitable.

C: Way back then, about hope, you said we should not look outside for salvation. Buddha said: "You shall work out your own salvation with diligence."

And that's what I meant when I said that all therapy needs to be self therapy. Only you can make the decision as to when and where you are going to drop that wall. That is the Truth.

Q: The first words in the prayer begin with Lord. Why do you ask the Lord for something?

That's a great question and an important one.

Q: Is it not so that in such a case you give up your own control?

I am going to answer that in the politically correct way by saying yes and no. You have to understand that these prayers were given to us by people who had achieved a more expanded level of consciousness than most of the people who were living in the general population in that day and age. To tell them that God was within you, that you are Divine, you are Source Energy and one with all that is in the Cosmos, they wouldn't get it. It would be like trying to explain nuclear physics to a six year old.

C: Your Buddha nature.

Right. So you have to understand those prayers from the perspective of the people they were meant to be

of service to and to help them to expand their own consciousness so they could get to the point where they could understand how they are divine themselves.

Q: Isn't it also a simple form of respect for your teachers?

Yes, yes it is. Understanding that the real teacher is the same for all of us – it's our innermost being. It's our true nature. It is just because we assume this illusion of separateness and we assume various levels of expanded consciousness that we need physical teachers that help us to focus on and do the work to bring us to our own realization, to work diligently as the Buddha said. And that diligent work is not work in the sense of trying to achieve something – it is actually expending the effort necessary to counteract our compulsive need to keep that wall in place. Because that's the only thing that is standing between us and the realization of our true nature.

C: Is also not this time I think Christianity. I was not criticizing about religions from my side.

Yes I understand. Now let me re-read that prayer... I am going to re-read that prayer from the point of view of expanded consciousness.

I am an instrument of true peace.

Where there is hatred I am love.

Where there is injury I am pardon.

Where there is doubt I am faith.

Where there is despair I am truth. (or hope)

Where there is darkness I am light.

Where there is sadness I am joy.

I seek not so much to be consoled as to console.

I seek not so much to be understood as to understand.

I seek not so much to be loved as to love.

For in giving I receive.

In pardoning I am pardoned.

And in dying, meaning giving up that wall, I am born into eternal life which is Divine Presence.

And that's all that dying really is. It's an allegorical dying not necessarily a physical dying. Although for

most people in this world the only time that they experience that expanded consciousness is when they physically die because they haven't given up their dysfunctional egos while they were alive. They missed the opportunity to do so. It's illustrated by that old saying – I don't know where this came from – you may have heard that old saying:

“If you die before you die then you do not die when you die.”

So we are talking about two different kinds of dying. One is allowing the dysfunctional ego to dissolve, and the other is the dissolution of your physical body which is what we typically think of as death.

C: It's a kind of existential issue with language itself.

Yes. That's true. People are at all different levels of consciousness and any spiritual teacher needs to understand what levels their hearers are at and be able to make the gap between where they are and where they Really are and where they “should be” – at a reasonable and an acceptable level of challenge. And so when people are at the mythological level where they do believe in the Eternal Law Giver as being something somewhat separate from the self, they need to have prayers that will allow them to address or communicate with this perceived Other Power. But through that prayer they will expand their consciousness and then come to the realization that the power that is seemingly outside themselves is their true nature.

C: I've always taken the first line of the prayer of St Francis “make me an instrument/channel of thy peace” literally as in he's a flute.. empty and hollow of the ego. If the flute were not hollow the wind would not be able to pass through and make music. The instrument must be empty/hollow to be able to play.

Yes. Your instrument.. your body, mind, consciousness must be empty for the energy flow through it.

C: To be able to play the music of the divine source which is love. That's a wonderful analogy. That's kind of like the fountain analogy. That it's always flowing. If something impedes it you're not going to get clear images, or experience what the true nature of the Cosmos is and what you are.

C: ..It is like a dance. Giving and receiving is like inbreath and outbreath. Only to receive without giving thanks is like breathing in and trying to hold it

Yes. Yin and Yang. The constant expansion and contraction of the vibration of the Universe. And allowing ourselves to flow with that expansion and contraction. The ego is contraction in the face of expansion. Or like as has been said.. breathing in and then trying to hold it.

Q: Any tricks to defeat the ego?

There are two problems with that question. First of all the ego is the source of all tricks, and second, what we don't want to defeat the ego we want to befriend the ego and reassure it that it's okay to let go of control – the control that it's holding on to. So that we can experience the free flow of energy through us. From the seeming outside and through us and back. We are expanding and contracting and vibrating in tune and in alignment with all of the Cosmos – all of what we are. Because we are connected with it – we're part of it.

C: Ok. I should've said maybe diminish the ego and not defeat.

Ok. Yes, that would've been a better choice. One of the chapters in my book.. which I am still working on, it's almost finished, is about the ego and where the ego comes from. What is the source of the ego and why we build it. And one of the concepts that I discuss there is that we actually have two egos: we have a functional side of the ego which is the part that takes care of all the things we need to take care of in our matter-of-fact day to day lives, and then we have the dysfunctional aspect of the ego which is the part that creates all the problems. That's the part of the ego that believes that we are separate from our source, we are separate from everything, and that we live in a state of lack and impoverishment. And that we then have to act upon the world and control our environment in order to be able to get the things that we need not only to survive but to feel that we are complete and whole.

Now the problem with that is that we already are complete and whole and if we only let go of this dysfunctional bugger, as you call it, we would realize that. And we wouldn't need to keep driving ourselves crazy and holding ourselves in misery in order to feel complete and whole.

That's some catch... that Catch-22.. huh? Here's the thing: The only way to get rid of the dysfunctional ego is not to resist it, but to embrace it. And that's the hardest thing for us to do because when the little bugger starts crying out, it's damned uncomfortable and we want to get rid of it. It feels terrible. But that's what meditation is. Meditation is the act of entertaining the rantings of the dysfunctional ego, but not reacting to them. Not giving in to them, not indulging them and not resisting them. But just letting them be as they are until they understand that everything's okay. And that it's okay for them to let go of control.

Now meditation is one way of doing this. The reason why a lot of people have trouble with meditation is because even meditation does not turn off those uncomfortable feelings. So that's when we have to call

out the “big guns.” The big guns are what I term the energy releasing techniques like EFT. That’s why I prescribe what I call the Integrative Transformational Pathways, for anyone who is serious about taking a spiritual path.. and that you address all of the different aspects of our consciousness: the body, the mind, the spirit and the emotions—the dysfunctional ego, the negative energies that come up. And that’s where a releasing technique like EFT, Emotional Freedom Technique, comes in handy because it’ll take those uncomfortable feelings that the dysfunctional ego is pouring out and that you can’t, as much as you would like to.. can’t let go of... can’t ignore.. and it will help to dissolve them so that they are tolerable.

If you would like more information on Integrative Transformational Pathways you can go to my website: <http://brightpathway.com>. There’s all kinds of information there.

C: Entertaining rantings but not reacting or giving in, not indulging or resisting.. letting them be what they are. This is exactly the method in the story you wrote about Continuum Concept.

Yes. Accepting him even when he’s engaging in the behavior that brings out the worst in us.

Get those videos, they’re great. Taste of Enlightenment and Power of Intention: Law of Projection videos. Between those two videos is everything that you need to know about living the spiritual life. Living a life of spiritual fulfillment and material abundance.

C: Continuum Concept is how you said we are to love the ego.

Yes that is how you need to love the ego. If you try and push it away it may go away for a while but it will just come back and scream louder. If you indulge it then you re-enforce that behavior that is gonna get it what it thinks it wants. So you have to neither indulge nor resist. But just letting it be and hold it, embrace it and love it.

C: Apply Continuum Concept to the ego. It’s very clear.

Yes that is exactly what we have to do. Because we did not receive Continuum Concept treatment when we were infants, and therefore created this wall.. the dysfunctional aspect of the ego we need to be the parents that we wish our parents had been to the deprived child, the dysfunctional ego that is still alive inside of us, that is still crying out for what was its right and due when it was in its infancy.. when we were in our infancy. And that’s where the effort in spiritual practice lies – in being courageous enough to be able to face the dysfunctional ego without giving in and without fighting.

C: Let the ego know it’s not a constant state of fear or threat.. that it’s safe to let go.

Yes, exactly. That's the goal of all spiritual practice. There's nothing to attain.. there is nothing to attain. Say that again... there is nothing to attain. There is nothing that you have to accomplish. Enlightenment is not something that you have to build like a house. Enlightenment is who you are behind the wall that you created and have identified with.

C: Like your comments on myth and its level of purpose.

Yes. You have to meet the ego, or the dysfunctional ego at the level that its operating in. The same rules apply in doing therapy. I've been a psychotherapist for nearly 40 years. There is not a single client that I would have succeeded with if I had not first accepted that the person exactly where they were on an emotional level. Not accepted their behaviors... Like when I was working in schools, you don't accept a kid hitting another kid when they are angry. We accept their anger.. we accept the fact that that's the level where they're at.. that there's something that angered them to the point that they felt like they needed to lash out. You have to meet the person at the level that they're on if you are ever to have any hopes of bringing them to a higher level. Because if the gap is too wide they will just say "I just can't make that jump. I can't jump that high."

Einstein said: "We cannot solve our problems at the level of consciousness we created them." So the skillful teacher needs to create just the right amount of challenge to bring that person out of the level that they're stuck at... make them willing to make the jump, so they can attain that higher perspective and see the solution to their problem.