



The Still, Voice Small

Judith Pennington

LIVING PEACE

Even as a little child, I sensed that feeling anger at someone would hurt me more than the other person, so this awareness taught me to forgive and forget. Being in or near the winds of conflict caused great suffering in my body-mind, and as time passed, my rigid resistance to conflict drew it to me.

In recent years, spirituality, meditation and the guidance of my still, small voice have diminished this conflict with conflict by revealing ways to unite my heart and mind in co-creative partnership: that is, with mind serving heart, heart serving soul, and soul serving Love. And these days, with our busy lives rotating faster and faster, conflict erupts often enough that we can see it for what it is: an opportunity for healing.

Even so, it's not easy to stay balanced while being unfairly judged and condemned, verbally attacked when open-hearted and joyous, or rejected and dismissed by a beloved family member. I have experienced just these conflicts in recent months, all from different sources, and yet, by returning to the peace and perspectives of my soul (which also led me, in perfect timing, to two enlightened teachers), I am surviving nicely and have acquired some insights to share with anyone struggling to live and breathe peace.

We create conflict, I was taught, when we make each other wrong in order to make ourselves feel better. Last month, while stressed by the emotions of others, I caught myself just before doing this to someone: my mind, aware of my heart's unmet needs, voiced unkind opinions of a loved one; in turn, my heart, upset by the mind's diatribe, closed against the loved one to escape the conflict. Ordinarily, the body-mind rids itself of inner strife by projecting it outward. It is this inner conflict, visited upon others, which is at the heart of the world's pain and suffering.

In his book, *Touching Peace: The Art of Mindful Living*, the gentle Buddhist monk Thich Nhat Hahn shows us simple ways to become mindful of inner pain and resolve it at its root. I could have retreated to a quiet place, asked to see the nature of my pain and soothed it by breathing mindfully and lovingly saying to myself, "I breathe in and become aware of my heart. I breathe out and smile to my heart." After this meditation, I could have respectfully asked the other person to help me resolve my unmet needs.

Instead, I did what works equally well for me. I went to my meditation room, listened and heard the call of my soul to love, which always heals our anger or sorrow and

eventually the other person's as well. So it did for me and also cured my unmet needs!

If you want to try this, just go to a quiet place, focus your attention on your breathing and, when deeply relaxed, pick up pen and paper and allow your heart or mind to ask the other a question in dialogue. You will be surprised by the clarity of both when they are patiently allowed to say what hurts and how to heal it. Go deeper to listen to your soul. Just focus on the breath and relax longer. Wait patiently and write down anything you hear until a kind, loving voice

emerges to teach you the laws of love.

Unity minister Gary Simmons shows us how to live this love in the wholeness of the spiritual self, which can be present to, yet not be diminished by, any life

situation, no matter how it looks or feels, just as the eye of the storm is present to every aspect of the storm, yet expresses only calm, clarity, peace and equanimity. Gary's illuminating book, *The I of the Storm: Embracing Conflict, Creating Peace*, invites us to say to the conflicted person (or self), "Tell me more" until the real need emerges and can be resolved with love.

In these challenging days, many inspired teachers are coming to help us transit into a new love for humanity and the Earth. In this Aquarian Age, we will shift our authority from external sources to the divine spark of wisdom and guidance that is within us.

While listening to our deepest selves in open, receptive meditation, we grow peaceful enough to bring peace to the world. Our minds and hearts grow brilliant with light. Broken points of consciousness are united and made whole, so that life takes on new color and joy flows out of us into a world needing love.

Here is the spiritual awakening awaited by so many for so long: it takes place within our souls, reaches out to serve the world and is the only peaceful path to the lighted torch of freedom that is just within our grasp.

(Judith Pennington is a writer, spiritual teacher and author of a compelling tale of transformation, "The Voice of the Soul: A Journey into Wisdom and the Physics of God." Visit eaglelife.com to sign up for her free monthly e-newsletter. The July issue includes an enlightening interview with Gary Simmons on his book, "The I of the Storm.")