

**Meditation**

As we began last week, perhaps you'd like to pick and hand and make a *tightly clenched fist*...and now see if you can soften everywhere except your clenched fist... as you settle, cup your closed fist with your other other hand, and let them rest together on your lap...let's see how that closed, clenched fist responds to being held in the quiet of our time of shared meditation...

***LOVING KINDNESS meditation between now and the election, a 100 day challenge. Prayer doesn't change outcomes, it changes us...***

**May I be filled with loving kindness.**

**May I be free from suffering.**

**May I be well.**

**May I be at peace. May I be joyful.**

Someone or "someones" dear to you:

**May you be filled with loving kindness.**

**May you be free from suffering.**

**May you be well.**

**May you be at peace. May you be joyful.**

**May you across the sea and over the mountains  
be filled with loving kindness.**

**May you across the sea and over the mountains be free from suffering.**

**May you across the sea and over the mountains be well.**

**May you across the sea and over the mountains be at peace.**

**May you across the sea and over the mountains be joyful.**

Someone or "someones" you find challenging:

**May you be filled with loving kindness.**

**May you be free from suffering.**

**May you be well.**

**May you be at peace. May you be joyful.**

**May all beings be filled with loving kindness.**

**May all beings be held in loving kindness.**

**May all beings be free from suffering.**

**May all beings be well.**

**May all beings be at peace. May all beings be joyful.**

### **Message**

Somehow, between last Sunday morning, and Monday morning the next day, I forgot my own invitation to a daily practice of the Loving Kindness meditation. But on Tuesday, when one of my beloveds called me, weighted by feelings of helplessness, hopelessness and despair, Spirit nudged me and in our separate homes, yet hearts centering in together, we unfurled into the words and silences of this beautiful prayer. Every day since, this practice has been an anchor.

*“Tell me about despair, yours, and I will tell you mine”* goes the line from the much loved poem ***Wild Geese***, by Mary Oliver. My dear one reaching out reminded me to reach inward, and to help her reach inward, to the voice of Love. It doesn't mean I won't forget here and there again, but that is the gift of being on The Way together, in community, our hearts opening into the loving kindness that is our calling.

Last week after my talk, a number of people mentioned the lines from John O'donohue about colluding with despair had really hit home. Here is that passage:

~John O'Donohue, in ***Bless This Space Between Us***

The way you look at things is not simply a private matter. Your outlook actually and concretely affects what goes on. When you give in to helplessness, you collude with despair and add to it. When you take back your power and choose to see the possibilities for healing and transformation, your creativity awakens and flows to become an active force of renewal and encouragement in the world. In this way, even in your own hidden life, you can become a powerful agent of transformation in a broken, darkened world. There is a huge force field that opens when intention focuses and directs itself toward transformation.

How is that passage in conversation with our VISION: *We envision a world transformed through the spiritual awakening of all.* And our MISSION: *We awaken to and embrace the Divine essence of all beings through prayer and service in our community and in the world.*

As we imagine the world across the sea, and over the mountains, and the world right here in our own families, our city and our country, how do we imagine our part in the transformation of the world of ego, of shame, of fear, greed and violence into a world where ALL BEINGS walk freely in beauty, in peace, loving kindness, wellness and joy? How are we each part of that change we long to see? Part of that transformation? How do we recognize the power we have to see possibilities for healing? To be sources of healing beyond our own comfort zones?

Howard Zinn writes:

*To be hopeful in bad times is not just foolishly romantic. It is based on the fact that human history is a history not only of cruelty, but also of **compassion, sacrifice, courage, kindness.** What we choose to emphasize in this complex history will determine our lives. If we see only the worst, it destroys our capacity to do something. If we remember those times and places— and there are so many— where people have behaved magnificently, this gives us the energy to act and at least the possibility of sending this spinning top of a world in a different direction.*

*And if we do act, in however small a way, we don't have to wait for some grand utopian future. **The future is an infinite succession of presents, and to live now as we think human beings should live, in defiance of all that is bad around us, is itself a marvelous victory.***

“*And if we do act, in however small a way...*” Spiritual teachers from Jesus to Buddha, from Emilie Cadie to Andrew Harvey remind us of the foundational necessity to pause, to cease acting, as well; in stillness to pray, to discern, to become an open channel for the wisdom and power of the Holy One to move clearly in us.

Cadie writes in *Lessons in Truth* (p.14):

26. When you withdraw from the world for meditation, let it not be to think of yourself or your failures, but invariably to get all your thoughts centered on God and on your relation to the Creator and Upholder of the universe. Let all the little annoying (*and I would add BIG, despair inducing!*) cares and anxieties go for a while, and by effort, if need be, turn your thoughts away from them ...

30. "We talk to God--that is prayer; God talks to us--that is inspiration." We go apart to get still, so that new life, new inspiration, new power of thought, new supply from the fountainhead may flow in; and then we come forth to shed it on those around us, that they, too, may be lifted up.

"Be the Change you want to see in the world" has become a powerful catch phrase urging us to take wise action. It is attributed to Gandhi. Here's what he actually said:

"We but mirror the world. All the tendencies present in the outer world are to be found in the world of our body. If we could change ourselves, the tendencies in the world would also change. As [I change my] own nature, so does the attitude of the world change towards [me]. This is the divine mystery supreme. A wonderful thing it is and the source of our happiness. We need not wait to see what others do." ~

Mahatma Gandhi

*"If we could change ourselves, the tendencies in the world would also change."*

*"The way you look at things is not simply a private matter. Your outlook actually and concretely affects what goes on."*

*"The future is an infinite succession of [present moments], and to live now as we think human beings should live, in defiance of all that is bad around us, is itself a marvelous victory."*

*"What we choose to emphasize in this complex history will determine our lives."*

If we want more peace in the world, are we making peace in our circles of close relationships? Are we adding our voices to those calling for justice or is our silence adding volume to those oppressing "others"?

If we want a world where ALL BEINGS are held in loving kindness, are we weeding out our own unloving, unkind thoughts and actions?

*"We talk to God--that is prayer; God talks to us--that is inspiration."*

Here is one more bit of inspiration, a poem from John Roedel.

when the world  
goes mad  
be wildly kind  
to everyone  
everyone  
everyone  
~ you can't control  
much  
but you control how  
you treat others  
in these breaking news  
heartbreaking times  
when nothing feels  
certain  
let your raw kindness  
be a certainty  
allow your compassion  
to become a North Star  
stamped up in  
the sky for  
others to follow  
back home

~ John Roedel

How is the voice of the Holy One getting through to you, inspiring you to pause, to pray, to act?

**May all beings be filled with loving kindness, held in loving kindness. May all beings live in peace, with ease and joy, free from suffering. And let it begin with me. Amen.**