

## Newsletter from April 9<sup>th</sup>, 2020

Hello Everyone,

We are all standing at the edge of an incredible opportunity. We have the capacity to transform our inner space emotionally and spiritually. We also can go outside and be a transformation. The outside is our home, our family, our friends and our clients if we are still in touch with them. We transform with the kindness of the *life force of the tide* coming from our heart.

When we work with the *second pair of hands* the whole spiritual spectrum of healing opens from the realm of the divine to the realm of the natural world. It is bridged by the *life force of the tide* coming from the heart. There is completion, containment and integration. I have a second pair of hands story. My wife Cathy fell and broke her leg last week. She is no longer in any pain and it is an incredible opportunity for us to discover the deeper dimensions of love and what she and I value the most in our lives.

I invite all of you to look deeply at your values now and clarify them for yourself and your partner especially how do you want to die, such as on a respirator? To avoid this requires a *living will* and a **Do Not Resuscitate (DNR)** order to be carried on one's person at all times in the state of Florida where we live. My mother lived on a respirator for 12 years. We will not submit ourselves to that or any other heroic measure when our time is up. When your time is up, your time is up as my father in law used to say before he died. It is so simple because it is a law of nature. Death will come in its own variety.

When I was treating Cathy for the shock of the accident, her deceased mother Rita appeared in her divine feminine form and placed her hands directly over the bone that was broken. In several moments I learned that Rita was directing where I should next place my hands. So sometimes the second pair of hands is an extra fulcrum or a powerful spiritual fulcrum and sometimes the second pair of hands is directing us where to go. There is a lot of heavy traffic in every mind and body.

We can also use our biodynamic practice when we are talking over the phone with family, friends and clients. While signaling our client to be silent after we discuss their needs, we can scan our own body and bring the *life force of the tide* from our heart to any particular region of our body and that will directly resonate with the client's body. We can also visualize the client's body while asking the client to be silent and invite the *life force of the tide* of our heart to that area. This ignites the *life force of the tide* in the client's heart. It is the practice of two hearted compassion.

At this time of social distancing on the planet, we are naturally even more sensitive to our own fears. The Dalai Lama says: "we must practice non-fright". Consequently, now is the time to use all of our spiritual skills to reduce our own fears and the fears of others. If not now, when?

Tonglen is an important and sophisticated Tibetan Buddhist compassion meditation. I received the transmission of Tonglen from Pema Chodron when I took my Bodhisattva Vow with Chogyam Trungpa Rinpoche in 1981. In the Kagyu tradition of Tibetan Buddhism, Tonglen required an initiation from a qualified master who at that time in Boulder, Colorado was Pema Chodron. The transmission of Tonglen was given to me by her in a ceremony at the Karma Dzong Meditation Center the afternoon prior to the Bodhisattva Vow being given to us initiates later that evening.

The compassion practice of Tonglen is always preceded by Shamatha-Vipashyana meditation. On a retreat, we would not practice Tonglen until the afternoon and not until we had several hours of Shamatha on our cushion. Then we would continue Shamatha afterwards for some time. It is a very deep purification of the heart, cardiovascular system and allows the self to dissolve which is a part of the practice. Tonglen traditionally requires generating a felt sense of sadness first. The practitioner brings to their mind's eye one particular memory that evokes sadness every time or almost every time when beginning to practice Tonglen. Or maybe we are already saturated in sadness from the pandemic upon us. That is the start of the practice.

Ten or fifteen years ago, the Dalai Lama requested anyone who knows the practice of Tonglen to please begin immediately teaching it to as many people as possible without any need to have received Bodhisattva Vow. More recently, Pema Chodron said that when we practice the giving aspect of compassion meditation, we make it simple. The traditional form as taught in the Kagyu lineage is intense and as powerful as Chod practice in my opinion. I usually teach less intense variations since many of my students are not Buddhist. Everyone can learn to give from their heart one way or another.

As biodynamic practitioners we give the *life force of the tide* from our hearts which is free from fear. It is a very deep level of healing that is pre-existing. We can visualize, intend or think about giving simple things to other people to reduce their fear. This is how we connect in the age of social distancing. Whenever I think of my brother who absolutely loves coffee, and he is having some anxiety or whatever, I visualize offering him a fantastic cup of coffee! Keep it simple like a Starbucks. Sometimes the best thing we can give someone else is our smile. That is all. That is enough.

We are feeling the *life force of the tide* from our heart in our daily compassion practice of living humbly in some form of social isolation. We feel the *life force of the tide* moving from the back of our heart extending everywhere in the world or to specific people. In this way we offer everyone a **second heart**. It is a practice for our time. I call this *second heart practice* a metaphor for compassion.

Blessings to all of you during this holy week of April 2020 where the death of one person changed the world. Now the death of many thousands of people this week can also change the world. What a gift to contemplate death so close as the news app on our phone as often as we please. How many dead today and how close is IT to me? **Our work now is to contemplate death.** Please receive this gift from the images of hospital morgues filled to overflowing with dead bodies and daily reminders of the dyeing to come. This is Real Food for our soul!

May all the remaining weeks left in our individual lifetimes be holy. Make this a priority for transformation. The Buddha said there is suffering and there is joy. Let us all remember

to stay balanced in these times. They will end. And our life will end someday somehow. How do you want to die? Right now, we have the present moment which is transformational. Allow yourself to be transformed.

**Blessings to all of you!**

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