

Encountering The Self

Spiritual Counseling for Everyday Life

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"The whole world is medicine

What is the illness?"

There are so many healers who come with their bags of cures without ever stopping to ask the basic question - what is the illness we're suffering from?

Healers want to heal. There are endless cures these healers offer. They feel it is their job to make their patient better. The goal of most of these cures is to stop the pain, offer relief, respite, comfort. These healers seek tranquilization, numbness, instant relief.

This, of course, is based upon the assumption that pain is bad, a symptom of something gone awry in our bodies, lives or minds. But this is not necessarily true.

Pain can be a great teacher, a wake up call, a way to connect with parts of ourselves and others that we have overlooked or disowned.

Pain is a communication system. It may be doing something for us and our lives we could not do without it. Pain can be a gift from our larger Selves, our inner wisdom, warning us that we are out of balance in ways we never imagined, and that there is a larger direction for our lives, one we are presently out of touch with.

It is dangerous to want only to get rid of pain, to disrespect it. It is dangerous to think that "We are the healer", that we know better than the person who has come to us, suffering. It is not up to us to inflict our notion of what healing is upon another. It is simply a foolish delusion to think that we are the ones who heal.

STEP ONE: The first step in becoming a healer is to completely get rid of the notion that you can heal anyone.

No one can ever heal another. No one can even imagine what healing truly means for another person. Only the person themselves know. *There is One Within That Knows The Way.* We do great damage to others and to ourselves by disrespecting that fact. We offer great support and courage, when together we make the acquaintance of and honor The One Within.

No one else ever has your answers

A healer, parent or friend, can create a healing environment, which can facilitate healing for another. Part of creating that healing environment is being fully aware that you are not better, wiser, or stronger than the other. You never raise yourself above the person or make the person feel weak or inadequate in anyway. There is no reason for it.

In each moment of your interaction, the healer is truly healing himself. In fact, the so-called patient is your teacher, showing you what it means to heal. If this is forgotten, the very basis for health is dismantled and power based ego trips begin, with one person using another to aggrandize themselves. By creating the illusion of dependency and confusion, you are always causing harm.

The true basis for healing arises when you help the person fully listen to, welcome and trust themselves. The job of a healer is to accompany the person in the journey they undertake, to lend their support and courage, not to interfere. When we interfere with, impose upon or categorize another human being, we are diminishing their natural ability to heal. And we are turning them into an object, robbing them of faith in themselves.

Faith in oneself is one of the most powerful medicines available. Yet all of society conspires to take that away. Why is Faith in Oneself so dangerous? How can we re-claim it for ourselves and others? These are the questions that healers, friends and parents must dwell upon. Notice each time faith in yourself is wavering, see what has caused it to happen, strengthen yourself immediately. Remind yourself of the truth and you will be truly serving all.

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This article is based upon Dr. Shoshanna's upcoming nine month program in Spiritual Counseling, Encountering The Self. (Book will soon be forthcoming). The program is for therapists, social workers, clergy, and healthcare workers on applying both spiritual and psychological principles to counseling. The program will be available as a Postgraduate certificate program and also as individually attended workshops.

Dr. Shoshanna is a psychologist, in practice for over twenty five years, long term practitioner of both Zen and Judaism, and ordained by Rabbi Gelberman. She is the author of many books, and has offered over 500 talks and workshops on all aspects of personal and spiritual development, building life giving relationships and creating authentic peace of mind. Her most recent book is Fearless (The 7 Principles of Peace of Mind). She is also the author of Jewish Dharma (A Guide to the Practice of Judaism and Zen). She can be reached at topspeakeryahoo.com. <http://www.drshoshanna.com>