

Coming of Age Never Too Soon

Australia, July 2020

Dialogue must begin, first of all, within oneself. If we cannot make peace within, how can we hope to bring about peace in the world? - Thich Nhat Hanh



The negative feelings and thoughts absorbed by our young selves have defined our personality long enough.

Already then, we did as we were told, no matter how we did it.

Mostly, we created inhibiting patterns that kept us small, even if we were brazen.

Whether we made ourselves compliant, invisible or rebellious, we didn't 'surrender'.

We did our best to fight back our impulses, however covertly and successfully we did it.

Already then, we misunderstood, as our parents had before us, the meaning of 'surrender' within the context, not of war and division, but of flowing.



Already then, as happened to our parents and their parents before them, as children, our ego-persona contracted.

It generated feelings intended to keep us 'on the straight and narrow', disciplined for work and labour – not for emotional freedom. It tightened the springs that made us jump further.

From the frying pan and into the fire, at times.



The process of being trained into 'responsibility', into responsible adults, germinated a mix of emotional flora: pride, self-judgement, fear, pain, avoidance and deflection, winning by controlling or excluding, and so on.

All mindsets that keep us in emotional trenches. But we were not - and are not – victims. We simply are as we are, here and now.



Though our age-old culture has pushed us to struggle to survive, surrendering to the moment, to What Is does not mean 'quitting'. It doesn't be 'resignation'.

It's not about setting ourselves up as losers or weaklings.

It's about floating on our back once a wave has toppled over our kayak.

It's the opposite of thrashing about, exhausting *our* selves, at the risk of drowning.

It's about dissolving the old and purely cultural paradigms of what it means to human.

It's about us as personas aligning ourselves with our centre of energy, with our life force.

It's about us becoming aware of the stealthy opportunities that come to us - and pass by - unnoticed, every day.



Now that we are all grown up, we could store those trigger emotions alongside our toy trucks, angel wings and Mickey Mouse ears, and leave them where they belong – in the past.

Equally, we could attend less to the grooming of our image as instrumental to social acceptability, coded as self-worth within our chosen grouping of apparently similarly-minded others.



In truth, our ego-persona is not an obstacle to emotional healing.

Quite the contrary, it is our indispensable vehicle.

It is connected to Soul, the source of our altruism and of our love.

Soul is the seat of our compassion and yearning to care.

Soul is our unerring GPS.

We are in the universe.

Soul, the universe, is within us.



As per their own conditioning, our parents wanted us to become what they thought they, themselves, were – or were not.

Strong and independent.

Not necessarily physically strong, but strong-minded, determined ... resolute.

But, of course, they seldom respected marks of that stubborn determination when it went against their decisions.

Again, as Yudit CS, my Jewish/Israeli mentor of 10 years used to say about such perceived complications, '*Gam zu letova*' – This, too, ultimately, is for the better.



Now, we could redefine what being strong could mean.

Beyond the age-old cultural notion that strength is about manly muscles and not giving up or giving in, real, useful power is the strength we hold within our heart. Within our core.

It's the strength that makes us 'noble' inside and out. It's also the strength that opens us to signs from the universe, a.k.a. positive 'synchronicity', the manifestation of unforeseen possibilities.



Truth is, the driving force behind the process of calm and coherent pushback against the fabricated low end of our mindset amounts to a willingness to self-convert, to wake up in awareness, to find ourselves, as we make our way home.



Once we have achieved a few incremental successes, we feel so much better about conquering what's ahead.

We forgive our parents' training into responsibility.

We let those memories fade away.

They are no longer relevant to us.

We replace them by emotions, thoughts and responses that energise us from the inside-out.

Things that seemed big at one time, now feel much smaller.

They no longer create an overwhelm.



We understand that by choosing to stay calm and centred, we are taking the easier of two roads.

Bolstered by trust in our chosen higher entity, we follow our conviction that everything will be fine once we begin retraining ourselves into a different version of 'responsibility'.

We embrace our newfound resilience.

We are grateful to ourselves for having nurtured a heart-based strategy that keeps us steady on our path, as energy beings compressed into a human existence.



Six months into the Coronavirus pandemic, Covid-19 can be branded as a stealthy, uber sociopath.

In a myriad of different ways, the virus has impacted most aspects of our lives. It can also be branded the termite of viruses. By the time we realise it's present, it's too late.



A multitude of people are hurting; more women than men overall.

More people of colour than whites.

Yes, we're all in it together but not equally.

Interestingly, regardless of the nature of the setbacks or complications we always have to face throughout any decade of our life, we are never equal in the way we must show up and deal with them. Our emotional stance against all and any Covid-triggered complications or hardship is no exception.



In every country, in every city, in every suburb, in every street, regardless of our postcode and regardless of what's enshrined in the 1948 Declaration of Human Rights, we are never truly equal.

The thing is, matters of justice aside, we can't ever be more equal than we are identical to each other.

Our appearance as much as our resilience are key elements of the highly personalised karmic blueprint that is ours to exploit.

Stamped 'Ready For Construction', that blueprint was ready for us well before our birth in this lifetime.

Since then, we have consolidated some of its features while breaking down others. We have reshaped some and re-purposed others, too.



Beyond the ongoing fear of contamination and infection, turmoil is brewing and escalating on several fronts.

Not only do we struggle as we always have with everyday stressors and our share of

unanticipated complications but, now, we are also concerned by the multiple implications of crashed economies that will ripple out for decades.

Top that with fragmented politics, the rise of hyper-nationalist and radicalised leaders and the possibility that 'we' might be sleepwalking towards a US-China war.

Australia, where I live, would be geographically and economically caught in the middle, as would, of course, several other countries, large and small.

Indeed, most nations would be affected, eventually, if these two Super Powers went to war.



Demoralising and soul-crushing is how one might refer to current times.

It's easy, natural almost, to sink into pessimism and a doomsday resignation.

Why bother? Why make any plans? we might ask ourselves.

Or, now, that theme parks are reopening, why not pass through the gates today, toss our face masks in the air in a gesture of wanton abandonment and shout 'Come what may!'?



Our lives are indeed sandwiched between the global pandemic and a worldwide outcry for social change.

Yes, we are living through difficult times.

And, yes, we still have to deal with what, by contrast, now seem ordinary complications that, perhaps we shouldn't mention, though they demand our attention, too, and are maxing us out.

For those lucky enough to be employed, more work-related demands arise, presenting many with a 'poisoned chalice.'

The endemic illnesses and diseases that have plagued our culture for so long are still occurring.



Amid social distancing regulations and having to stay at home for one reason or another, many dysfunctional relationships have become more glaringly unhinged and violent.

As an aside, puberty is often difficult to manage well. A disintegrating family makes it even worse.

That said, we need to practice reminding ourselves of reasons to be grateful.

There are lovely moments scattered throughout each day, should we care to spot them.

Life goes on, and we have the inner resilience to handle each thought coherently as it presents itself in the moment underfoot.



The thing is, as long as we live in fear of death and resent the loss of our acquired goods and comfort entitlements, even the most banal of negative incidents could send shockwaves of gloom and doom throughout our neural circuitry.

Every illness we might suffer, every incident we might have to deal with could trigger a fight/flight response.

Let's not begin to factor in news of a local earthquake, sinkhole, tsunami, cyclone or bridge collapse.

It's best not to think too often of the increased toxicity of the air as a forecast for a not too distant future or the likely eventuality of germ warfare, a cyber-attack or the next lone wolf or organised terror attack.

Our bodies' biological response to stress will go on being triggered, again and again, each time restricting a bit more the flow of prana, qi, the energy of space - our life force energy, by any other name.



Our options appear severely limited. That's until we regain control of our emotions, thoughts, actions, reactions and purposeful inaction.

In this lies the greatest exercise in self-work and teamwork ever executed on planet Earth since the beginning of time.

That's OK. We're up to the challenge. Like, what other options do we have, huh?

There are innumerable ways to support our selves, each other, young and old, even as we remain physically separate.

Yes, truly, in these unprecedented times, we, of the 'multitude' often referenced in biblical writings, are in it together – though differently.

we are not all safely tucked away in Noah's ark, waiting for the flood to subside.



If rage we must, then, as warriors for the greater good, we begin by talking loudly and forcefully, first to ourselves.

Then, we ground our lives in healthy, revolutionary dynamics.

Then, we actively accept that healthy relationships with those who are nearest and furthest from us begin with understanding that, because we don't all have the same abilities or the same knowledge, we need one another.

As it is true that our journey itself is the destination, each moment is a pivot or a link to the next one.



Each moment underfoot allows us to approach the many 'destinations' waiting to be reached throughout any given day, with clarity and heart-based coherence.

There is no other healthy way to move forward.

Static thoughts and random inaction are killers.



Remember, each moment underfoot is 'only' the latest destination reached on the often-long journey of every day – day in-day out.

All that the universe asks of us is that we do our best.

And, yes, of course, 'our best' is always variable.

Beyond our best intentions, 'our best' is commensurate to our mood at any given moment. It is also equal to our overall energy and enthusiasm.

Both are controlled by the impact of stress on our body's systems.



So, again, when amid any unpleasant situation or setback, the first thing we could do on the way to our daily personal best is to ask ourselves, 'From within the constraints of this crazy moment, how can I make it better?'



Bottom line: for those of us longing for an evolved heart-mind coherence strengthened by resilience in the face of hardship, adhering to the Kiss principle should be the first line of defence.

It's literally 'fool'-proof.

When we choose to 'keep it simple, stupid', we tap into the purest core values shared by all world religions and spiritual traditions.



One day, in an era circa 10CE, a prospective convert came to Hillel the Elder, a revered scholar who lived in Jerusalem.

As my mentor, Yudit CS explained, the man wanted the sage to explain to him the Jewish Torah a.k.a. the Bible in a matter of minutes, while he stood on one foot.

Hillel gave the man the simplest and the best answer possible. "What is hateful to you," he explained, "do not do to your fellow. This is the whole Torah; the rest is the explanation; go and learn."

Similarly, should one ask about Christian beliefs, a short but robust answer could point them to the Ten Commandments. The rest is the result of subjective interpretation.



That said, when one finally decides to 'come of age', to love is to empathise with another's sorrow just as accept and embrace our own.

As much as we rejoice at another's 'lucky break', we are grateful for our own, great or small.



To love is to show up. It's to engage from our heart-space without expecting anything in return.

Or, as Kahlil Gibran wrote, *'When you are joyous, look deep into your heart and you shall find it is only that which has given you sorrow that is giving you joy.*

When you are sorrowful look again in your heart, and you shall see that in truth you are weeping for that which has been your delight.'



Heads up: there is good work to be done by one and all. For ourselves and for others. Inside and out. The thing is, here, there, and everywhere, homelife as well as our heart-responsibility to those karmically attributed to us as partners, parents, siblings and relatives, must remain at the centre of our adventures into awakening.

Here.

Now.

Always, for the 'come of age' Warriors that we are.



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