

## **The Importance of Self**

### **by Adrian Mitchell**

It might sound obvious, but taking time out for your Self is absolutely essential. “Recharging the batteries” as it is often called is an opportunity to reconnect with the power and wisdom of your almighty Self. Not just your almighty Self, but the almighty Universe, the almighty Oneness, the almighty God, the almighty Creative Source. As soon as you tune in to your Self, you automatically tune in to the Universe. There is no “separateness” and it is here that you can realise it. There is in reality no “your self”, only your human experience of self. In this context, the term “self” equates to “life force” or the “energy of life”. We all carry the “life force” around with us because it is us.

### **Sandcastles**

Each one of us is this “life force” individualized. But even though we are life “individualized”, we are all one and the same. If you are on a beach being particularly creative and you make a lot of different types of sandcastles, boats, tunnels, bridges, waterways and roadways and you stand back and look at them, you will see all the individual shapes you have made. But they are not really castles or boats or tunnels etc., they are all one and the same...sand! Sure, they have been moulded and shaped to all look different, individual pieces of creativity and they certainly all look to be separate from each other, but in essence, they are neither separate nor individual. They are all one. They are all sand on the beach. The spirit or life force within activates the mind and the body to create, and individual shapes are formed. The shapes that are formed are reflections of the one that formed them. They hold within them the energy of their creator.

### **Mirrors**

The person who I see in the mirror; the person who I identify with, who I presume is me, is not me, but a reflection of me. The life force or spirit of life within is “me”. This person, known to me as “me” is filled with the energy of who I really am...the spirit of life shaping and experiencing itself through the form of human life.

When I look in the mirror who or what am I really seeing? It depends on where I am looking from. Am I looking from the spirit of life within or I am looking from a mental representation of who I think I am or of where my mind is currently focused? If I am looking from the spirit of life within then I will see a reflection of the spirit of life within. If I am looking from a mental representation of who I think I am then that is what I will see reflected back to me.

If I think I am fat, guess what I will see staring back at me? If I think I am skinny, guess what I will see staring back at me? If I think I am ugly, guess what I will see staring back at me? If I think I am gorgeous, guess what I will see staring back at me? If I think I am stupid, guess what I will see staring back at me? If I think I am intelligent, guess what I will see staring back at me?

If I am in a bad mood looking in the mirror, will I see a smiling face staring back at me? If I am in a joyful mood when looking in the mirror, will I see a sad face staring back at me? The mirror will simply reflect back what is looking at it without any judgement, without any game playing, without any distortion. The mirror will always reflect back to me the part of me that is looking at it. So, if I want to see something specific looking back at me, I need to be that specific thing looking at the mirror. I hold the key. I choose.

The mirror is not only the piece of glass in the room that reflects me back to me. It is also everyone and everything I encounter. I meet mirrors everywhere. No matter whom or what I encounter, I encounter me. There are millions, billions, trillions and even zillions of ways I can encounter me every day of my life.

### **Presence**

But if I engage with life through my mind, I can only ever encounter me. I can only meet me. It is me, my mind that will always be reflected back to me, my mind. However if I meet life with my presence, I fully experience life. When I engage with nature with my presence, I experience a deep connection and am infused with a sense of awe and wonderment. I could even initially engage with nature with my mind and through the ever presence and omnipresence of nature I can be “exalted” from my mental/emotional state to my presence and thus experience the “spirit of life”.

Looking at or encountering nature is like looking in the mirror, except it is infinitely more powerful and pure. When I encounter other people, they could be operating from their mind or from their presence like me. Unlike nature, people can present a distorted reflection of life, depending on where within they are operating from. For example, if I meet you and I happen to be in a “stubborn” frame of mind at the time then as long as I remain in that frame of mind, what do you think I will experience? I will experience some form of stubbornness, conflict and resistance during that encounter. I will likely think it is coming from you. Unless, that is, I can shift from that frame of mind, which is a choice that always exists, but unfortunately, I’m not always necessarily aware of! If I do shift from it, then I will have a different life experience.

What do you think you will experience? Who knows (well, you probably do!), but unless you were in your presence at the time you are likely to have reacted with your mind to my mind and created an experience out of that which would probably include some negativity towards me. So, the two of us probably walk away from our encounter with negative experiences of each other. You acted as a mirror for my life experience and I acted as a mirror for your life experience. However there was distortion in the mirror for you (coming from me) and probably distortion in the mirror for me (coming from you) as a result of neither of us being in our presence. The shame of this is that neither of us got a chance to properly experience the other. We simply experienced a mental aspect of ourselves as we were in reaction to each other. When I say, “got a chance”, I should say, “took the opportunity” because the opportunity was always there for both of us to shift from reacting out of a mental state to acting out of presence and therefore change the nature of the experience.

### **“Life is the dancer, you are the dance”**

Presence is like nature...it will always reflect the spirit of life in its purest form, because that is what it is. The more often I take the opportunity to be in my presence, the more often I see life as it is presenting itself to me. No mental or emotional lens is applied; it is just life reflecting back on itself. This is what the world of duality brings to us – the ability for life to experience itself. I get to experience life in its true form, through my self as long as I am present to life. This is why it is so important for me to look after myself. This is my way of experiencing self, or the spirit of life or the life force. As Eckhart Tolle says “life is the dancer, you are the dance”. I need to create a dance to allow life to dance its heart out! I need to create a dance that is flowing, so that life can express itself fully through me, through my self. I need to be watchful of my self. I particularly need to watch my mind in action as this is where I can get lost. My mind, powered by my habits, beliefs, thoughts and emotions and expressed outwardly through my reactions and responses, needs to be regularly infused with the spirit of life via my presence to bring purity of mind, clarity of mind and peace of mind into as many of my life experiences as possible.

### **Heart living**

My presence is brought into my life experiences through my heart. My heart is the gateway not just to the “spirit of life” flowing within me, but to the “spirit of life” flowing everywhere. This is how I connect with nature. This is how I connect with people. This is how I connect with myself. My connection to the “spirit of life” is hugely significant in how I live and experience my life. My heart brings me pure life. It brings me joy. It brings passion into my life. It allows me to feel alive or experience life living (“dancing”) through me. It allows me to love. It allows me to appreciate. It allows me to feel grateful.

What stops me from connecting to nature, to people and to myself is what goes on in my mind, or rather, what I allow to go on in my mind. My mind can shut life out! My mind can shut people out! My mind can even shut me out! Equally, if my mind is open, it can enhance my life. It can enhance my relationships. It can enhance my decision making. My mind is open when it is in connection with my heart. It is closed when it breaks off the connection. How does my mind break off the heart connection? It convinces itself it is separate from its surroundings, its environment, the situation, the other person or people. It convinces itself it is right, because once separate from everything else it has to fully power itself and it does this in the only way it knows how...self preservation. It must win...to survive. It is fighting against the “enemy”.

Where is “my self” when all of this is going on? A part of me is “caught up” in the mind and a part of me remains in tune with the “spirit of life”. The “spirit of life” will not force itself on the mind, even though it is infinitely more powerful. It will not attempt to change anything. It will not because it doesn’t need to. It doesn’t need to because it simply doesn’t “do” anything. It just is. The mind is charged with the task of being in tune with the spirit of life, rather than the other way around. The more my mind opens to my heart and allows the flow of life in, the more likely my mind will become part of the flow. The more often it shuts down, the further it moves from life. The further it moves

from real connections with others and the further it moves from a real connection with its creator.

If, over time, the habits formed in my mind, have heart disconnection, as distinct from, heart connection, as their signature, then it becomes increasingly difficult for me to experience real wholeness, real happiness and real fulfilment. The “spirit of life” is not affected by this in any shape or form, but my human life experience most certainly is.

The more I am living from my heart as distinct from my mind, the easier my life is...plain and simple! But not just the easier it is, the more joyful it is. The level of stress that I experience is probably in line with the level of disconnection from my heart. When I am able to “let go” of the way I am thinking about or looking at a situation, I free myself from the stress I was experiencing. Staying connected to my heart allows me to live in the present. It allows me to be grounded when all around me seems chaotic. The chaos will abate and I will still be here.

### **Looking after myself**

Looking after myself is critical if I want to experience a wholesome, joyful and fulfilling life. Taking time out from the busyness of everyday living allows the storms (good and bad) to die down. Watching what is going on in my mind on an ongoing basis is crucial and connecting with and living from my heart is vital. I can see when my mind is dragging me from my heart. I can feel and experience the consequences of when that happens. I can change what I don't like. I can change what doesn't feel “right”. I can do this as long as I can stay connected to the spirit of life within me and “outside of” me.

The level of connection or lack of, to my heart will always play itself out in my relationships. Not just my intimate relationships where it has a very obvious impact, but in all my relationships. My heart connection impacts every aspect of my life. It determines my relationship experiences and therefore my life experiences. Most importantly, it determines my relationship with myself. I am my own constant companion. After all, as the saying goes, wherever I go, there I am!

So, I need to check in and see where there is disconnection; where there is stress; where there is conflict; where there is fear; where there is resistance; where there is resentment; where there is procrastination; where there is emotional turmoil; where there is bitterness; where there is despondency; where there is sadness; where there is frustration and anger; where there is disappointment; where there is resignation; where there is righteousness; where there is blame. When I am experiencing any of these, my mind is blocking out my heart. My heart is my life source. My mind is blocking out the source of life and is regurgitating its own past victories and failures and eventually creating toxic energy. New life needs to be infused into my mind. This can only come from my heart. My mind cannot sustain itself indefinitely without my heart.

### **What am I doing to myself?**

When I look and find any of the above (or others like them) it is then time to take action. We've all heard the saying “leave well enough alone” – none of the above come

anywhere near “well enough”! They are unfortunately at the other end of the spectrum. If I find any of these inside me, I have a responsibility to myself to take corrective action as I am doing something that is going against the “flow of life”. I need to do it straight away. If I am holding within me negative emotions or thought patterns either directed at myself or another person or even directed at a task, situation, circumstance or event, guess who is hurting and guess who is suffering...yes, ME! This toxic energy is contaminating me. It has arisen from within my mind and will cause divisiveness, pain, stress and/or conflict and will possibly even attack my body with injury, illness and disease! I must stop it now...not tomorrow...not next week...but NOW!

### **Take heart!**

I can do this, no matter what the evidence my mind will produce to the contrary. I need to listen to my heart for answers, not to my mind. It has closed and will defend itself. Listening to my heart means allowing my mind to quieten and move into the background. It means allowing myself to feel “connected” again. I have the power to do this. Living in disconnectedness, divisiveness and conflict doesn’t make any sense for me or for anyone else. I cannot control and change anyone else (believe me, I have tried!), but I can absolutely let go of control and change myself.

I need to ask myself what steps I need to take to move out of stress and negativity and into peace and love. I may or may not need to identify how I have managed to create this dis-ease in me, but I certainly need to let it go. To some degree, it doesn’t matter how it started...it only matters that it stops. Knowing how it started, or should I say, how I started it, will hopefully help on future occasions where I am faced with similar situations, but letting it go is what will help me now. I may need to be courageous to do this. I may need to be contrite to do this. I may need to be humble to do this. I may need to be any amount of different things (apart from guilty, as this is more of the same negativity in clever disguise!), but I need to do it. More than anything, I need to be present and connected to my heart. Truly if I am, peace and love will flow into where divisiveness has ruled and will wash it away. Time for a shower!

<p><b>My mind is the storehouse of all my past experiences and all my future imaginings, where I can get completely lost. My heart is my present, the only place I can be found...</b></p>
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