



The Still, Voice Small

Judith Pennington

POLISHING THE MIRROR

Several years ago, during an interview with Bernie Siegel on precognitive intuition and the role it plays in his life, this distinguished doctor and bestselling author recounted a story about a patient who criticized him for his anger. Siegel responded, "I was angry because of what I had to do to you."

"But you took it out on me!" the man insisted.

Siegel, a loving and sensitive person, saw the truth in this and changed his behavior. Years later, he read a line of poetry by Rumi: Your criticism polishes my mirror. "When I heard that," Siegel exclaimed, "it was like 'Oh, thank you! Now I know why they're all trying to make me better. It isn't that I'm a terrible person. They're trying to help me!'"

And so it is for each of us, as the people in our lives hold up reflective mirrors enabling us to see who we really are. The problem is, as Bernie Siegel pointed out, most of us don't take kindly to criticism. The self-defensive ego, a hero in its own mind, typically rejects criticism and stirs up negative emotions that close our minds to truths which could be larger than our own. At other times the ego, in disarray, absorbs undue or untrue criticism that becomes a less-than-useful way of relating to life.

What, then, is a body to do?

Science and spirit tell us that the body is to sit still and relax when the mind is confused. The mind quiets itself and consciousness listens for the still, small voice of the soul. We draw from this deeper well of knowing to get clear on the truth of a person or situation, because the only cure for ego's well-meaning grip on our perceptions is disarmament through meditation, positive thinking and wholeness affirmations. These create in us the calm, peaceful mind of transcendence, in which we are attached to nothing of the ego and only to the mind of the soul. It is this higher mind which sees clearly by staying open and receptive to wise, loving guidance of every sort.

I've been listening to a wonderful discussion of how emotion influences consciousness on a CD set, "Destructive Emotions," by author Daniel Goleman. It's a detailed report on a Mind and Life Institute gathering in which the Dalai Lama of Tibet met with some of the world's foremost researchers on the effects of and antidotes to our destructive emotions (a staggering 84,000 of which have been catalogued by Buddhist philosophy). Scientists are confirming in studies that negative emotions like anger, fear and depression alter physical structures in our brains so that we are quite literally unable to know the difference between fact and fiction: e.g., we get so mad and filled with aversion that we "see red" or "can't see straight." Conversely, love really is blind to the truth about our objects of attraction and affection. Somewhere between the eyes

and ears, the brain dumps this undesirable information, I suspect because the appreciative, energized heart, according to The HeartMath Institute (heartmath.org), emits a vibration that is 60 times stronger (within the body) than the power of our brain waves!

What a wonderful challenge and how critical it becomes for us to master even our most subtle emotions and moods, in order for our conscious minds and senses to accurately perceive and interpret information. Otherwise, we live in emotional delusion and reality distortion. So we have a choice between truth or fiction. If we choose to see truth we must accept that this is not easy to do, yet work

toward it by mastering our thoughts and feelings in the hope of a consensus reality that will lead us and our world to peace.

I am reminded of the

Snow White fairytale, in which the wicked queen demands, "Mirror, mirror, on the wall/Who's the fairest of us all?" and a sepulchral voice intones, "Snow White." This response so infuriates the queen's obsessive vanity that she dresses as a ragged beggar to give a poison apple to Snow White.

What if, instead, the queen had searched in her mirror for the perfect, radiant beauty of her soul? If, within the mind of her soul, she'd heard the voice of an inner critic, she could have allowed her higher self to remind her that we are all souls on a journey, none better and none less than another.

I see us living happily ever after in this adventure called life. Each step of our soul journey rids us of negative emotions like self-blame, guilt and shame, the worst distorters of all, so that eventually we love, honor and respect ourselves; attune to the still, small voice of the soul; and shift to the perspective of love. Through these eyes we see every person and event as a teacher and readily discern what is true and what is not. We are no longer pushed by pain, but pulled by vision.

When our mirrors grow cloudy, it is easy to polish them. We bring into our minds our joyful memories of love, and love carries us into Spirit's realm of transcendence. Ego and its hazy illusions vanish because we now see in a new and better way. Through these eyes, on a clear day, we can see into forever.

(Judith Pennington is a writer, spiritual teacher and author of a personal story of transformation, "The Voice of the Soul: A Journey into Wisdom and the Physics of God." She gives talks, presents workshops and publishes books and CDs through her spiritual outreach, Eagle Life Communications. You'll find the Bernie Siegel interview and related articles on the Newsletter page of her website, at eaglelife.com.)