

Living with Presence

by Adrian Mitchell

We have talked about Presence before. We know that presence is about being present. To do this we must “go beyond the mind” and so operate from a space of stillness and silence, where the busyness and the clutter of the mind are left in the background. It helps us to use our life skills far more effectively in our daily activities as our mind is infused with this presence of peace, clarity and intuition and is fine tuned in both its focus and its functional capacity. As a result we are able to create better experiences for ourselves.

When we talk about Presence and an ability to be present as mentioned above we are talking about “going beyond the mind”. This brings with it a dilemma. What is “beyond the mind”? How do we know that anything exists beyond the mind? Well, from previous articles we know that we have an “awareness” and this part of us is observing what we are doing all the time. Not just what we are doing externally, but also what we are doing internally. It is watching us thinking, feeling and sensing. It is watching us struggling with issues and dancing with joy. It is watching our reactions, our judgements, our expectations and our fears. It watches us as we talk, as we walk, as we work, as we play, as we listen, and as we engage with life in the many different ways we do this. If you haven’t already become aware of this aspect of you, then start looking for it now. It won’t be long before you notice its presence within you. It will be sitting peacefully within you watching silently without judgement. There is no judgement, no critical analysis, no praise giving and no forgiveness. There is none, because these are functions of the Mind. All of this is done in peace and stillness with Love; that is love, the energy, not love, the emotion. It is done with this, because it is this. This Love energy is the energy that all life is created from. It is the essence of Life. It is why we all crave love in some shape or form. We want to be that which we are. We want our true self to be expressed, to be experienced. This energy of Life is what powers each one of us. It is what gives us life. But what do we call it? What is its name? We know, once we have experienced it that it is not the Mind, as it observes it and we experience it as being “beyond the mind”.

Presence centred living is a holistic approach which helps us to create the kind of life we want for ourselves on an ongoing basis. As it is holistic it is based on the Body-Mind-Spirit equation representing wholeness or the complete person. This is an already accepted “energetic” concept within our general awareness. The focus has mostly been on the Body-Mind part of the equation with the third part, Spirit, generally left in the hands of the religious and religions. This is understandable as many generations have accessed their understanding of God and of the part of themselves that was beyond Body and Mind through their religious beliefs, practices and teachers. However, the Spirit part of the equation usually got lost in the greater God concept inherent in all religions and as a result it also became largely redundant and powerless to us. When the need arose to go beyond the Body and Mind people defaulted to God or to their perceived direct link with God, be it Jesus, Buddha, or other entities such as angels and saints or other deceased holy people. Over time people assumed that going beyond their Body and Mind for help, meant going “outside” of themselves, thus creating a division between Man and God and creating a dependency of Man onto God. This dependency is disempowering enough in

its own right without the added roles of those humans who were and are perceived to be God's representatives on Earth. The religious leaders and their representatives (priests etc) used their positions within communities to help people with their spiritual affairs and sometimes with their emotional and psychological affairs as well. They were and are very much needed and appreciated for how they helped and help people. In fact many people would have been "lost" without them. The problem is that at the same time, they could have been also "lost" because of them. Not because they were or are doing wrong, but because of the dependency that this has created within people. If you use a crutch for too long, you develop a limp and then you always need the crutch. It is the same problem with God. People have prayed to God to help them, to give them what they need and want. But as they do this, they are giving away their power because they believe that God is somehow separate to them, above them, greater than them and can give them things that they can't give themselves. This sets up a major dependency energy which is then carried through and played out in other relationships (if it wasn't already there).

Taking the easy way out

The part of us that is supposed to be leading the way has been cast aside, suppressed, gagged, or simply missed as a result of our looking to the church and God to lead the way for us. Why, after all, would we tire ourselves out paddling our own little boat when we could jump on the nearest God ship and let the captain and the crew look after us for the journey! When we encounter problems, we can get the crew to help us with them. We feel safe in the knowledge that others on the ship also have problems and are being helped. We are all in the same boat together. But we don't have to worry about it because the captain, the officers and the crew know what they are doing.

False Gods

We as a society have created other false gods also. We are currently experiencing the information and technology age which has powerful representatives such as TV, video games, the internet and network websites such as Facebook and Twitter. We are in danger of becoming subservient to these as well. As we do this we forget about our unique journeys and our unique guiding lights within. By becoming subservient to something outside of ourselves we endanger what we came here to do in the first place.

Spirit is an energy not a religious concept

No two people's journeys are alike. Each is unique and needs to follow its own guiding light. That is why we each have our own guiding light. But for the most part we have forgotten this. This guiding light is our Spirit. It is the part of us that created and breathes life into, the Body and the Mind. In fact it not just breathes life into them; it is also the Life that it breathes. We must remember that this Spirit is not a "religious" creation existing to carry out the Will of the religious God. It is an energetic creation existing within a vast and unlimited complex network of energies all forming a Universe of unthinkable proportions and unknowable purpose. You might ask where God is in all of this. The answer is, this is God! This Universe is God and every single living part of it is also God. The human mind cannot even begin to comprehend the complexities of the Universe, though that doesn't stop it from trying! But the Spirit can. The human mind is set up to understand life from the human perspective. It was created by the Spirit for this

purpose. But the spirit, though experiencing human life, is not limited to human understanding and human perspective. It has access to all universal life because it represents all universal life.

Presence

This is the part of us that we use very little of. Yet it is the part of us that is our life giver and that carries all our answers to life's questions. When we do tune into the frequency of our Spirit, we experience Presence. This happens when we manage to free ourselves from our mind. In our state of presence we are able to manifest and express our essence, which is to say our Spirit, that which we are, in the physical world. This is the energy of interconnectedness, oneness and love. There is a soft gentleness to this energy. There is an amazing power and strength to this energy. There is a sparkle to this energy. There is an incredible lightness, both in terms of weight and brightness, to this energy. It is free from mental qualities and activities such as analysis, judgement, expectations, assumptions, opinions, fears, stress and negative emotions. Is it any wonder it is light?!

We have this wonderful energy available to us at all times, and yet how little we use it! This is mainly because of our lack of awareness of it, lack of education about it and lack of role modelling of it by others, which are the three main ways we learn about ourselves and life. We have been living in a very dense energetic world, some of which is attributable to the physical nature of our world and some attributable to the mental nature of our world. What we are attempting to do here is to infuse our physical and mental natures with our spiritual nature and light them up, bringing real colour and life into them. This will in turn bring a finer quality and dimension to human life.

By bringing our presence into our everyday living, we free ourselves from most of the clutter and noise of the mind. It still goes on, but only in the background. In the foreground we have peace, clarity, stillness, joy and connection. Fear and lack are demoted to the back benches when presence takes over. They no longer have a grip on our lives. Sure they will have their say at different times, but these times will be uncommon. The more we live out of our presence, the more we will default to it even after a short stay in the mind.

Get out of the mind

Presence is always available to us but we have to get out of our minds to experience it. This is, as you all know, easier said than done! If we have lived in the mind all our lives and have assumed that this is life, then there is quite a journey of self awareness and self exploration awaiting us. The mind as we have seen previously can be either full of drama where we find ourselves in the middle of everything that is going on and have a perspective on none of it, or we could live out of the analysis department of the mind, getting involved only when we absolutely have to, watching everything going on from a safe distance, with an opinion on everything, but a perspective on nothing. Both kinds of experiences are addictive and hard to let go of, even if we know there must be a better way to live.

Pathways in the brain

We have formed pathways in the brain over many years of thinking the same way, doing the same things, and getting the same experiences. These pathways are like a road system formed within the mind where we travel on a daily basis to and from experiences.

Unfortunately our experiences are limited to, and therefore determined by, our internal road system. Over time we travel the same roads over and over again going to the same experiences and coming back wondering why life is like this, wishing to God it was different, but getting up the next morning and going back onto the same old roads again for another dose of life. It doesn't matter whether we have loads of money or very little, our experiences are very similar. They may look different on the outside, but inside is the same emptiness, loneliness and sense of frustration, despair and self loathing. This is no way to live our lives! A lot of people live in their minds, but the mind is not our home. The heart is our home. It is our bodily connection with the Spirit. This is where we can access all the joys of life. But we need to be living out of the heart rather than the mind first. It is worth noting here that our emotional reactions to things happening in our lives have nothing to do with the heart. They are very much mind based creations. Living from the heart however allows us to experience or process emotions without reacting from them.

Making changes

To help us get out of the mind and into the heart, we need to stop using these internal roads that bring us to experiences that are not serving us. We need to create new pathways in the brain. We can only do this by being consciously aware of what we are doing. This means identifying the experiences that are not serving us. In other words, if we are having negative experiences, we do not have to continue to be driven to these by some aspect of us that have taken the keys of our car and therefore taken control. Our experiences are created by our reactions and responses to activators and triggers from the outside. It is not necessarily the outside triggers that we need to get rid of. It certainly isn't where we start. However, if we change the internal reactions, responses and experiences, the external circumstances also changes. There will obviously be a time factor involved in this process but the sooner we start, the sooner things change.

Perpetrators and Victims

When we have identified the negative experiences, we then need to identify how we are creating them. This could be the hard part as our mind will have convinced us that it is not our fault. The evidence is clear. There is no doubt. It is always the other person's fault. Or it is the fault of the circumstances. Or it is the fault of the situation. Or it is the fault of the task. We are the victims, not the perpetrators. Our mind has us convinced. Except, our mind is pulling the wool over our eyes, because it is locked into being right and it will trigger negative emotions to back it up. However, no matter how convincing the evidence is, we are always the perpetrators. There is no exception. And it is very fortunate for us that we are always the perpetrators, because if we are creating it, we can change what we are creating to something better. If we are not creating it, we have no control over it. We are at the mercy of something outside of us. So, we are both the perpetrators and the victims as from the perspective of experience, there is only us. It is all happening internally.

Let go!

In order for us to take responsibility for our experience, we need to let go of the mental evidence that it is not our fault. It is there in the mind in whatever voice and tone that will convince us, "*it is not my fault...it is not my fault...it is not my fault*". Well, it is not your fault, because it is nobody's fault, but it is your responsibility. It is your experience. It is your responsibility. It is your life. No amount of mental gymnastics or game playing is going to change this.

Incidentally, the mind may take the opposite line to the above and convince you that it is your fault. It is always your fault. You are useless. You are no good. Nobody likes you. You deserve everything you get. This is not your Spirit talking. It is the voice of a very self destructive mindset which will continue to heap misery on you for as long as it gets away with it.

It is your presence and your spirit that allows you to see beyond the mental and emotional dramas. This is who you are. You are not your mind. You are infinitely greater than your mind. Do not let it control your life and create your life experiences. Many relationships can be destroyed if you allow your mind to take over.

Once we can let go of the offending mindset or more accurately, release ourselves from its vice grip, and this is the major step, we can then start on the process of changing the way we are reacting and responding to external triggers and activators to get a more positive experience. We need to ask ourselves what kind of an experience we want relative to whatever situation we are dealing with. Then we need to make choices on what the best responses would be to bring about that desired experience. As it is likely that these responses will have to happen more than once we need to be very watchful of ourselves to make sure we do not slip back into previous unhelpful responses. We need to make sure that we are operating from our presence as often as possible.

Resistance

Watch out for resistance working within you. It will take many forms, but it is the energy behind stress, anxiety, panic, conflict, the need to be right, and a sense of being lost in something, to mention but a few. Look behind these and you will see resistance.

Resistance is basically a fear of being out of control. It takes you out of the natural flow of life and now you are swimming against the tide and experiencing all sorts of negativity. You must get back into the flow. You will be able to do that by being present. Pull back from the mind and watch it doing its thing. You will see what it is up to. You will see where it is leading you to. You will not want to go there, even if your mind does.

Participate in Life

Observe yourself in how you are being and what you are doing. As you are doing this you are in your presence. But you need to infuse your mind with your presence. You can't continue to live in two separate worlds. We are not here on Earth simply to watch the mind in action. We are here on Earth to manifest our spiritual energy in the physical world. Manifestation will not take place by being a spectator. It will only take place by

being a participant. Seeing helps being but it can't replace it. Involve yourself in Life. Embrace Life. Do so with your presence, with your spirit.

Overlaying the past onto the future

Your mind constantly tries to overlay the past onto the future completely bypassing the present. It does this because it has power when it is doing this. It is in control of things. If the present is introduced to the mind, the mind becomes what it is, a servant of the spirit. This is of course only looking at it from the perspective of the mind. It sees the big boss coming in to take over things and it doesn't like it! It likes to be in charge. It is Ego after all! It likes to map our lives out for us and via the power of habits it tries to do this with the least amount of effort expended. Unfortunately it nearly always creates far more effort as a result in terms of the consequences it brings to us.

When some potential life experience is being triggered or activated, the mind immediately looks for the best match in terms of reactions and responses used to create a past similar life experience and pushes the best one forward for us to use. It will always find one and sometimes it will be fine. But a lot of time it isn't fine. It isn't appropriate. It isn't representative of us in this moment. But if we are not operating out of the present we will likely go with the mind's offering and then have a similar experience to one we had before, which is negative and doesn't serve us now. It will bring us drama and suffering. The mind will continue to recreate itself through us if allowed. We simply must not allow it. We must move our attention to beyond the mind and bring our presence into play. Our presence can then inform the mind what to do and it will do it. It is after all a creation of the spirit. But if it is not asked it will not do!

It is always the present

Do not be scarred by the past and frightened by the future. Let the past go and don't get attached to the future. The past was yesterday's present and the future is tomorrow's present. All that exists is the present. Live in it now!