

*It's possible I am pushing through solid rock  
in flintlike layers, as the ore lies, alone;  
I am such a long way in I see no way through,  
and no space: everything is close to my face,  
and everything close to my face is stone.*

*I don't have much knowledge yet in grief  
so this massive darkness makes me small.  
You be the master: make yourself fierce, break in:  
then your great transforming will happen to me,  
and my great grief cry will happen to you.*

Rainer Maria Rilke  
(Translated by Robert Bly)

## **Why is it important to know what our deepest desire is?**

This exploration is about the most difficult times – not how we get there, but how we can use them to break through into deeper truth and love within ourselves. We've explored how to discern the Presence – OUR presence – as it coexists with troublesome thought patterns. We've looked at this as we invoke what Elly has called "10 pound weights."

But what happens when we are suddenly and unexpectedly confronted with the full force of a very deeply imbedded reactive pattern in ourselves – one over which we have ABSOLUTELY no control? We all know these times, and they tend to crop up from time to time in our important relationships, and when we are in their midst, we seem powerless to change them in any way, or even to admit that we are in a reactive pattern. We blame. We hide. We bypass. Sound at all familiar?

For example...

The other day, I was working in the yard when Elly came out and reminded me that we needed to work on this week's class, toward which I had promised to contribute a major part. What she saw as a simple reminder and request to "get going" on the project, I heard as a threat to my sovereignty, an assault on my independence. I said something sarcastic back to her, and pretty soon we were fully embroiled in a powerful reactive pattern, actually yelling at each other. I was hopelessly caught, and we continued to argue for a while, until, knowing I could not extricate either myself or Elly from this situation, I left the room. Somewhere along the

way, the subtle realization that I was not reacting as myself in the present moment had dawned on me, yet I still could not stop the reactive juggernaut. I was caught.

The bad news is, that these patterns will continue to reemerge until either some Cosmic force knocks them clear out of us, or (more likely) some deeper urge within us which wants above all to know the truth cuts through our resistance to owning, taking responsibility for, and actually LOVING that part of us which actually exists in the past. The good news is that these uncomfortable and sometimes startling uprisings provide us with an opportunity to discover our most powerful inner allies. Pamela Wilson has a marvelous insight into this process:

*"I'm not in the don't-touch-it school. Maybe it's my Italian heritage. I call it Mediterranean satsang. I say, "Come here, poor little story!" If the story keeps coming back, it means it's desperate for a little loving attention.*

*If you are always going, "Oh, it's just story," of course it's going to renew its effort: "No, I'm not!"*

*If a certain situation continues to arise, just let it sit with you. See it as your devotee. Grant it the compassion to be able to sit with you. Say, "Yes, you are welcome here." Even story. In the beginning it's good to get firm with stories, because there are way too many of them. But it's like Reader's Digest; you have them condensed down to the top five issues, right?*

*When you're feeling strong, or if you have a friend to sit with, just sit in the silence until you're soothed, until the body and brain are soothed, and then invite the story to come sit. It will start to activate the body, and then the brain will start to bring in strategies to fix it and try to help. So thank the brain, and then attend to what's happening in the body. Stories have another function, other than bothering us. They're designed to dissolve the defenses in the body. They're like armor. So you sit with the issue, the upset, and see where it's triggering in the body, and then just allow awareness to move into it and permeate the upset - like awareness has hands, and it's soothing and loving.*

*What you're doing is helping the body let go of the past. One of the ways the body creates release is by recreating something from the past in order to pull it out of the earth of the body. Otherwise it stays deep. This system of release is strange - almost reptilian, it's so ancient. These bodies are from another time. Even though you get a fresh, new body every time, a lot of the defenses are recreated through thought. That's why I say bring the story here. There's no lack of brilliance in the design of either the body or the way it lets go, or even that this world is so harsh. Robert Adams used to call this the remedial planet, because when you really want freedom, this is where you come.*

*It's sweet: the body asks for a blessing through its upset, its agitation. It's invoking the Beloved, awareness-consciousness: "Please, master, come here. Please heal me." And if it's really frantic, then it will be sending out distress signals all the time. So it has another function: to awaken the Beloved. It awakens the satguru through its distress.*

*Ramana used to say, "I would follow a devotee into hell if need be." So when hell or agitation arises in the body, it's luring the satguru out of the heart. Everything is an invitation for the Buddha to awaken and bring peace, even to the body. It calls for the laying on of hands, the welcoming and soothing. Even doubt is asking for your love. Doubt is talking to you, saying,*

*"Master, is this true?"*

*When you see your body and thought as your devotees, you have a completely different relationship with them. Where else are they going to go for truth?*

~excerpt from a Pamela Wilson satsang

So, in the middle of the personal example I was citing, even though I was, indeed, powerless to stop my passive-aggressive stance, even though that scared part of me could not let even my loving self in to quell the fire, there did exist a powerful force at my disposal. My deepest desire, which is to know the truth. It could see, even as I was outwardly still denying and arguing, that the truth was imbedded in the very situation I was in. And it – this deep, deep, ongoing desire to know the truth above all else – led me to give to myself and to the situation exactly what was needed to be in harmony with the moment – in this case, to get out of the room but continue to explore the gift of this discordant event. Because by that point, I was beginning to consciously see this event as a gift – a digging tool, so to speak. A sort of time machine. I was able to open enough to let my own love in – all it took was the slightest opening, at first. And then, the gift of seeing could arise from that crack in the wall, and I was able to write:

*The reason I'm passive-aggressive is because I had learned that yelling back at my mother could have really painful consequences. So I engaged her in sarcasm instead. It was safer. When she would yell, all I wanted to do was get out of the way, out of the room, out of the house. My first instinct was to fight, but when she was stronger than me, then the overwhelming urge to leave took over. If I couldn't leave physically, then I left emotionally. I flipped the switch which closed the room of my soul so no one could get in and hurt me. At the time, my reactions were pure sanity. They worked. Only trouble: acting out in a passive-aggressive manner left me with a burning rage inside. This is what gets activated in me now, when that scenario is triggered in my body. My solar plexus trembles with rage and desperation. It's much easier for me to love existential fear in my gut than it is to love remembered fear in my solar plexus, because in the past I felt it necessary to shut the door to my soul, and it snaps shut again in reaction. Even I can't get in.*

This allowing myself to know and to truly listen to what that ancient part of me had to say was ONLY possible because I carried that deep desire for truth within me consciously. Because I trusted it absolutely. Because I value it above all things.

This is why I ask us all to revisit the question with which we began this course: What do I want most deeply? Because when we know this one thing consciously, we have the best friend and trusted ally a person could ever ask for. Even though it may sound like a universal thing, the particular way in which it manifests and sticks with us is ours alone. Our deepest desire. The one thing that can never desert us because in is actually the essence of both our uniqueness and our universal nature.

Another way to pose this important inquiry is to ask ourselves What is the one thing we know we can count on – the one resource which, even though we may not know it consciously at the moment, never leaves us, never changes, and is undeniable within us – in other words, What gives us the unquestionable authority to be the Master to whom we can bring the most troublesome and disturbing things which arise for us?

Some of us may know exactly what that is, without even thinking about it or having to dig for it. It may be obvious, and we may be fully conscious of our deepest longing or our most dependable resource. For others, we may find, when we examine more closely what we think is our deepest desire or resource, that it seems to stand on even deeper ground within us. When we are encountering those really, really difficult situations, self- judgements, uncontrollable reactions – the ones we just want to run away from – knowing consciously that one thing that is the strongest pull or certainty within us, that actually makes us what we are in our world, gives us not only a firm and consistent place to stand, but makes us powerful and loving teachers for ourselves. It makes us each the God that all our nightmare problems can come crying to, to be completely heard and comforted.

This is why I believe it is vitally important for all of us to dig as deep within as we can to find that one unique identifier that we rest upon. And what is consciously found and used now may give way to an even deeper understanding in the future. We may find, in time, that what we have found rests on something deeper and stronger and more fundamental still. For instance, I can already sense that my deep and abiding desire to know the truth above all else, rests on surrender to an absolute emptiness. In one sense, I know this because I am committed to know the truth; on the other hand, it is the emptiness itself which provokes me to want to know the truth. You may be consciously relying on an inner peace, which may itself rest upon and even deeper truth or ongoing inquiry. We can only know what we know at any given moment.

One more way to approach this inquiry is to notice what it is that Stands Beside you in the midst of your most difficult moments. What is it that, for you, stands beside you – inside you – all along, that you may not have fully appreciated or been aware of?

The deeper we go with these questions, and the more consistently we ask them, the closer we get to what is truly universal, yet also uniquely ours. We find inside our own brand of wisdom, upon which we can rely. We own our own authority. We are more and more who we really are.

Take a few minutes to ask that question again – What is my deepest desire?; or, perhaps, When I feel cornered by life, what is the one resource which can crack open the living illusion to let a little bit of light through? If we don't find an answer in words, that's okay – as long as we feel the texture of its presence inside us.

This is not a lightweight exercise, I know. These questions are designed to drill down past what we know, into the brilliance of the Unknown, into perhaps hidden resources, into a place where we truly stand as our Selves.

## A Meditation:

- 1 Take a moment to simply rest, letting whatever thoughts, feelings, sensations arise to come and go. Nothing to do here, nothing to change.
- 2 Not changing anything, notice what it is that you would like to have happen for you as you sit here in silence. Take a look around inside – below the neck. Down inside, behind all the comings and goings. And down further still. You may notice a deep wanting, or even a deep Presence begins to be felt – it may be a subtle energy, or a sense that this is ME. If nothing is arising, you can simply be with this nothing. You are only noticing what is actually here.
- 3 As you hang out here, you are making contact with realms inside us which always exist under the surface – which do not change with the surface currents of our life. Named or unnamed, seen or felt, or sensed within, there is a *something* which we naturally greet with an open heart. It makes us glad. We can stand upon its quiet strength.
- 4 Sit for another few minutes, letting your inquiry have its own life. Appreciating yourself for simply being here.

~ Namaste ~