



## **WHY CAN'T I HEAL?**

**By Ross Bishop**

No one likes emotional pain, and yet we all have it. Some of us carry around a lot of it. We all want to heal; yet doing that seems almost beyond our reach. We try and try, and sometimes it doesn't seem as though we are accomplishing very much. We look for answers in the stars, get advice from psychics, do the I-Ching and consult all manner of oracles. We look to God for help and feel frustrated and abandoned when our pain and problems continue. Interestingly, we persistently avoid doing the one thing that would make a real difference.

What is it that keeps you from being at peace? What stifles your passion and keeps you from being the person you could be? Yes, life can be unfair and your partner can be a jerk, but those aren't the things that really hold you back, are they?

When push comes to shove, you get scared. You've been hurt and you're afraid to be hurt again. You shut down, close off, and pull back from life. This isn't about sexual or racial discrimination or being smart enough or the hundred other things you blame your failures on. These things can be factors, of course, but they are not causal. The bottom line is that you are afraid that when you are tested, you won't measure up. That's how it has felt in the past. In your past lives, your ego held you away from the God-space as it does today, and you felt then as you do now, isolated and unlovable. The bleed-through of those experiences has a significant effect on your present attitudes.

I'm not here to give you another pep talk about overcoming your fear or self-doubts. That stuff doesn't really work anyway. What I want to ask you to look at is the conflict between the deeper truth that you know – that you really are a beautiful, wonderful, special person, and the other beliefs that see you as unworthy, incompetent and defective.

You come to the table sincerely wanting to heal your pain, while at the same time, another part of you holds significant negative beliefs about you. It is powerful opposition, and it is frustrating. This conflict is the reason that life and healing are so difficult. You want peace, you want to heal, and this other part of you is convinced that to pursue that avenue will only expose

you to the truth and confirm the awful things it believes. Your other "half" is not being contrary, it sincerely believes that it must keep you safe by protecting you from certain failure and resulting humiliation. As a result, it sabotages what you desire. I like Bartholomew's line, "If you had a friend who said the kind of things you say to yourself, you'd get another friend!"

The dichotomy within us exists because we have free will. Having free will does not mean that you control your life. It means that you do get to decide how you will feel about your life. Having free will means that if you are going to change your beliefs, you must decide. No one else can do it for you. Essentially what happens is, you look to God and plead, "Please help me heal." And, God looks down and says, "How? You won't let me in!"

As long as you hold beliefs that you are unlovable and unworthy, you separate from your natural God-self and you're not going to get very far, in your healing. And, God cannot do much about it (at least not directly – more about this later) because to do so would violate free will. So yes, it's time for you to take responsibility for all those awful things you say about yourself. It is time that you stop.

Unfortunately, we humans can be pretty stubborn. This is not a small matter. Many people force themselves to endure extraordinary pain and suffering before they give up their ego-based condemning beliefs and surrender to The Creator's love. When people come to me for healing, it is because they are desperate, beaten down and frustrated. If they felt that their old way of doing things would still work, they wouldn't be asking for my help. Sometimes people come wanting a miracle so that they can avoid their pain and not have to change, but it doesn't work that way. Saving them would be about the worst thing I could do for them. That's why God doesn't do it either.

We see this pattern very clearly with alcohol and drug addiction. Addicts destroy their lives and create a lot of pain for themselves and the people around them. Hopefully at some point they realize that something is very wrong. They (usually with the help of loved ones and friends) put themselves into a rehab program, and then they very frequently relapse. Why? Because they have stopped using, but they have not dealt with the deeper pain that caused them to abuse in the first place. It is only (in most cases) the second or third collapse that makes them realize that they must reach much deeper if they are going to deal with the pain that is driving them. Then real healing can take place.

Unfortunately, some of our Western social values really get in the way of people's healing processes. One of the great foundations of Western civilization has been our attitude toward overcoming obstacles, no matter how difficult. Our Roman ancestors had a motto: *carpe diem*, which translates to "seize the day." It expresses our attitude toward taking control of life. All you need do is reach out, seize life by the throat, and bend it to your will. It's only a matter of desire and determination. We seek to conquer nature so that we can control our fate. We have tamed rivers, conquered diseases and walked on the moon. We have built great cities in hostile

deserts and harnessed the vast power of nuclear energy. We can do almost anything we choose.

And, if it is not happening, either we are not doing it right, we're not trying hard enough or something else is wrong with us. Right? Well, not exactly. That's the funny thing about life. Whenever you act in contravention to the Universal, something always (eventually) seeps through the cracks to upset the furniture. Feudalism didn't work, slavery didn't work, monarchy didn't work, religion didn't work, colonialism didn't work, fascism didn't work and materialistic capitalism is next.

We have created a culture that in some very important ways runs almost completely counter to the Universal. As an example, "success" in the West means checking your humanity at the door. Al Davis crystallized this philosophy with his slogan "Win baby, win" for his Oakland Raider football team. Unspoken in his words are, "at any cost." The great football deity, Vince Lombardi preached, "Winning isn't everything. It's the only thing." We have always known that the captains of industry could be heartless and that politicians were corrupt. They have bought into another belief system built on false power, manipulation and a "win at any cost" mentality. This is because what we call power is not true power. It is intimidation and manipulation, and these qualities are incompatible with the truth. These people worship "false gods" as it were, as compensation for the truth that they have forsaken.

The shadow side of this version of achievement is that when people "fail," the emotional burden placed upon them can be very heavy. If you don't climb to the top of the heap, or if you don't want that kind of success, you are just not as good as the other guys. We build shame and feelings of inadequacy into the process as negative motivators. We came to earth to learn to listen to our hearts – the very thing that Western scientific society strives so very hard to avoid. People of real power – the Lincoln's, Gandhi's, Martin Luther King's and Mother Theresa's of the world, achieved real success by touching the fundamental humanity in people's hearts.

People oppressed by social structures will always create conflict with them. What the establishment calls terrorism, repressed people see as patriotic heroism. But, whatever you call it, it keeps tripping up and undermining the establishment. "Those who you keep down will eventually bring you down."

Regardless of what you would like to have happen, the person that you see in the mirror does not really control your life. Your soul does. You are not in control of that process. A much larger force, we could call it "love of self," is shaping and guiding the events of your life. You may want to be the captain of your ship, but the fundamental trajectory of your life is controlled by a process far greater than your worldly desires. What is shaping and controlling your life is the degree to which you love yourself, or your relationship with God (which are the same thing). And that is a very difficult concept for some Western minds to accept. You have influence on that path, which I will talk about later, but you do not determine it. And, as loving and wonderful as the place of self-love can be, we fear it.

I want to tell you about one of my favorite cartoons. The setting is the foyer of a lecture hall with doors opening to 2 different lectures. At the first door, there is a large line of people waiting expectantly with pens and notebooks in hand. There is no one at the second door. The sign over the first lecture hall reads, "Lecture about God." The sign over the [empty] second door, simply reads, "God."

We can chuckle at the cartoon, but it illustrates the fundamental dilemma that we all face in reconnecting with our God-consciousness. It's easy to read books and learn to meditate and go to workshops about spiritual growth, but actually facing God is a significantly different matter. It forces us out of the protection of our intellect into what feels like the less secure realm of feelings and emotions. Unfortunately, this is what life on earth is ultimately about. A matter at which, by the way, we have done rather poorly.

It's pretty incredible if you think about it: if you were to add up the hours spent and the energy expended over these thousands of years in prayer, doing ceremony, going to church and reading holy writings like the Bible, Buddha's Sutras or the Bhagavad-Gita, etc., all over the world, by a hundred generations, the total expenditure of human time and energy has been simply astronomical. All the effort that has been expended toward spiritual development - to reach enlightenment, or personal peace, or God awareness, or whatever you want to call it, could have built thousands of great cities, but what have we gotten for it?

It wasn't a waste of time. There have been notable and laudable achievements. Feudalism is gone, slavery is uncommon, and many people around the planet live in relative freedom today. But, ethnic and racial conflict and strife are prevalent. We still let people starve and die from easily preventable diseases. Half the world's population doesn't have clean drinking water, decent sanitation, etc., etc. So we have a long way to go in terms of learning to love each other, and to that end, I think one has to question whether we've been really getting our time and money's worth from our spiritual endeavors.

Fundamentalists will tell us that we have been impeded toward enlightenment because of our personal weaknesses and sinful behavior, but I do not think that is the case. That is a setup to create guilt and shame and to make people dependent upon fundamentalist religion for salvation. It's like a Middle Eastern terrorist wrapping him or herself in the cloak of Islam. No matter what you wrap it in, a dead fish still smells.

Certainly, we have a ways to go in our development, and lord knows, we make our share of mistakes, but the vast majority of people all around the planet are good, well-meaning, caring, loving, decent souls. It has always been that way, and yet real connection with our God-selves eludes us. When you find something massively "out of kilter" in human society, you need to look for deeper and more significant explanations, and that is certainly true in this case.

The simple answer is that the game of life has been rigged. For thousands of years during The Age of Karma, our chances of making a really meaningful God-connection have been virtually nil. Profound spiritual development has been designed out of the process, while the desire for enlightenment has not. The resulting inevitable frustration was intended. Christ came to us with a message of love and compassion, knowing full well that we would not be able to go there. He lovingly set us up.

There are two basic reasons for this. Imagine humankind as a giant spring. The more you wind it up, the more power it has to do work. Over thousands of years of failure in making a meaningful God connection, we have built up a powerful inner frustration. We have looked again and again for salvation, and He hasn't been there (so we thought). We have internalized the resulting feelings of abandonment as personal unworthiness.

These feelings and our eons-old frustration with God, hold a considerable potential energy. They are an enormous spring; all wound up and ready to erupt. That frustration will provide the energy for a monumental and unprecedented transformation of human consciousness.

Around the world, humankind's giant spring is becoming explosively loaded. As I work with groups, I ask people about their relationship with God. I also ask them how worthy they feel. The results are surprising. What are the odds that you could take room after room of hundreds and hundreds of people and have almost every person tell you that they felt unworthy? I have had that experience repeated many, many times. This is the substantial anomaly in the human experience that cries for deeper explanation.

I said that there were two reasons for the separation from the God experience. The first involves the creation of potential energy as we have discussed. The second has to do with ownership.

How different does it feel for you to work for and earn something than to have it handed to you? Certainly, gifts are nice, but when you have paid with something through your hard work and effort, it takes on a much greater significance. This is the payoff for having free will. When you do something yourself, you must confront the various fears that the task presents. The power is in learning that your fears are largely unfounded and you are not the unworthy person you feel you are. This is the true gift of both the arts and athletics in school programs.

To strengthen that concept even further, it is when you have lost something that you really come to appreciate it. And, the further out you go, the greater the appreciation you feel for what you have had. Read the accounts of how near-death experiences massively change people's appreciation for the life they have almost lost.

So what does all this have to do with God? Well, how separated do you feel from the God-consciousness right now? How alone and unloved and unlovable do you feel at your core? How deeply do the feelings of unworthiness cut into your gut? When you come back to the God-space, and this time by choice, your feelings of separation will foster an appreciation of

that space simply not possible by any other means. And, the pain that you have experienced along the way will energize your process. And, from where you are probably sitting at the moment, the process can seem unfair, arbitrary, and perhaps even cruel. I assure you that it is not. It is our resistance to opening our hearts that causes us pain and makes the process difficult.

What you need in order to grow and develop has been determined, and you are going to experience what you need, regardless of how you feel about it. And, because much of what you need to learn puts you up against your fears and anxieties, I can assure you that you are not going to like it.

The good news is that the rules are changing and that you are going to come home. We have entered an age with somewhat different rules from those of the past. This age, which will be known as The Age of Awakening, will be a 50-year period of unprecedented transformation in human consciousness.

So where does that leave you? Probably confused, frustrated, and maybe a little bit scared. The bleed-through of your past life experiences during The Age of Karma has probably left a pretty sour taste when it comes to your relationship with God. It strongly influences your present-day beliefs and attitudes.

So, this grand process is going to affect all of humanity and you will be swept up in it. Are you powerless to affect the outcome? The answer is yes and no. You are not going to be able to stand in front of the parade with a flag and affect the course of the great ship of life. Humankind is on its path, and the collective agendas of 6.2 billion other people will determine where we go.

Now, does that mean that you should just sit on the couch, turn on Oprah, and wait for enlightenment? No. Life does not work that way. There is a very important related issue, which you do control. You may not be able to direct your life, but you do get to decide how you will respond to what happens. I will repeat: the quality of your life experience is largely determined not by what happens, but by how you respond to it. Whether you look at life from an individual or a societal perspective, there is only one process occurring. You are being asked to learn to love. To love others for certain, but most importantly, to learn to love yourself. The more you do that, the easier life becomes. Life does not change; we change our relationship to it.

Here's the secret: as you become more loving and compassionate, you do affect what The Universe brings to you because it "backs off" as you move to compassion. The Universe is here to teach you to love, and as you get the lessons and start living more in harmony with life, you won't need as much "training."

The goal is to learn to live in harmony with the Universal Principle to LOVE EVERYTHING. Good, bad, scary, sweet, disruptive, or harmonious, your goal is to learn to love the process. You don't have to like what is happening, but

if you work at it, you can come to see and appreciate the powerful opportunity for change contained in even the most difficult and trying of circumstances.

So, that's the goal. In concept, loving yourself is simple, but as you know, doing it can be difficult. And, that "difficulty" encompasses the challenge laid before you in completing what you came here to do. Most people are able to love to a point. Deciding that they deserve to be loved and unconditionally opening their hearts presents significant difficulty. I have written about learning to love yourself in several of these articles and the subject is addressed at length in my new book *Truth*.

Ok, so what do you do? Even if you accept that everything I have said so far is right, you are still stuck with the person you see in the mirror every morning. That person gets scared, angry, judgmental, and occasionally downright petty. What can you do to help that person to heal?

Start by practicing loving other people. Make it a conscious effort, 24 hours a day. Practice loving strangers, like the guy in the other car, the person ahead of you in line or the clerk at the store. Note that I said love, not like. You may disagree with another person's choices, but you can still love them for who they are. This can be easier with strangers because they are safer. After all, you don't know them and they don't know you. Remember, this is about changing what goes on inside you.

When you feel as though you have begun to do pretty well with the people you do not know, then move on to the people you do know who you do not have major issues with. Practice opening your heart to them and work to keep it open. You won't always like what they do, but love who they are.

Then when you are ready, begin to work with learning to love the people who push your buttons, who you have issues with, who aggravate you or that you simply dislike. In order to do that, it helps to separate behavior from issues.

If you were to see someone walking naked down the street, for example, you might have any number of reactions ranging from curiosity to amusement. You might not agree with what they were doing, but you would be largely uninvolved in the occurrence. If you told a friend about the incident, it would be from a place of curiosity or perhaps humor, maybe even shock or surprise. You would not be emotionally involved in what had happened.

If on the other hand, you had issues about your own sexuality, the naked person's behavior might cause any number of more intense reactions. Seeing their uninhibited sexuality might drive you to become incensed and berate them or even throw stones. If you told someone about what had happened, it might be with moral indignation. Emotionally you would have become very involved in the naked person's behavior, and that is the difference. This is where we often get into trouble in relationships. We condemn the other person for their "nakedness," while failing or refusing to recognize that our

emotional involvement is far deeper than that of the casual, uninvolved observer.

Once you have begun to recognize your own involvement in the creation of an issue, then try to look past the issue to see, to truly see, the other person. Nine times out of ten, you will find a scared, fearful, isolated, hurt person on the other side of this issue. If you can grasp that, you can better respond to what is really going on between you instead of the stuff you usually squabble over. The other person will probably still be difficult to deal with; so don't set yourself up to get run over. But, this is not about them. You will feel better about yourself for dealing with the situation this way.

In order to move toward your own healing you must learn to love everything. Love them for their willingness to participate – even in a “negative” way – toward making you aware of your resistance to loving unconditionally. Also, if you wish, thank them for helping with the growth and development of our species.

And, if you cannot do any of that, then fake it. That's right, cheat. If you do this earnestly, even though you do not believe it, you will find that you naturally begin to migrate to a better space. So, even if you fake it, you'll actually begin to feel better, and that will reinforce doing it even more. If you can't fake it, you will want to look more deeply into the issue you are confronting. Do the shamanic journey process to identify the fear that is being triggered and work with the old fear and pain that you are carrying. This is a place where good professional help can be beneficial.

Then after all that, go into the bathroom, look into the mirror and start to work on loving yourself.