

## Wednesday Night Study Series – “The Power of Now”

**Prayer of Surrender:** Spirit of Truth, CARRY ME where you will; BRING TO ME what You will; TAKE FROM ME what You will; AWAKEN IN ME what You will. The Christ MAN is around me. The Christ MIND is in me. The Christ POWER flows through me. And, the Christ MYSTERY exists as me. I believe it. I perceive it. And, now I receive it! I am surrendered. Amen. And, so it is!

### The Power to Choose

*What about all those people who, it seems, actually want to suffer? I have a friend whose partner is physically abusive toward her, and her previous relationship was of a similar kind. Why does she choose such men, and why is she refusing to get out of that situation now? Why do so many people actually choose pain?*

I know that the word *choose* is a favorite New Age term, but it isn't entirely accurate in this context. It is misleading to say that somebody “chose” a dysfunctional relationship or any other negative situation in his or her life. Choice implies consciousness – a high degree of consciousness. Without it, you have no choice. Choice begins the moment you disidentify from the mind and its conditioned patterns, the moment you become present. Until you reach that point, you are unconscious, spiritually speaking. This means that you are compelled to think, feel, and act in certain ways according to the conditioning of your mind. That is why Jesus said: “Forgive them, for they know not what they do.” This is not related to intelligence in the conventional sense of the word. I have met many highly intelligent and educated people who were also completely unconscious, which is to say completely identified with their mind. In fact, if mental development and increased knowledge are not counterbalanced by a corresponding growth in consciousness, the potential for unhappiness and disaster is very great.

Your friend is stuck in a relationship with an abusive partner, and not for the first time. Why? No choice. The mind, conditioned as it is by the past, always seeks to re-create what it knows and is familiar with. Even if it is painful, at least it is familiar. The mind always adheres to the known. The unknown is dangerous to the mind because the mind has no control over it. That's why the mind dislikes and ignores the present moment. Present-moment awareness creates a gap not only in the stream of mind but also in the past-future continuum. Nothing truly new and creative can come into this world except through that gap, that clear space of infinite possibility.

So your friend, being identified with her mind, may be re-creating a pattern learned in the past in which intimacy and abuse are inseparably linked. Alternatively, she may be acting out a mind pattern learned in early childhood according to which she is unworthy and deserves to be punished. It is possible, too, that she lives a large part of her life through the pain-body, which always seeks more pain on which to feed. Her partner has his own unconscious patterns, which complement hers. Of course her situation is self-created, but who or what is the self that is doing

the creating? A mental-emotional pattern from the past, no more. If you tell her that she has chosen her condition or situation, you are reinforcing her state of mind identification. But is her mind pattern who she is? Is it her self? Is her true identity derived from the past? Show your friend how to be the observing presence behind her thoughts and her emotions. Tell her about the pain-body and how to free herself from it. Teach her the art of inner-body awareness. Demonstrate to her the meaning of presence. As soon as she is able to access the power of the Now, and thereby break through her conditioned past, she will have a choice.

Nobody chooses dysfunction, conflict, and pain. Nobody chooses insanity. They happen because there is not enough presence in you to dissolve the past, not enough light to dispel the darkness. You are not fully here. You have not quite woken up yet. In the meantime, the conditioned mind is running your life.

Similarly, if you are one of the many people who have an issue with their parents, if you still harbor resentment about something they did or did not do, then you still believe that they had a choice – that they could have acted differently. It always looks as if people had a choice, but that is an illusion. As long as your mind with its conditioned patterns runs your life, as long as you are your mind, what choice do you have? None. You are not even there. The mind-identified state is severely dysfunctional. It is a form of insanity. Almost everyone is suffering from this illness to varying degrees. The moment you realize this, there can be no more resentment. How can you resent someone's illness? The only appropriate response is compassion.

*What you say about choice also applies to forgiveness, I suppose. You need to be fully conscious and surrendered before you can forgive.*

“Forgiveness” is a term that has been in use for two thousand years, but most people have a very limited view of what it means. You cannot truly forgive yourself or others as long as you derive your sense of self from the past. Only through accessing the power of the Now, which is your own power, can there be true forgiveness. This renders the past powerless, and you realize deeply that nothing you ever did or that was ever done to you could touch even in the slightest the radiant essence of who you are. The whole concept of forgiveness then becomes unnecessary.

*And how do I get to that point of realization?*

When you surrender to what is, and so become fully present, the past ceases to have any power. You do not need it anymore. Presence is the key. The Now is the key.

*How will I know when I have surrendered?*

When you no longer need to ask the question.

**Affirmation:** I am not my thoughts. I am not the thinker of my thoughts. I am the observer witnessing the thinker thinking the thoughts. Tonight, I am not the voice in my head or any limitation of an inherited collective cultural conditioning, religious indoctrination or even my past experiences. This week, I will mind my mind, free my mind, be free of my mind and surrender to practice “no mind.”