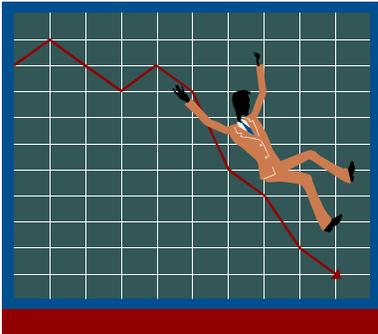


Conversation about Fear

From Golden Vessel™ Workshop – April 2006

Excerpt from upcoming book.
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Someone in a workshop asked me ‘Do you feel fear?’

Yes. As human beings we have all the gamut of all the emotions. And if we didn’t, we would be really foolish because fear is a positive energetic quality sometimes.

Q: But the fear doesn’t overwhelm you. Is that what it is?

It is a survival mechanism in a lot of ways, and you can’t get rid of it.

Yet, I feel that what most people call ‘fear’ is, much of the time, a different type of supportive energy. Let me share my own lesson about ‘fear’. I learned a lesson, a long time ago, about fear. Fear of doing.

Many years ago, I was quite scared of speaking to groups of people. As it happens often, I had a job where the groups that I had to speak to were bigger and bigger each time. The moment that I got comfortable with speaking to a particular group size, then the universe seem to laugh and test me with triple its size the next time around. I went from feeling fear in speaking to 30 people to feeling the same fear to speaking to thousands at one time via satellite workshops.

Every time before each presentation, I felt such fear in my belly! How am I going to do this? After about four or five speaking presentations, I began to notice something interesting...I noticed that when I felt that energy (that I used to call ‘fear’ in my belly) and I approached the podium in front of people, that energy of ‘fear’ seemed to disappear or transform into a deep connection with each and every person in the audience. I also noticed that in the one or two times that I did not experience this ‘fear-feeling’ ahead of a presentation, I was a dry speaker and just bombed! After a while, I deduced that there was something else happening here...something that seemed to help me deliver my talk from a powerful place...something that was not really ‘fear’ but a different type of energy that I had mislabeled for the lack of a better word or because I had no clue! What I realized was that my ‘so called fear’ was actually a type of supportive energy that was rumbling inside me before a great delivery, and, when I just acknowledged that feeling and as a warrior went beyond it, then my delivery became awesome!

I understood something very important through those experiences. I understood that if I am asked to do something new, there IS a part in me that knows how to do it and can do it. That part gathers the energetic momentum that feels like fear, yet it is not. The crucial moment exists when I recognize and befriend that energy, chose to not pay attention to that moment’s limiting thinking and move through it full steam ahead!

The outcome is full presence of mind and connection to the moment. If we can just understand that ‘fear’ energy in a way that allows us to transform it, for our highest, like the alchemist, then we can shift something that may be deadening, to something that is precious and fully alive!

Q: That’s the hard part for me...Shifting it.

It only takes a split second to say “Okay fear, I know you are there, but I am going to step forward anyway.” It only takes that split second to shift it, and then, all of a sudden, what used to be fear is supporting you energetically! It is totally there ready for you!

So yes, thank the feeling of 'fear' and the next moment you feel it, and it is not about your survival, use it willingly. Transmuted, transform it. Use it. Respond to it wisely, differently and for your highest good!

**Q: What is the trick for switching the fear into the positive?
Is there a certain mindset that you do? For me it's hard.**

Yes. You know why it's hard for people? Because they think they can do it with their head. They are too caught up in 'how' and 'why' and 'maybe' and 'should' and 'would' and 'when' and...you got me going now!

There are two brains. We only know the brain of the intellect, the brain in the head. But there is a brain in the gut. Martial artists use the brain in their gut. They are sensing. Do you think that if a Martial artist was in a fight, and he would think with his head, "The hit is coming. What am I supposed to do now? I am going to strike in this way..." If he goes into his thinking brain, he is totally dead before he can strike back! He lost the moment of reaction/response by being caught up in the head. This fighter has learned how to put the head on the back burner and feel and sense like the panther feels and senses what is surrounding him in the jungle. It is not about thinking. It is about sensing.

So, to answer your question...the only way we can move from fear, the only way we can actually move towards being who we are, is to understand that the thinking brain is probably the one that is stopping us from being who we are! Okay? There is NOTHING wrong with the thinking brain. The thinking brain is a great tool for us. We were talking about this last night. The thinking brain is like...and I am going to give the analogy again because it is such an incredible example...You have seen kids or people, grown ups, walking their dogs on a leash. And, you may have seen a grown up tumbling after their dog because the dog is going really fast? These owners have absolutely no control of their dog. The dog is leading them! That is what happens with our intellect. It is leading us! But, the mind is OUR vehicle! It does not rule us! It is a vehicle, an instrument, a tool for us. Yet, we are being led by the tool!

**Q: So how do you get to follow the sensing brain and not the thinking brain?
How do you block the thinking brain and go with your brain in the gut?**

Ahhh! It takes time. It takes practice. And all of this that we are doing is to take off layers that are holding you back from actually moving there faster each time. Because the less weight you are carrying in your bag of stuff, the less non-coherent resonances you are carrying with you, the clearer you are and the more you exist in the present moment and the more you can SENSE in the moment with that part of you. So, in the case of the guy with the dog that is running in front and leading him helter-skelter, that person has to learn to teach the dog how to heel, just like you teach a regular dog. You teach them. 'Heel! Don't move!' and you practice this discipline ten times, every day, consistently, until they learn.

I remember my Dad used to raise German Shepherds. As a kid, I remember that he would train them in the back yard. Every day, at the same time, he taught that dog until the dog got it. Every day. Consistency. Practice. That is why people who meditate sit for meditation at the same time of the day; the brain then knows that that is the time to relax, the whole system gets ready and looks forward to that time. It feels, "Okay, now is the time to meditate." Consistency. Practice. Understand? So, we just allow ourselves to say to our mind... "You know what mind? I know I should think about that other thing. I know you are bugging me to think and think about what my grandmother said to me that drove me crazy, and I know I have to talk to her...but, I want to do something else right now. I will think about that later. I am placing that on the backburner." Don't reject the nagging thought because it will come back with a fury. Don't reject the thoughts. Just say, "I'm going to think about that later, when I have more time." Begin there. And then, get back to your sitting for meditation, your breath or whatever else you're doing. Okay?

Right now, we will practicing a modality that is the foundation of knowing how to listen to the 'sensing' brain. So everyone please close your eyes....

Begin to notice the movement of your breath. Don't control it. Just notice it like a silent witness, as it goes in through the nose up the throat and to the heart area and as it goes back up from the heart area through the throat and out the nose. Just notice the movement of your breath.

Allow yourself to just hear the sound of the breath going through the back of the throat, as it goes down and as it goes up. Listen also to the sounds in the room. Those sounds are no more important than the sounds of your breath. Allow yourself to just notice the movement, the sound and the feel of the breath as it goes in and out. Allow yourself to become relaxed in the body as you do observe your own breath. There is no hurry now. We have time. As you breathe in, as you watch the breath going down, notice if you can sense when the breath turns around, just a little below the heart area. See if you can sense that moment when the in breath turns around and becomes the out breath.

Now, as you do that over and over and over, observe the quality of your being-ness. What is the difference? How does it feel? Observe the quality of your senses. What is the difference? How does it feel?

Okay. In a moment I am going to ask you to open your eyes, but don't do it yet. What I will like you to do is to continue to follow the breath in and out. Listen to all the sounds. Pay attention to the inner world...the movement, the sounds, the feel of it. Sense yourself in the body and how it feels. Pay attention to the beating of the heart. When I ask you to gently open your eyes, I would like you to continue paying attention to this inner work that you are doing right now. Remember, the only thing you're going to be doing is opening your eyelids, so the world can come into your eyes, but your attention can remain within.

So very gently now, open your eyes and let a soft vision fall on an object. Continue focusing on your breath...listening to the breath, hearing it, feeling it and sensing it. Continue resting in that place in the heart, or just below the heart in the solar plexus, where the breath turns around and becomes the exhalation.

Now, let your soft vision fall on someone in the room and see if you can continue to rest within at the inner place of your being-ness. Notice if there is a different quality when your attention remains within while your eyes are open to the world. Sense it. Notice the different quality of being, available to you right now. See if you can sense the difference.

Good. Now, you may want to write in your journal as to what you noticed was the difference in your state.

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