

Let's Keep It Simple!

Do you ever rant and rave at the complexity of modern life? The other day, I failed three times in a row to prove that I was not a robot as I tried to get into some kind of online service. In the end, I simply gave up, said two well-known rude words to my computer and then tut tutted to myself about how crazy modern life had become. So this month, I thought I would share with you some thoughts about how to keep everything simple even in the midst of the most complex chaos that constantly seems to be raging all around us in our modern world.

From the perspective of being locked into physical consciousness, our whole universe is incredibly complex and diverse. For example, apparently, there are approximately 100 billion neurons in each human brain. What exactly is a neuron? I haven't got a clue! Or how about this? The distance from Planet Earth to the Planet Neptune is 3 billion miles.

I don't know about you, but thinking about the complexity of physical phenomena like this does my head in. So let us now turn our attention to a really simple but profound truth about life. We are either living in fear or we are living in love. It really is that simple. 'What about all those aggressively angry individuals who never feel any fear?' you might well ask. Well again it's pretty simple. All forms of anger are just fear in disguise. If you are not sure about this, please sit and just watch your personality-self being angry for a while, then ask yourself what lies just beneath your anger and you will discover a deep fear or hurt that always lies underneath fiery, angry energy.

What about grief? Well the feeling of grief is triggered by loss and loss in turn triggers our primal fear of abandonment and isolation. Depression? Depressed individuals are trying to suppress fear so much that they feel virtually nothing except apathy and despair. Someone can even be so depressed that they lose their conscious fear of dying and thus become suicidal. But the fear of extinction is still there deep within them.

Finally, what about guilt? Well there is a load of fearful energy in all kinds of guilt combined with some anger, which - as we now know - is just fear in disguise. So at heart, all negative human emotions are fear based and our only real purpose this lifetime is to take some incredibly meaningful steps along a universal path from fear to love.

The only key question that remains to be answered when we realise that we are always either drowning in life-destroying fearful energy or bathing in life-supporting love energy is how do we get from A to B?

Now when I first started to seek for the ultimate truth about life by reading a load of spiritual books, a lot of what I read seemed incredibly complex and confusing. For example, several key Tibetan Buddhist texts talk about all the 'Bardos' the soul goes through when it leaves a physical body behind. But these texts were basically incomprehensible to me. Similarly, when I first tried to read the incredibly dense and complex text of *A Course in Miracles*, I simply could not understand it and frequently found myself almost falling asleep in the middle of reading a chapter.

But these days, I am beginning to see that I am too old to cope with too much complexity in my life and so I am choosing to simplify everything including my spiritual beliefs. I now choose to see life as at heart so simple, despite all physical evidence to the contrary. I keep everything simple by more or less constantly checking to see whether my thoughts are fearful thoughts or loving thoughts. Then, I do my best to choose to change a fearful or angry thought (a fearful thought in disguise) into a loving thought so that I can support my life every day with radiant, love energy.

For example, last week I fell walking home from Didsbury and hit my head pretty badly. I had a heavily bleeding gash just above my right eye and my right cheek was soon badly bruised. Now of course, my immediate reaction to my fall was one of shock and fear. I have also felt quite a lot of anxiety because my recovery has been much slower than I originally expected. So here is where the rubber hits the road and I have to put into practice what I teach! This means that I need to stay calmly aware and accepting of how my body is feeling moment to moment. But then, I need to do everything I can to soothe my troubled mind and body with Love Energy.

One way I have bathed myself with love and compassion this week has been to listen to some really uplifting hymns on You Tube, particularly one called *It is Well with My Soul* that I sing along to and then feel its uplifting energy sinking into me. However, I know that hymns may well not be your thing, so if this month, you start to drown in any kind of fear or anxiety please find a song or piece of music that opens your heart and soothes your soul. Then just listen to it over and over again until your fear and anxiety quite naturally begin to subside or even dissolve away completely.

Another wonderful way to soothe yourself whenever fear or anxiety threatens to overwhelm you is to sit breathing slowly and deeply for a while as you hug yourself as a loving mother would hug a distressed child, or gently massage your shoulders as you silently say to yourself, 'It's OK. I am with you. This moment now, you are perfectly safe.' Even better, better write out a few

loving words of your own that feel just right to you in terms of holding your anxious self in the healing power of unconditional loving kindness and self-compassion.

Finally, whenever we are in any kind of pain – physical, emotional or mental – it is so helpful to gently remind ourselves that many other human beings right this moment are similarly suffering from a similar kind of trauma, pain or hurt. When I remind myself of this fundamental fact about life on earth, it really seems to help me from getting lost in negative ‘Why me?!’ thoughts and feelings. It also brings me back to focussing on heart-centred compassion so that I can extend compassionate well wishes to all suffering sentient beings on earth without exception.

So this lovely, autumnal month of September, please do everything in your power to dwell in the life-supporting energy of love rather than the destructive energy of fear or anxiety. If by any chance you do become fearful at some point in the month, just pause to bathe yourself in the deeply healing energy of unconditional love and compassion. If you keep practising this pretty regularly, I more or less guarantee that you will have a truly wonderful month. Yeah!!