

March 31, 2011

Fear. Fear is where it's at. Looking at what you're afraid of, and how you've organized your life to avoid what you're afraid of, might be the quickest way to a state of freedom and happiness.

I remember a few years ago when I noticed a subtle thread of fear that became activated in me as I moved in to my meditation practice in the mornings. As I tuned into this subtle fear, I noticed it seemed to remain present during my practice, and was present most all the time whenever I fine-tuned my attention enough to really notice. What was I afraid of? When I asked myself I got answers like, "I'm afraid of being disloyal to my Yoga and spiritual teachers if I don't meditate." "I'm afraid if I become TOO inconsistent in my routine that my life will go back to the same state – and I will suffer – in ways I did many years ago before I meditated." Even, "I'm afraid God will punish me if I don't make this time in my life." "I'm afraid something bad will happen to me, or to my children, if I don't meditate."

So I gave it up. I consciously chose not to do my regular meditation practice for thirty days. I did sit occasionally, finding minutes of quiet and stillness in a chair, whenever I spontaneously wanted to. But I did not do the routine and my regular practice which includes mantra meditation during that time. And the sky did not fall. Horrible sickness did not strike. The superstitious fears that had coursed through me, so subtle I didn't notice for years, were unfounded. What a joy to discover! And, after thirty days, I noticed my thoughts and actions were more dispersed without my practice. I was less organized and energized, both mentally and physically. I missed meditating! Since then, I meditate most every day. It's different now. I can choose to alter the timing of my practice so that it fits well in my life, without fear. And my heart is regularly infused with joy, more joy, as if the fear that was present before was taking up space that now is available for joy and gratitude.

"You can't know your relationship with something until you give it up." -- Rod Stryker.

Other things I've explored giving up at different times are TV, sugar, wheat, chocolate, meat, cooked food, dancing, blaming, sex, telling the vulnerable truth. I'm laughing now. Some of those decisions weren't very conscious – like when I wasn't selected for a dancing group I tried out for many years ago, and vowed never to dance again. After several difficult years of no dancing - where I made some choices I later regretted - I relented, and decided to dance again. Thank God! A more conscious choice was a few years ago, I gave up sugar for two years. I enjoyed the freedom from food cravings that prior to that time seemed so normal to me I didn't really notice them. Even now, choosing to include sugar in my diet, I am free-er in my food choices. I choose what I eat because I choose. I choose in support of my purpose – expanding love and joy on the planet.

So how about you? What are you afraid of? I invite you to breathe into your heart with a drop (or more!) of love and wonder how you might organize yourself to live free-er from fear.

Fear and Love. Exploring our relationship with fear and diving in is one ticket to our co-creating the world we want to live in. I'm talking about the inside world, and the outer world we all share, the world that is sustainable, the world that alive with love.