



Active Willingness - The Email Course

Tony Morton

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Foreword

“Your only calling here is to devote yourself, with active willingness, to the denial of guilt in all its forms.” A Course in Miracles

This book has been many years in the making. It started as a practical course in spiritual awareness which ran for three years. The notes from the course formed the basis of the original book. The course carried on from there, becoming a weekly meditation class and then for a further three years a weekly spiritual awareness class, still refining and becoming deeper. Finally the course has been run as an Email course offered freely to those who chose to receive it. The aim of this version of the course is to simplify and touch the essence of each lesson. The notes from this course have been compiled into this book. It is intended that these lessons are able to stand alone, but for those who wish to follow the exercises and meditations, these are available from the active willingness website.

www.activewillingness.co.uk/resources/spiritualawareness

Introduction

In essence spiritual awareness is very simple. It is not special or difficult, it is already within us. It is already at our core. This is a course in self knowledge, nothing more and nothing less. We first learn more about ourselves as a human being and then as a spiritual being. We uncover ourselves, as we behave in this world and uncover ourselves as we are beyond this world. We are both of these, physical and spiritual. We aim to see ourselves in the round, whole and complete. We are the physical and the spiritual combined into a human being.

There is nothing to change. If there is anything to change then that implies that we are, now, not already perfect, that there is some flaw or imperfection that we need to change. There is nothing to change. This does not mean that we will not choose to change. There are things that we do, in the way we behave that no longer are serving us and we will learn how to change those things.

By the very process of paying attention, we will know ourselves better and will change naturally. We change our perception and perspective i.e. we will see more clearly and in doing so will see differently. But there is nothing we have to do. There is no need to become a “better person”, no need to act in a different way. No need to pretend to be spiritual or to behave in certain way. As we come to know ourselves we focus on our relationship with “All that Is”. In this clarity and knowledge all else follows. We are what we are, there is no need to change anything, but focus on the truth of who we are. Our essence shines through.

Spirituality is normal, it is part of every human being. Without it we are unbalanced. Spirituality is, by its nature, beyond the physical plane and therefore has an otherworldly quality. But the essence of this course is to learn to access spiritual awareness and ground it into physical action. The aim is not to be ethereal, spaced out, but balanced and grounded.

This Course

This course is based on practical experience. The aim is to become more aware, both of yourself as a physical being and yourself as a spiritual being. The foundation of this course is to increase this awareness of yourself through the practices of meditation and Chi Kung (energy exercise). Meditation helps us with the mental aspects and Chi Kung the physical aspects. The practices are best done in a group and preferably with someone able to teach or lead the practices. This makes a email course very difficult. I would recommend that to get the most out of this course you also do some meditation practice and some body practice. The body practice could be Chi Kung, yoga, tai chi or some similar practice. It could even be a martial art but the aim should be to increase self awareness. The email course will concentrate on the other tools and techniques.

The aim of the Chi Kung and meditation is to deepen awareness of what we experience. We are trying to train the body and mind so that our experiences are no longer hidden. Once we become more aware we have more choice about the way we react and respond to life. The course aims to develop tools which we can use in different circumstances. The lessons in this course are more about these tools and how to use them. The objective of the course is to provide us with a set of tools which help us to deal with the day to day events that life throws so that we develop a process of change. Life becomes the classroom and teacher. This course does not aim to give you all the answers but aims to give you the tools to find them for yourself. The course does try to offer insight and experience so that you have the opportunity to see yourself and the world in a different way and then participate in a different way.

This course can be challenging. Try to be kind to yourself. Try not to judge yourself. We are all human, we all have a defence mechanism to protect us. We are who we are, there is nothing wrong with who we are but we do have the opportunity to change, to become more open.

This is a course of self knowledge, you are learning about yourself. Everyone takes their own path and uses the tools that they are most comfortable with. There is no right or wrong way to proceed. My only advice to you is to take this journey. I am here to support you and help you with the course. So if you have any questions about the course please email me and I will reply as quickly as possible.

Further Information

Further writing and exercises can be for each lesson in this course can be found at www.activewillingness.co.uk/Resources/SpiritualAwareness

There is a weekly lesson which aims to get to the core of each lesson and, where necessary, make the course as real and applicable as possible. Additional material and exercises for the course is on the Active Willingness website under Resources then Spiritual Awareness. There is more material in the Active Willingness book, which can be bought at www.harmonicpotential.co.uk

Overall there will be 30 weekly lessons. The course is split into 3 main parts which explore how we operate in this world, our spiritual nature and the application of spiritual awareness into daily life.

With love and light

Tony

Week 1 – Awareness

Awareness is one of the greatest gifts, without awareness we are nothing. It is the key that unlocks the door. It opens the door so that we can set out on the journey. Suddenly from being asleep we are awake, from being a prisoner we are free to explore. Awareness is the key that unlocks the door to our spiritual growth. It is the first step to taking control of the mind, bringing it back into the present.

Awareness is the start, it is the first stage in emptiness. Being here is only one step away from being. As we learn to observe ourselves, we come to know ourselves better. We know what we like and what we don't like, we know who and what we are. We use awareness to discover the aspects of ourselves that were previously hidden by the noise of the mind. As we become more aware we can start to observe the mind and then consciously empty the mind until we are just in the present moment. It is this state we seek, a state of just being, alert and alive and in the present moment, all the senses and thoughts withdrawn.

We start with awareness of the body, how it moves and how it feels. We are aware of the mind, the thoughts, the stillness and the noise, its busyness and its quietness. We become aware of the emotions, how we feel, both good and bad. We create awareness of the ego, the image we present to the world and the way we react and respond. We become aware of the beauty in this world, within us and within others. We come to know that we are not just this physical presence.

Awareness of the Body

Slow down. As we slow down we become more aware. We become aware of our posture and movement, we feel any comfort and awkwardness. We adjust ourselves to make it comfortable, natural, aligned, smooth and flowing. We become aware of the breath, gentle, coordinated with the movement.

The body is the tool for spiritual growth. It is our tool for awareness and experience. All the feelings and experiences of the body create the spiritual experience. Both good and bad experiences help us. Every feeling, whether we think of it as good or bad is beneficial to our spiritual growth.

The full range of experiences are important, the senses, the emotions, thoughts and feelings. Awareness is the tool that makes us more aware of what we are feeling, thinking and experiencing. We concentrate initially on the body, its movement, the breath, but we also turn inwards to the inner experience particularly on certain areas of the body. These energy centres, the chakras help us to feel and experience. We focus our attention on them in order to awaken to the experience more deeply.

This is an experiential course. We are trying to awaken to the experience. Our humanity is key to spiritual awakening. We are not trying to overcome the body but to use it, to appreciate it. The body and its ability to feel and experience is a precious gift to us. We feel everything through it. Look after it, nurture it, pay attention to it.

Appreciate the body, every aspect of it. It is the tool for experience, of this world and the tool through which we become spiritually aware. It is a gift to be treasured.

Pay attention to it, listen to what it has to say, not only on the physical level but on the energetic level. The very act of listening to the body brings benefits of health and well being. The body no longer has to scream to get us to hear.

Nurture the body, take care of it, look after it direct your positive intent to it. We nurture the body, turning the beneficial effects of the body work towards our health and well being. But we also nurture the body physically, taking care about the food we eat, what we drink and what we put into the body. The body is a precious gift.

The Course

The Chi Kung exercise and meditation help to awaken and strengthen the internal areas and help us to feel and experience them. They will open us to the flow of energy, within the body and with the world around us.

Over the course we will open and strengthen all the energy centres of the body. This first part of the course concentrates on three, the tan tien, the solar plexus and heart centre. The tan tien is a point in the centre of the body just below the navel, sometimes referred to as the hara or sacral centre. The solar plexus is in the centre of the body just below the rib cage. The heart centre is directly behind the breastbone. The simple Chi Kung exercises and the meditations will focus on these areas, but not exclusively. These three areas form a solid foundation on which we build.

Over the whole of the course there are three main areas of the body which we will awaken. These we refer to as the three treasures, they are key to the flow of energy and to our spiritual awareness. They relate directly to the tan tien, the heart and a point behind the eyes, the third eye centre. They bring physical health and vitality, a still quiet, connected mind and an open heart. The three together, bring balance and wholeness.

We come to a state where the body doesn't demand attention. We are aware of the senses but not following them. The body is alert, ready, awake. The aim of the body work on the course is to awaken the body, to raise it up, to prepare it to become open and ready to receive. The body is not only the tool for experience it is the vessel which is filled with spiritual presence. It is the means by which we create the Son/Daughter the reunion of heaven and earth.

The body is our greatest gift. Treasure it.

With Love and Light

Tony

Week 2 – Meditation

The aim of awareness is twofold. First it is a tool in its own right, it allows us to withdraw from the world, to become more present, more alert and alive. Second, it makes visible what is hidden. There is so much information that we turn off. We lose awareness of the senses, our bodies, how we are feeling. We are not aware of our train of thoughts, that wander through the mind, day dreaming, wishing. We lose contact with our emotional responses, acting without awareness, responding without thinking. We are not aware of the image we project, nor the response it receives. We are only awake when the extremes force us to be awake.

We awaken the subconscious in order to realise what we are not. Spirituality is hidden, so to awaken to it we need to become aware.

Spirituality is not letting go of anything. It is becoming aware of something. To become aware of our spirituality we need to move past the subconscious and into the conscious. We only need to let go because of our perception. We think that we are something and therefore ignore ourselves beyond that belief. We cannot fully awaken to our spiritual nature if we believe we are this body, these thoughts, these emotions, this ego. We need to start to recognise that we are more than this. That does not mean that body, mind, ego are bad, but only that they limit us, they get in the way. If we are to move beyond them then we must know them and then we can know more.

While our perception is limited by our physical presence, we cannot accept that we are also something else. While we believe we are single, human, a body, separate we cannot accept that we are connected, expansive, limitless, powerful. We cannot, while limited by the human experience, realise the truth of our spiritual nature.

Awareness of the Mind

Meditation is an essential tool that we carry with us and use, the ability of the mind to focus, to open and be aware and the connected nature of the mind are essential to the journey.

We are trying to go beyond aspects of the mind which hinder our ability to be aware. The first is busyness, the mind flitting aimlessly from one subject to another. We are trying to be able to still the busy thoughts and to be able to bring the mind back when it wanders off. If we cannot, when it is necessary, still the mind we may miss that which is important. We are also trying to move beyond the intellect and the need to understand and analyse everything. In spirituality much is beyond our comprehension. We are trying to feel and experience, the intellect and its desire to understand can get in the way. I remember being in a hermits cave in southern France, which had been a place of prayer for 800 years. When people entered the feeling in the cave almost literally took their breath away, you could hear them gasp. Yet within seconds they had left the feeling and experience behind and the intellectual mind had cut in and they were reading the signs and taking photos. The real experience and feeling within the church and their opportunity to learn something that was not written down, by just being in the experience, had passed them by. It is too easy for the intellect to get in the way of experience.

Meditation is not only about trying to go beyond aspects of the mind but also to develop qualities and to hone the mind, to sharpen it. As we meditate the mind becomes clearer, more able to focus. We develop the ability to direct the mind to the focus of our attention. We start with one-pointedness, focussing on a single object, but without intensity, just a lightness of mind. We develop this focus, keeping the mind clear and directing its power to our objective and pure intent. We start to develop intuition, insight, guidance and the ability to be open to the connected aspects of the mind. We learn to comprehend the creative power of the mind and how we might best direct that power.

As the mind becomes still it opens and expands upwards and outwards. It is this that reaches out to the Divine, it is this that connects us with the Divine and with each other. The mind is expansive, it is capable of accessing a knowledge beyond itself, of connecting to a universal wisdom. The mind is incredibly powerful, beyond our wildest understanding. Without meditation and the ability to take control of the mind this power is creating haphazardly. With meditation we can focus the creative power for the highest good.

The Course

The course uses a form of meditation that focuses on the energy centres of the body as a means of one-pointedness. This assists in awakening these centres and increases our awareness in those centres. The same technique is also used within one of the key exercises, for transforming feelings and difficult situations. It also forms the basis for two key meditations, The Three Connections and The Flow of Love which come later in the course. There are many other forms of meditation which will all have beneficial effects and will help to take control of the mind. Use whichever you are comfortable and familiar with, but also try the meditation in this course because it may be useful later.

Meditation is one the foundation practices of this course. Everybody will have different levels of experience of meditation and there are different levels to meditation. At this stage of the course we are using meditation to start to quieten the mind and become more aware. Later in the course we will explore the deeper states of meditation.

The aim of these first four weeks of the course is to make more aware what is subconscious. If we remain unaware of how we feel, what we think, how we react and respond, then we will be unable to change. But most of all we are trying to remove limitations to our perception.

This course is experiential, we want to experience ourselves and in particular to become aware and experience our spiritual nature, to make it more accessible. Different people feel it in different way, but the means for that feeling is the body. If we become more aware of how we feel, then we can feel our spiritual nature and can become consciously aware of it.

Twice recently students have said to be they don't feel anything, which I take to mean that they don't feel the chi, or the emotional response to chi kung and meditation or that they don't feel what they think that they should feel. But everybody feels something. When we pause at the end of chi kung or meditation the idea is to be aware of what you feel. There is no right or wrong thing to feel. The key is always to feel to be aware.

The more we become aware of what and how we feel the more we can assess the difference. Almost always, what we feel at the end of meditation is different from how we felt at the start. It is important to be aware of both.

With love and light

Tony

Week 3 - Image Awareness

We are born separate from our source. We feel that we are alone, defenceless. We build a wall, as we grow up, to protect us. We make allies. There is an underlying sense of lack in all human beings and we all create an image, an ego as the best way of defending ourselves.

The ego is the greatest blockage to spiritual awareness, because it is the defender of our individuality. We develop the ego to protect us in a fearful world. It is our way of dealing with the world while still maintaining an element of self confidence. The ego makes us feel good about ourselves, in whatever way we have found that works for us. The ego is the defender of self. It guards and protects our individuality. In spirituality we are trying to know ourselves beyond our individuality. We are trying to know that we are connected, part of everything, whole, complete. The ego protects us from a fearful standpoint. The spirit is free, open and loving.

This is not a battle between the ego and spirit. It is not one or the other. Nor is this a course in psychoanalysis, it is to know ourselves better. This is a process of transformation. It is a process of change of perspective from fear to love. We are not trying to get rid of the ego, merely change the way we look at the world and to let the ego transform. It is never one or the other, it is only deciding how to lead your life.

As an ego we gather people around us who will support our ego view of the world. Our friends, partners, and families support our ego view of the world and help us feel good about ourselves. But there are therefore others who present a different view of the world, who make us feel bad or uncomfortable. This is what we want to learn from the world. What makes us feel good, what makes us feel bad. We are aware of our feelings and our thoughts.

As we awaken our understanding, we may feel bad about ourselves, how we behave, what we do. But there should be no self criticism. This is awareness not judgement. This is very important. We are not here to judge ourselves or others, merely to awaken. Everybody has an ego. Everyone creates an image to defend and protect themselves. This knowledge should help us empathise with others, but also to be kind and gentle with ourselves. The essence of this course is to be kind and gentle just as the essence of spirituality is kind and gentle.

This is not a battle, nor is it intense change. This is a process of gentle unfolding of the spirit and a choice of how we act and respond. This unfolding of spiritual awareness takes time, but stay alert and aware all the time of the ego and the games it plays.

The Spiritual Ego

We are not trying to create a spiritual ego. We are not trying to present a more “spiritual” image to the world, in order to pretend to be spiritual. We are trying to learn to express our spirituality. To do this we must know ourselves and know the ego. We must continue to do this, to remain aware of the ego, as we change, to ensure we do not pretend to be spiritual, but to become a true expression of the spiritual.

We will always have an ego. It will change, it will take on different aspects but it will always be there. I once told a class this and one student, who had been a transcendental meditator for 40 years, said that at the 7th level of enlightenment we no longer have an ego (his teacher had told him). He added that Christ was only at the 5th level. I cannot verify the truth of this, but it safe to assume, for practical purposes, that we will always have an ego. We remain vigilant to the ego and what it hides from us.

The most difficult problem is that the ego is moveable, clever and subtle. It changes position, it starts to develop a more “spiritual” form. So we start to pretend, just as before, but now we pretend to be

holy. We pretend not to be angry or fearful. Yet this can be just as much a pretense as before. We continue to practice to be aware of the game the ego plays.

The aim is not to beat the ego, but to know it and remain aware of it. We are trying to be able to make a choice, in the way we operate in this world. We either operate from love or from fear, from spirit or ego. It is upon our ability to make this choice that our spiritual awareness is founded. The ego operates from a position of fear. Spirit operates from love. Both are present and both are valid. Both are needed to live in this world. Yet we are able to choose. Do you want to think, speak and act from love or from fear? The choice is obvious, yet it is not easy to follow what we choose because the ego is ingrained and its responses subconscious. As we increase awareness, we make conscious what has been hidden and improve our chance to operate from love rather than fear.

The Course

Lets step back. First, we all have an ego, it is the means by which we deal with this world. There is nothing wrong with it. It is normal. Second, we are not about to destroy the ego. The aim is not to get rid of it, but to become aware of it. Again we are trying to make visible what is hidden. Nor is this course an examination of why we feel like this, nor any form of psychoanalysis. This is not the agenda. The agenda is to be honest, to feel. We want to get in touch with our emotional response to the world. This should be gentle work. At this stage we are just being aware. Later we will explore and choose to change, but first we need to develop tools.

There are two main tools for image awareness. The first is to learn to feel emotionally and the second is try to get beyond superficial thoughts into our underlying thoughts and beliefs.

We find emotional awareness using the body and in particular how we feel. One of the effects of the ego is to suppress feelings we don't like as a way of dealing with them. The body responds to emotion, we feel it physically. This is the feeling of the image we project being challenged. We can gently become aware of this through Chi Kung and Meditation, by turning the mind inward to feel. As we stand at the start and end of Chi Kung try to get in touch with how you feel, physically, mentally, emotionally and energetically. We will use this awareness. You can also become aware of the effect of chi kung and meditation on how you feel. We not only need tools that enable us to feel but we also need tools which improve how we feel.

Morning pages or brain dump is an amazing tool. It clears the decks, it gets us past our fearful, automatic response to the world and into our open mind. It helps us be aware of the underlying thoughts that are hidden, to what we really think and feel. It is not a negative tool in any way, but a powerful enabler. Try to use it every day. It is something to use regularly over a period of time, not just occasionally. As with all the tools, get used to using them, find their core and how they are useful for you. Eventually we use them as we need them, but first learn them. For me this tool is essential, one to which I regularly return. You can find out more about morning pages in the book *The Artists Way* by Julia Cameron.

With Love and Light

Tony

Week 4 - Appreciation of the Emotions

The emotions are the prompts through which we awaken. They help us to make known what is hidden. They make clear what is hidden inside.

There is nothing wrong with any emotion. It is not wrong to be angry. It is not wrong to be fearful. It is not wrong to be jealous or guilty or anything else. They are all ways in which we react and respond. By their very nature we do not choose them, they are feelings that we want to avoid. We often hide them, to avoid the strength of their feeling, but they are there and, if we hide them, then they will eat away at us. They are there and they are ours.

Emotional awareness tries to bring these to the surface so that we do not hide them but know them. They can be powerful and we do this gently, we become aware of them and their origins. They are as important to our growth as the feelings of love, joy, peace and happiness that we seek. If we do not know them then we limit the potential for growth.

I do not suggest that we have to express them, actively or immediately but we have to learn to acknowledge them and learn to deal with them. The ability to feel these emotions is as much a gift as the ability to feel positive emotions.

For now we allow ourselves to become aware of them, to feel them. We feel the response they create in the body. These emotions generate physical feelings and we acknowledge the physical effects of the emotions. We allow ourselves to feel them gently, without any sense of self criticism. They are extraordinarily powerful, so just feel them gently.

We are trying to awaken the feelings of love, peace, joy and compassion, but we are not trying to do this by suppressing feelings of anger, jealousy, guilt and fear. Yet as the light grows within us the feelings associated with the heart grow and the feelings of fear will diminish. So the process is not one of suppression or limitation but one of change and transformation. The world will continue to invoke reaction and response but we will change. There are feelings, emotions and situations that we have to deal with, but we will look at tools for this later, but for now be open to and accept every emotion. Be aware of them, own them and accept them.

Ownership

We take ownership of what we feel. Stop believing that anything outside can make us feel a certain way. What we feel is inside us. Nobody puts that feeling there. That feeling is ours. It is ours to continue with or to change. When something happens, or when somebody does something, which causes an emotional response, that response is ours. It does not belong to the situation. Start to take responsibility for your life. We will learn how to transform feelings and situations, how to change, but for now we need to start to feel and experience and take responsibility.

The aim is to become the master of your own life. You are in charge, you know what you feel and you decide what you accept and what you change. Nothing outside of you can make you react and respond in certain way. This also means that, when we explore the spiritual aspects of our nature, later in the course that you are in control of that too. I have seen people who act from a spiritual connection with good intent, but excuse themselves responsibility. They say "They told me to do it" meaning their guides or angels. Yet even if we act from guidance and intuition we still take responsibility for that choice. If we are to become whole and complete that means that we are both heaven and earth and that we are responsible for our actions, our emotions, our thoughts and our choices. We are in a unique position, we are both body and spirit together and we sit between them both holding and integrating them, never one or the other but both as one. We are able to choose which leads our life. We take responsibility for what we feel and the choices we make. The start of taking responsibility is to be aware of what we feel.

We start by feeling our emotions. We own them, they are ours. We come to appreciate them to see them as a gift, just as much as the feelings of love, peace and joy. In response we are filled with determination, to bring spirituality into our lives and to pursue those things that are truly important to us. This determination grows as we grow.

The Course

I have added this as a new lesson within the course. The material has been covered in the past but was included in other lessons and therefore somewhat hidden. I wanted to bring out this lesson separately because it has taken me a long time to really come to a deep appreciation of our ability to feel emotion. The feelings of anger, guilt, fear, etc. are ones which we naturally shy away from. We do not really want to feel them. It has always been a key part of this course that emotions and their physical presence within the body are one of the tools for change. Yet I now realise what a gift it is to be able to feel them. Just because I say they are a great gift, doesn't make it true for you. We are all, to some extent, dealing with difficult situations and those situations make us feel uncomfortable and they may be very painful. Yet if you can have just a little more appreciation of your emotions then it may just make them easier to deal with. We will come back to this and in particular how to release and transform these emotions, but just at the moment appreciate, as much as you can, your ability to feel them.

I wanted to bring to the fore the ability to feel and in particular the solar plexus centre. The solar plexus, a point just underneath the rib cage, is a place in the body where we feel our emotional response. It is one of the three key areas of the body which form the basis of the first part of the course and developing tools to deal with life's situations in a more positive way. So I wanted to specifically focus on the solar plexus area, in the same way that we focus on the tan tien and heart centres.

With love and light

Tony

Week 5 - Heart Opening

To open the heart centre is, without doubt, the single most important practice on the spiritual journey. The heart is the centre of peace, love, joy and compassion. It is the balance between the physical and the spiritual. It is the point that grounds the spiritual experience into physical action. It is the place that we retreat to. It is the choice that we make. To awaken the heart is to know the spiritual presence.

The awakened heart is something we all know. It is an expression of inner beauty and it reflects the beauty that we see around us. Even if we don't recognise it we all know what it feels like. It is awakened by the magnificence of nature. It is awakened by new born children and animals. It is awakened by the sacred. It is awakened by love for another. We know what it feels like, it is natural and normal. What we want to do is know it better so that it feels stronger and more accessible. It is like an inner warmth that illuminates the inside of the body. It is the light that shines out from within, out into this world. It is a mirror that glows in the beauty of this world. It is awakened by your awareness of the divine, in whatever form that takes.

If you do nothing more from this course but learn to open the heart and feel the heart centre, then that is enough. Once we find the heart, and keep returning to it, everything else will come to us. The heart is the core of our being. The more we return to it and stay in it, the more the spiritual experience will grow in us. It seems almost trite to say that love is all that we need, that love is everything, yet when we really know the feeling of love, as a heart experience rather than as an idea, then it is absolutely true. Love is all we need. For me love is the very presence of the divine in this world. Love is the heart experience. Whatever the questions that life asks of us, whatever challenges we face, love is the answer.

Spiritual Awareness

Within the heart is a spark of light. It is like a seed in that it contains our full potential. As we become more aware of ourselves as body, mind, emotion and image we can start to sense something else. We start to go beyond that sense of individuality and feel this spark. At this stage we just want to become aware of its existence. We may just have to trust that it is there. But this seed is unlimited in its potential. This is the seed of spirit. We will explore it more fully as we become more aware of it.

We are alive, there is something that makes us alive. We are made up of the same atoms, minerals etc. as other objects, but we are alive. What is being alive? What makes us alive? Just as we have started to become aware of our body, breath, mind and emotions we also want to be aware of being alive.

What does being alive feel like? Can we sense the difference e.g. I hold a pen and it is dead, yet my fingers are alive. They feel different. We can sense the life force within us, and around us. We can sense it in nature, in plants, trees, animals, birds, fish. We awaken to being alive. Slow down and try to feel this aliveness, the energy, vibration and essence of being alive.

Being alive is the essence of spirit. We start to sense that there is something else. To become aware is to be aware of this sense of being alive. To be alive there is a spirit, a life force within us and around us. This is not just within us but within every living thing. Go for a walk, sense it in nature. Look inside, sense it within. Begin to awaken, wake up, be alive, be aware that we are not just this body, this mind, these emotions, but we are more than this.

The question we ask is what is and where does it come from. While the body, the mind, the emotions are ours, this life force does not feel exclusive. It appears to combine with our physical form to bring it alive, but we can sense it in every living thing. Aliveness, when we sense it, does not feel as if it belongs to us. It does not seem to be limited by our body. It is within us but also around us.

What is spirituality? It is something that is part of us yet also beyond us. It is not only the spark but the seed. It is within and expansive. The second part of the course goes deeper into awareness of our spiritual nature. For now, we want to be aware that there is something else other than the body, mind and emotions. We also recognise that the body, mind and emotions are the only tools we have to experience our spiritual nature. We are trying not only to become aware of the physical form but also by deepening awareness to find expansiveness, beyond the physical. This is why awareness is so important, unless we become more subtle in awareness we cannot start to experience what is different, what is unusual. If we are to wake up to the spiritual we must first know our body, mind, emotions and ego.

The Course

The very first time I did Tai Chi, I stood like a tree, my arms embracing an imaginary balloon at the heart centre. I could feel something, as though the balloon was real. I felt it in my hands and between my fingers. I was curious and it was that curiosity that made me want to explore and learn more. It was the first awareness of chi flowing from my heart, within the body. It is there within us all, to be rediscovered, to be developed so that it becomes tangible and accessible.

How do we open the heart, fundamentally, by paying attention to it. The heart centre is a point, in the centre of the body, directly behind the breast bone. Often if you press the breast bone, you will find a point that is slightly tender, the heart centre is directly behind that point.

There are two ways that we work with to open the heart. First we use chi kung and meditation exercises which actively work with the heart centre, to open, expand and strengthen it. In the notes I've included some specific simple exercises. However, the best exercise is the one from the book, the version of the Eight Silk Brocade. This has been put together specifically to focus on the heart centre.

The Infinite Tai Chi form, and nearly every chi kung routine I know, has at least one movement that helps to open the heart centre. The Golden sun sequence, Master tam, 8 silk brocade, standing sequence, dragon chi kung, advanced standing, healing sounds, salute to the four corners and probably others have movements which help to open the heart centre.

The characteristic movement for heart opening is to expand outwards, level with the heart centre. Sometimes we push sideways from the heart to feel a tingle in the centre of the breastbone. We can strengthen it, by embracing at the heart and pushing in. We can awaken it by stretching out.

The heart also opens naturally. Try to pay attention to it at times when it is naturally stimulated. When you see beauty in nature, feel it in your heart. Listen to beautiful music or sacred chants, feel the resonance in your heart. If you are able to spend time with babies or young children be aware of your heart centre. Look at beautiful art and feel if they stimulate your heart centre. The image I use for the heart is of a flower that opens in the sun. It does not try to open, it opens without effort when the conditions are right. The very act of paying attention helps us to be more aware but it also helps to expand the heart.

With Love and Light

Tony

Week 6 - Acceptance

As we become more spiritually aware our appreciation of nature deepens and our perception of the world changes. As we spiritually deepen we start to see the world in a different way. It seems that this changed perception takes time and it is a fundamental part of spirituality because we start to appreciate how spirit flows through nature. We start to appreciate nature both as a learning tool and as an example. It is the natural power, innate intelligence and underlying presence in this world that provides us with a model. This changed perception and appreciation of nature is, naturally, part of this course and it starts from here. We start to change the way we see the world. The fundamental change is one where we no longer view the world as imposing on us but see it as a tool and prompt for change. The world no longer affects us unprovoked, but becomes the means by which we learn.

The world is a natural mirror. What the world reflects back is a perfect reflection. It is perfect in the sense that it is reflecting clearly, but also in the sense that the stimuli of the world are exactly what we need to grow spiritually. This is a natural reflection, it is not forced, managed or manipulated in any way. There is an underlying perfection in this world which we are trying to touch. We are part of this underlying perfection but it is blurred by the limitations we place on ourselves. This blurring is reflected back by the world. If we choose to touch the underlying perfection then we need to take notice of what the world is offering us as a learning opportunity.

When we look in the mirror we see a distorted picture, but the distortion comes from the way we see the world, not from the mirror. Our true nature is distorted by the ego. If we accept, for now, that the nature of humanity is a pure expression of universal light, we can perhaps also accept that, at present, we are not always expressing that light.

How we feel, react and respond to the world is a reflection of the image we project. So if we look in the mirror we see the image. The world becomes a tool to learn. The first step is this change of perception is to take responsibility for how we feel. We take ownership for our feelings. They are not imposed on us by the world, they are our feelings. We react subconsciously to the world's stimuli but that reaction is the ego's response.

One of the key aims of this course is to establish a continuous process of change. There are two main stimuli for that process, the first is this world and how it makes us feel. The second, recognising insight and intuition and learning to act on them, comes later in the course. When this world makes us feel bad or uncomfortable in any way, we explore that feeling and consider whether we want to change or not. The world becomes our prompt, it prompts us with pain, but also with passion. Pain is opportunity to change, passion is our opportunity to act.

Responsibility

There is a perfection in nature, a balance and an ever changing cycle which expresses a raw power and gentle simplicity. Alongside that is the world that we create. This a place of illness. Heart disease, cancer, diabetes and many more are widespread. Many people find it difficult to cope with stressful lifestyles, leading to abuse of alcohol, drugs dependency. We live with difficult relationships, often our anger is barely disguised, there is both physical and mental abuse. On a wider scale there are wars, terrorism, civil unrest, poverty and the abuse of the planet.

Whether it is the circumstances surrounding our personal lives or the national or global situations this is not natural. This is the result of our distorted view of the world. It is what we, individually and globally have created. Are we, as individuals, ready to take responsibility for what we have created in our own lives and what we have participated in on a national and global scale?

It is one of the hardest things that we have to do, to take responsibility for everything in our lives. Perhaps we are not yet ready but we can start. We are responsible for how we feel, how we respond and react to the world, but we are also responsible for how the world is.

The world is merely acting as a mirror, reflecting back to us our perception and judgement. The world is a perfect teaching environment, offering us exactly the lessons we need if we are to change our judgement and perception.

This is not merely an individual perception. How the world is and the lessons it offers are presented on an individual and global level. We might not like wars or the treatment of the planet but we are also responsible for them. The lessons we are learning individually are merely part of the lessons we are learning globally. As we become more spiritually aware we become less individualistic and more connected and joined. We become more aware of the global nature of the lessons being learned. Yet the opportunity and responsibility that we have is to change ourselves.

We have individual judgement and perception and we are part of the global perception of what is normal and acceptable. For spiritual growth we need to be able to step outside of what is normal and accepted. We have to be prepared to take responsibility for what we feel and for what we create. There is little point being against war yet being angry with someone who offends you. We have to be prepared to challenge, for ourselves the very basis on which we live our lives and sometimes we have to be prepared to change it. Understand that not everything that we are creating and perceiving is wrong, yet while the world continues to reflect back to us situations that we don't like we still have the opportunity to change.

I understand that the hardest part of taking responsibility can be the feeling of guilt that we have created the pain within our own lives and in those close to us. Yet this is the way of the world and we are part of it. Taking responsibility is about learning to stop creating pain and suffering. Once again be kind and understanding with yourself, be gentle and loving with yourself, nurture yourself. This is how the world is, if you are ready to change then you can be part of the solution. We look to ourselves to bring change into our own lives and into the world.

The Course

The additional week I added to the course about emotional awareness had its origins in this week's notes but wanted to bring it out earlier and more independently. It seems that this week is about the ego image, the emotional response and how we perceive the world. Yet it is really about the nature of this world.

This course takes place in this world. Spiritual awakening is not an escape from where we are. It has to be practical and effective in the way we live and act in this world otherwise it is meaningless. This world offers us the lessons that we need. Whether it is our light or our darkness that the world reflects we are given the opportunity to learn.

This world also offers us lessons of its own. Nature is a wonderful teacher, because the spirit that operates within us flows through the natural world as well. Yet the natural world is not hindered by the distortion of the ego. So when we see nature we are seeing the spirit in a pure form.

We are trying to understand this world and, because we are part of it, ourselves. As we deepen into our spiritual awareness at the same time we deepen into an appreciation of nature. The two seem to go hand in hand, they walk together. If we can comprehend how this world is reflective, not doing or judging, then we can comprehend the effect of our judgement and perception. If we can understand the flow and the balance in nature, the cycles of change and the life force then we can better understand our relationship with the divine.

Appreciate the opportunity that life offers us and take responsibility for the lessons that are given.

There is little new this week in terms of exercises, but it is also an opportunity to continue with the heart centre and working with the energy centres in Chi Kung and meditation. Also try to spend time in nature in appreciation of the lessons that it offers us.

With Love and Light

Tony

Week 7 - Embracing

Spirituality has to be practical, it has to be useful. Spirituality has to help us to deal with life. If it doesn't do this then it is difficult to sustain spiritual growth. There has to be uses and benefits on the journey and not merely the promise of an ultimate prize. Spirituality helps us to face life's problems in a different way. It helps us to deal with life differently.

It is as though life is constantly asking questions of us. It is as if we are being challenged by life to change the way we deal with it. The key here, the answer to life's questions is always the same. The answer is always love. Whatever we are faced with in life the answer is always to bring love to it. This is the essence of spirituality, to bring love into the way we deal with every situation. It is easy to talk about love and easy to think that we are bringing love, but here it is not what we say or think but what we feel. To bring love we have to feel heartfelt, unconditional love.

Embracing is all about the process of bringing love to the situations and problems that we are faced with. As we deal with situations and problems, face on, it can be difficult to come into our heart. We react emotionally, subconsciously and respond automatically. So to bring love is a step away from where we are. At this stage we step back from the situation. We need to accept our initial response but, when we can, at the right time for us, in the right place we revisit our feelings, our instinctive response and bring love to the situation. We embrace the original feeling, recreate it, feel it fully, own it and then and only then do we bring love to the situation. We do this in a safe environment, where and when we are ready. We use meditation. We feel, we experience, embrace and, if we want, bring love to the situation. Others can help us, therapists, counsellors etc. but we need to be clear in our own desire to bring love and ensure that they embrace that too.

We start to bring love to the problems that we face. This should be, in no way, a wishy washy sort of response to life's difficulties. This is about a powerful, true, heartfelt response. This response has the power, both to change the way we see the situation and to change the situation itself. It has the power to transform. It is able to empower and strengthen us.

Love is the answer to the questions that life asks of us. We will learn to bring love more immediately, but for now we learn to step back and in our own time and space, embrace life and all its lessons.

Transformation

Everything that has happened in the past is reflected in the present. When we deal with what is presented to us now we deal with the past too. The aim of the course is to act in the present, dealing with what life presents to us. We learn to come into the present moment, and into the centre with the heart. Yet this is not easy. When we are faced with difficult, uncomfortable and painful situations it is not our first response, yet, to become quiet and still inside. Nor may we be confident in doing so. So the aim of this lesson is to deal with the situations presented to us, what you feel and how you perceive it, later in a safe place.

We use meditation as a way of dealing with the situation, but more importantly, to start to transform the situation by changing the way we react and perceive it. For me it is an essential tool, to be able to deal with what is in front of us. It doesn't have to be this tool, but you need to have something that helps to transform, or else you stay where you are. I observe that many people talk about changing but when it comes to the opportunity to change they revert to old, ingrained habits. The essence of this course that we deal with what we are faced with every day. The lessons that life presents us are exactly right. By dealing with what is in front of us we walk a gentle path, growing a bit at a time.

The tool is to feel what we feel, to acknowledge it, to feel it as deeply as possible and to own it. Then when we are ready to come to the heart and bring the situation or person to the heart centre so that we bring love to it. We do this as often as it takes to start to transform how we respond and react, and

how we perceive until the situation starts to transform itself. We are transforming ourselves yet by doing so the situation transforms itself too. Try not to expect too much too quickly. Some issues are deeply ingrained and we transform ourselves gently.

The Course

To come from love does not mean, in any way, that we come from a position of weakness. It is actually the opposite, we come from a position of power and strength. It is difficult to describe this. To come from the heart should not feel like a capitulation, as if you are giving in to others. It should feel that you are coming from a position of certainty and absolute confidence and strength. It is a position of power but not smugness or arrogance. It comes with practice but also with knowledge, because we start to realise that it does not come from our personal power.

In Chi Kung, we have not only been developing the heart centre but also rooting into the earth, the Tan Tien. This represents the Earth connection and also our link to universal power. So when we come from the heart, from love, we are also supported by universal power.

As always with this course this is not a question of doing this ourselves, but getting out of the way. It may not yet be easy to let go of our own personal power. The more we come from the heart we will recognise that it has within it an inbuilt strength which does not need our own strength, and which is stronger the more we step back and let it happen.

Later, in the second part of the course, we will also recognise that to come from love also has an inherent wisdom, and similarly we learn to step back and let it flow naturally.

For now we practice coming from the heart in meditation, in our own space and time, when we have some control. The transformation meditation sets out a way of learning to embrace emotions, to fully experience them again and to transform them with love. The principle of the process is here, use it in whatever way suits your need. Start small but develop the tool so that you can deal with the hardest situations.

This is a key tool. The first part of the course leads up to this. It needs our emotional awareness. It needs us to acknowledge our feelings and take responsibility. It works with what is reflected from this world. It needs us to use the open heart. Each of us is in a different place, but just work with where you are. Having the intent to change, and then putting that intent into action by using the process, is the most important thing. As awareness grows and as the heart centre becomes stronger and more open the transformation can become more immediate, but there will still be a place for transformation work in your own time and place.

You choose what situations you deal with and when you use it. My advice is to deal with any situation that bothers you. This might seem quite mild but it is better to deal with it while it is gentle than wait until it has festered and grown and you have to deal with it. Try and use the technique as soon as possible after the situation has affected you, try to find a quiet, secure place as soon as possible. If you can, do it while the emotional response is still strong. Never stay in the negativity, always finish by spending time at the heart centre. Let it go afterwards, even if you don't feel you've fully dealt with a problem, finish at the heart and let it go for the time being. Most of all, use it.

With Love and Light
Tony

Week 8 - Acknowledging Beauty

The world is a perfect mirror. It does not choose what to reflect. It does not try or make any effort, it merely reflects. We look in the mirror and choose what to see. Life offers us the lessons that we need, but not because of what the world does but because of what we are projecting and how we view the reflection. There is no effort involved, what we give we receive. It has always been so and always will be. All we have done is awaken to the stimuli. We have acknowledged how things make us feel and have chosen to start to change some of them. But this is only part of the reflection.

The reflection does not only reflect shadow, it also reflects light. We look upon a beautiful world and that beauty also affects us. The beauty of nature, everywhere we look there is beauty, in the smallest detail and in its overall magnificence. We can equally start to look at the beauty in the world and notice how it stimulates us. The beauty of nature reflects our natural beauty and magnificence.

Look also at humanity. We may see pain and feel the effect of others on us. But we also see love, compassion, joy, innocence, happiness, humility, tenderness, kindness. We see these qualities everywhere. The world does not only reflect back darkness, it reflects our light. Yes it is important to change things that limit us, but we equally, or even more importantly, need to accept and embrace our light.

When we see the beauty of nature it reflects our beauty, its power is our power, its magnificence is ours too. When we see the qualities of love and compassion, we recognise ours too. When we see joy we recognise our joy. Every quality we see reflected is also ours. We can only see it if we possess it. Those feelings we don't like we accept or change, but those we do we embrace and hold close.

Some things dominate our lives. They are so absorbing that we cannot get beyond them. Some things prevent us from seeing clearly. We try to clear away those things that prevent us seeing the beauty that is reflected. We clear away the blockages, but we also learn to look elsewhere. We start to see the perfection in everything, in the lessons we are offered and in the beauty we see. There is a perfect reflection, it reflects our humanity and our spirit. We look on both. We don't only concentrate on clearing the wood but also on seeing the trees.

The Course

We are developing effective techniques for dealing with the world, but not just with problems but also with the positive aspects of life. We want to embrace and own the positive qualities that we have and, just as before, we look at the world to see them reflected. What do we see that moves us? What do we see in others that we admire? What makes our heart glow?

We look at the world and appreciate the positivity in mankind and acknowledge it within us. Appreciate that the qualities in everyone else are a reflection of that quality within us. We see it and feel it because it is within us too.

This is not only in other people but we may be moved by nature, by music, by art, by the sacred and when something touches us we need to embrace the feeling. Absorb it, let the quality and experience be felt fully.

Life reflects back both sides. It sometimes seems easier to concentrate on negativity but we also seek the positive. It is so easy when we see something positive to attribute it to someone else without acknowledging that quality is also within us. It is easy when faced with beauty, in any form, to turn to the intellectual mind rather than fully open and appreciate it. This week is about fully absorbing, appreciating and embracing the positive aspects of life as a reflection of who we are.

The qualities of spirit are always present, no matter how well hidden or how we limit them. They are always there, by embracing them we make them more apparent and allow them to become more prevalent.

As before the heart is the answer. We feel those qualities at the heart. Sometimes the world just fills the heart with beauty, we stay there to appreciate it. Sometimes we are moved by the actions of other, we come inside to acknowledge those qualities within us. This is not just about what we feel but where we feel it. We are trying to comprehend the feelings of the heart. The heart is not exclusively positive. We can feel compassion, touch the pain of the world and still feel it at the heart. We want to feel the heart in every dimension and learn, whenever we are able, to come back to the heart.

I have left this week's lesson largely unchanged. There only one thing that I want to add. The exercise of observing positive aspects of people is hardly an exercise at all. The very act of noticing the quality in someone else, that we would have previously missed or overlooked is all that is needed. There is no need to acknowledge that quality in yourself, because the act of observing is, in itself, transforming. The process of recognising of recognising the quality within yourself is a by-product of the observation. This is not an question of wanting to be like someone else, nor to behave in the same way. This is just a recognition and acknowledgement of the small acts of kindness, tenderness etc. that take place all around us all the time. As we observe, we change. It is very simple. The change takes place subtly over time. It does not require great skilfulness in meditation just the recognition of positive qualities in people. It is especially beneficial when we notice them in people we judge, people who are too uptight, or aggressive, or anything else. Just notice their simple actions.

There are two practices this week which are associated but different. The first is one of observing simple acts and kindness that we usually miss, so that we become more aware of them. The second is when something beautiful affects us, whether it is nature, music, art, in film or a book or another person. Try to sit with it and feel it, try to appreciate how it makes you feel.

The world we see is reflecting something back to us. We transform our darkness but we just sit with our light. We act to change one, but we do not have to act for light to grow.

With Love and Light

Tony

Week 9 - Universal Model

God you are three, we are three, have pity on us (Aztec Prayer)

There is only One. Everything comes from the one source. From the One comes an energy, spirit, life force which coalesces into form. The One takes on many forms but all these forms are transient, impermanent. They eventually return to the source. The source is permanent and unchanging. It is the underlying presence in all things. All things retain the presence of the source.

This model of the universe is, in one way or another, present in all religions and spiritual teaching. There is One, which is in three interconnected, unified parts, a spiritual source, physical form and an integrating, connecting energy. This is the universe, the macrocosm. Human beings are a reflection of that macrocosm i.e. we are created in the image of God. So within humanity we see there is a spiritual element, part of the original creative force, a energy which flows within and a physical form. These three are integrated as one.

However the nature of humanity is also that we see this one, or individual, as separate from everything else and in most religions there are different stories about how that separation took place. Now mankind's perception is of a physical world, body and form and a separate spiritual world of non-form and God. Now is the time to start to heal this sense of separation using the tools of prayer and forgiveness.

This is the first part of the course in a nutshell. We find that we are a physical being and a spiritual being integrated together with an energy. We learn to pay attention to these seeming separate parts in order to become whole and complete.

Separation

There is one crucial lesson to learn in part one this course, that there is something more to us than this physical form. There is something beyond us and we are part of it. We learn this so that we can start to explore the world beyond ourselves in the second part of the course.

You probably know this. It is important for us all to understand this. We use a model to try to comprehend it. Our mind always seeks to understand. Yet even at this stage try to bear in mind that the model we use is not true, merely a way of trying to comprehend something that is, literally, beyond us. We cannot comprehend, no matter how much we try, the magnitude and nature of the universe. Yet if we can hold an image then we can use it to help us explore. The key is to understand that we feel separate from the unifying creative force. The essence of spiritual growth is to heal that sense of separation.

The reason we are looking at this now is that we can learn that in seeking spiritual awareness we are not on our own. If we can accept that there is something beyond us then there is no reason that can't rely on its strength, love and wisdom to help us. As I've said understanding and exploring our connection is the nature of the second part of the course but we can even now use prayer and forgiveness as tools which help us to deal with everyday situations and help us to grow. We can access their power and start to heal the sense of separation.

The sense of separation is a not bad thing. Every time I run this course I have self doubt. I know that I don't know. I know that I am still on my journey so I doubt my ability to lead people where I have not yet stepped. Yet, I was once told that the lesson I am here to learn is trust. How could I learn the lesson of trust if I did not have doubt? Whatever lessons you have to learn, the sense of being separate from our source, is an essential part. If I did not feel separate and disconnected I would not sense any lack and would have no doubt and would never be able to learn the lessons I need to. The process of learning the lessons is the way in which we heal our sense of separation.

Separation is a perception. It is natural, in this world, for us to feel separate. Yet this is not the true nature of this world. We have never ever been separated, we are still connected to everything. We are not trying to reconnect, but merely to feel reconnected. Because we are not disconnected, but feel it, we can still use the connection to help us. The tools of prayer and forgiveness are tools that use the connection to help us grow.

The mind seeks to grasp for any sense of understanding. It is very helpful to have some foundation from which to work, some belief system on which to build. My advice is not to hold onto it too tightly, use it, but do not let it become too solid. It is a tool for understanding, not the answer. Use it but try to keep an open mind.

The Course

We are ready now to heal the sense of separation within us. We are not yet ready to heal the separation from source, but this is the first step.

We are the universe in microcosm. If we are to heal the universal rift then we must heal the rift within us first. We must again bring the body and spirit back into wholeness. We are ready now because the heart is ready.

We have already taken great steps. By working with the heart we have started to re-unite the separation within us, to start to take the steps back to individual wholeness. We have started to become aware again of the spiritual side of our being and started to be aware of it in others. The spiritual side of us is, and always has been connected. We are still connected.

You are a spiritual being in a physical body. There are three parts to us integrated into a whole. We are a physical form, with all its ability to experience, we are a spiritual being which is open and connected and we are an integrated force which combines and connects these two into one.

The heart is the centre of our being that integrates the physical and spiritual. When we come to the heart we come to the centre of our being. We use the heart to reconnect with the spiritual experience. The awakened heart helps us to come close to the spiritual experience. This is aim of the first part of the course, to re-unite body and spirit, to become whole again.

Can you sense what an enormous step this is? It seems so simple, yet for most people this is so far away from where they are. Just acknowledge to yourself what an amazing thing this is. To be able to bring body and spirit together within you, even some of the time, is both natural and incredible and it has huge implications for your personal health, vitality and well being.

Every time this week that you come to the heart and re-unite your body and spirit feel appreciation. This is a new lesson pulled out to stand on its own, from the lessons on forgiveness and prayer. There are a few new notes on the website

These contain an exercise, the microcosmic orbit, which is an extension of one the exercises in the 8 Silk Brocade, the circles of light. These two go hand in hand, almost literally, because what is experienced externally in the hands is also experienced internally as the flow of the microcosmic orbit.

With love and light

Tony

Week 10 - Forgiveness

At the core of forgiveness there is nothing to forgive. We do not need to forgive others and we do not need to forgive ourselves. Yet forgiving others and forgiving ourselves are a means to that end.

Imagine what it feels like to be loved completely. Everything that you have ever done wrong, even the worst thing, doesn't matter. You are loved totally, completely, utterly with an unconditional love which is all consuming, totally embracing, so that it burns within. This is love for you. You are loved.

In the end there is nothing to forgive. Everything you have ever done wrong is nothing. You are already, and always have been, loved unconditionally. Feel this love for you, let it consume you, filling every part of your being.

When we forgive ourselves or others we are only clearing away obstacles to our awareness of love's presence. We have always been loved completely and always will be. This unconditional love is constant, undiminished by any action. It is ever present. When we are consumed by this love the world seems different.

Everyone we meet is ourselves reflected. We can see the light or the darkness. Everyone is just like us, they have a human side and a spiritual side. We can see their darkness, which is our darkness reflected or we can see their light, which is our light.

Forgive them and we forgive ourselves. Let go of the negative image of others and try to see their light. As we do we let go of our own negative image. They are already forgiven as we are already forgiven.

The core of spiritual experience is love. It is the heart experience for others and for ourselves. We have learnt to awaken the heart and to bring strength to it. We feel love and bring it to every situation.

Working with Forgiveness

There are two states that we can be in, a state of wholeness and a state of humanity. When we are whole, there is nothing to forgive. Yet our humanity is capable of inflicting and feeling great pain. This pain remains with us whether it was inflicted on us or we inflicted it on someone else. I do not wish in any way to underestimate the effect of this on us. This pain is one of the greatest blockages to spiritual awareness and one of the hardest things to let go. We associate it with those who have caused it and feel guilty for the pain we have caused. This association of pain with others distances us from them and keeps us apart.

We are trying to become more spiritually aware and to act from a perception of our wholeness rather than our lack. While ever we keep others apart from us then we are still operating from our humanity. There are no exceptions to this. Holding even one person separate from us keeps us in chains. We need to let others go free, to see their light not their darkness. We need to free ourselves from our sense of guilt. The most important thing is to have the intent to forgive everything, so that we are ready to move forward.

Forgiveness is part of the process of being able to choose. We need to acknowledge when we are angry, hurt and vengeful. We need to grow through forgiveness, but we also need to return to the place where no forgiveness is needed. When pain gets in the way forgive others and ourselves. We have started to forgive by using the transformation exercise and the writing exercises. Now we just try to see others, especially those who have caused us pain, in light not darkness and move beyond our anger.

We also need to let go of our own guilt for what we have done to others. We feel it and transform it in the same way. We start to use the unconditional love meditation exercise which helps us to feel, whatever we have done, that we are loved unconditionally.

Forgiveness is not an action of our humanity but a choice for our spirituality. To forgive from our humanity is to say "I forgive you for what you have done to me." Meaning I am better than you and I forgive you. Forgiveness from spirituality is about knowing the other person's humanity but choosing to see their light from our own place of light, meaning that you and I are one.

The more we know the light in others the more we see it in ourselves. If it is difficult to forgive others it is even harder to forgive ourselves. The process of forgiving others helps us to forgive ourselves. We learn to come to a place of unconditional love for us. We acknowledge our human failings but choose to see our light.

Forgiveness is not an action but a process which grows and develops as we grow. The more we understand the true nature of the world, the more forgiveness develops. The more we know that everything is joined and one, we realise that forgiveness of ourselves, and others, is the same. As we go further we realise that there is nothing at all to forgive and that we are all already loved unconditionally. As we grow in this knowledge we learn to avoid creating more pain. Being loved unconditionally is not an excuse to do anything, but a call to act from love.

The Course

Use forgiveness to heal the sense of separation. Have the intent to forgive, so that we do not hold grudges against others and against ourselves. Have no exceptions, we need to forgive everything.

Try not to forgive from the stance of "I forgive you for what you have done to me." Try to forgive from "I understand your humanity but I choose to see beyond it to your light." Try to hold the person in your heart.

Forgive yourself. Try to let go of any guilt associated with past actions. Use the transformation exercise from earlier in the course, or the writing to let go of feelings of guilt.

Try to feel that you are loved unconditionally. Using the exercise in this week's notes.

I've updated the website information to contain more of the book material on forgiveness and have added the unconditional love meditation exercise.

There is some excellent writing about forgiveness in Supplements to A Course In Miracles. It is also very good on prayer which is next week's topic and on healing. This can be accessed at <http://acim-search.miraclevision.com/std-second-edition-and-supps/index.html> follow the link to the website and then on the left hand side go down to the section on the supplements "The Song of Prayer" and click on the part you want read.

With Love and Light
Tony

Week 11 - Prayer

"I am lost. I stand alone in the dark, fearful. It is as if everyone has abandoned me. I am afraid. All my tools and knowledge are as if nothing. I close my eyes and pray."

We are not alone, it seems that we do this journey ourselves, that we stand or fall by our own ability. Yet this is not true. The essence of spirituality is that we are one, part of everything, joined and connected. The nature of spirit is that it has a natural intelligence, a power and strength and a loving nature. This intelligence, power and love is available to us as we make our journey. When we pray we are accessing this spiritual force to support and guide us. Prayer is our reminder, that we are supported, that spirit stands with us. Our prayers are answered, perhaps not as we think they should be, but the answer, the guidance is always there. We are no longer alone, we never were.

In its highest form prayer is the reunion. It is us raising ourselves up and opening so that we come again into harmony. It is the goal of the journey, to be re-united. Before that prayer offers us support and guidance.

The aim of this course is to develop and use tools to awaken us to the awareness of our spiritual nature. We deal with our emotions, we quieten the mind and we open our heart. Yet we cannot always be there, centred, open. Sometimes despite everything we have already learnt we cannot find our way back into our heart. It might be fear or anger or worry about someone. It might be a critical time in our life, when our emotions are so strong and our concerns so powerful that we cannot find a way to quieten the mind and open the heart. There are times on this journey when we need support, when we cannot stand alone.

Prayer is a way of returning to our centre, not through our own effort but by opening to something that we believe in. At this stage of our development we need to believe in something. Prayer is a powerful tool. It reminds us of the true nature of the world. It reminds us that we are part of something much greater than ourselves. It calls upon this and in doing so accesses all the wisdom, love and power to help us.

We need to recognise that there is something more. It helps us when we cannot come from our centre. It connects us to the creative power of the universe for our purpose and benefit.

Belief is important to help us on the journey and prayer starts as a tool of belief. Later we will come to understand that belief can also hinder us. When the experience of prayer becomes strong enough we can move beyond belief, but for now we need belief.

Ultimately prayer is not us calling upon something beyond us. It is a re-connection, a union with everything. Prayer is the song of the universe, the underlying vibration, within everything.

Mantra

Mantra is a form of prayer. The sound of the words resonate within us to open us up. Mantra is an ancient and sacred form of prayer. Just listening to the sounds repeated awakens us. These sacred prayers have the effect that we desire of bringing us back to our centre. The sound of the words vibrate with the body to open and raise up, much as in the way we use Chi Kung. These are sacred prayers designed to raise us up.

I have used mantra in a number of ways and listened to mantra many times and recognise the power that they have to uplift us. Listening to mantra is an excellent tool, but when I was introduced to mantra it was in a different way. There is a way of working with a mantra which embeds the prayer so that it is like a constant sound flowing through us. This sound flows along unnoticed until it is needed. Suddenly it is there on the surface, reminding us and returning us to a state of grace.

This form of mantra is embedding a prayer within us. We repeat the prayer so many times that it becomes part of us. It is there constantly. I have used two prayers which have deep resonance with me. One with Kwan Yin, the Goddess of Unconditional Love and Compassion “Na Mo Kwan Shi Yin Po Sa” and one with Christ, the Jesus Prayer “Lord Jesus Christ Have mercy on me”. These are for me the balance of East and West, male and female. I have worked with them for many years they are always there. I still hear the words, sometimes one, or then the other coming to the surface. When I am in great need, the words come naturally to me. Initially they are very fast, but soon become slower, more resonant as I calm. I also notice that at times the Lord’s Prayer, so often repeated as a child, returns to me.

For me mantra is a powerful tool that helps us in times of need. If you want to use one, then choose one that appeals to you. There is more information about the use of mantra in this week’s notes on the website.

The Course

This course is not based on any particular religion. It is open to people of all beliefs and people with none. The course aims to deepen spirituality through experience, by feeling and experiencing. These feelings and experiences are nothing to do with religion, although religious teachings can help us to reach them. The experiences are open and available to everyone. Every human being can experience spirituality, it is not confined to any religion. There is only one God for me means that the experience of prayer, of being at one with all that is, is the same for everyone. It may be described differently, interpreted in a different way, but the essential experience is the same for everyone.

We choose a prayer that appeals to us. We reach out to the divine in the way that touches us personally. We use a prayer that feels right for us, not one that someone else uses but ours. We pray to someone we believe in. Which angels or divine masters for call upon for help is up to us.

Try to pray without any doubt that it will be successful. When you pray, try to do so from a sense of gratitude, rather than one of asking. Prayer is reaching for the natural creative abundance and be grateful for its success. Know that the prayer is already answered.

Pray from the perspective of the highest good. Try not to limit your prayer by your human limitations. When you pray, do so for the benefit of all. Pray with the highest of intentions for yourself and others.

Be open to the highest outcome. Try not to limit or judge the answer to the prayer. Try to be open minded about the solution that prayer offers, giving the universe space to operate in its own way. Prayer is always answered but not always in the way we expect.

“There was a moment today when I felt I could not continue. How would I be able to complete the last 8 days. The answer was immediate, pray to God for help. I am on my knees, physically and mentally and ready to pray for help and assistance. It is when we are ready to submit that the greatest guidance is available.”

It is good just to listen to mantra, sacred music and chant as a way of reconnecting with the divine centre. There are many great mantra CDs around I like the music of Deva Premal and Krishna Das. A few CDs I particularly love

Mantras for Precarious Times - Deva Premal

Buddhist Chants and Peace Music - Buddhist Chanting Group

Rain of Blessings- Vajra Chant - Jean Phillippe Rykiel

With Love and Light

Tony

Week 12 - Surrender

When peace comes at last to those who wrestle with temptation and fight against the giving in to sin; when the light comes at last into the mind given to contemplation; or when the goal is finally achieved by anyone, it always comes with just one happy realisation: "I need do nothing." A Course in Miracles

Spiritual awakening never comes with effort but through surrender. It doesn't happen at some time in the future but in the present moment. We can't make it happen. We will never be able to gain wisdom through our intellect but by becoming empty. Spiritual gains are made when we stop trying and just give in. All the effort we apply towards spiritual growth makes us more ready to awaken, it helps us to change and come closer to understanding, but it will not take us there.

There should be both doing and non-doing. As human beings we need to do things, and much of this course is about the things we can do which help us and keep us aware. Yet these tools can only take us so far. There has to also be a time of non-doing, where we just stop and are open. In meditation the techniques and tools need to fall away. In Chi Kung we need to just do it without effort and without purpose.

We need to spend time just being, in meditation, in Chi Kung and in life. We are present, alert, and quiet, not in order to grow, not to learn anything, not as an exercise but just to be. We do it with no thought to gain anything or develop anything but to be at one. We do it without any expectation. We do it without any judgement of how good we are. We do not have to do it perfectly. We do it as well as we can do it today

This is what active willingness means. On one side we are active doing, working with this world, growing and developing. On the other side we are already perfect we just sit and realise it.

We are learning to let go, of our body, our emotions, our thoughts and our ego. We are learning to let go of the concept of who and what we are. We are becoming more open minded. We are learning to experience the human side of ourselves and the spiritual side of our being.

To be able to surrender takes great skill. It is a skill that we may only be able to touch so far, but one which we return to throughout the course. People tell me they know how to surrender, but usually they don't really yet understand what it means. The problem that we have in spiritual awakening is that the position from which we view spirituality and the position from which spirituality operates are diametrically opposite.

We cannot really explore the depth of spirituality without first changing our position.

Paradox

The two sides of us, the human side and the spiritual side operate from completely different perspectives. We work with one but the other, the spiritual side is completely beyond our understanding. The human side operates from a relative, singular, individual position while the spirit is absolute, interconnected and whole. They see everything differently.

The starting point of our human, ego side is fear. Everything in the world is separate and a potential threat to the ego and the body. The spiritual side operates from love. Everything is connected and part of One. Nothing can be threatened because everything is one. This gives us two views on the world, the absolute and the relative. From the absolute everything is seen from the whole interconnected oneness. From the relative position we see the world as an individual looking out. It is not one or the other, it is both together.

The process of spiritual awareness is one of moving from fear to love, from the relative to the absolute. The aim now is to pay more attention to both the ego and spirit. We have always had a spiritual side. We have always had experiences of the spirit, but we have not always paid attention. Often we have been encouraged to ignore spiritual experience. We have been encouraged to develop a toughness to deal with the world and not to be so soft. Yet we have all had spiritual experiences.

All this is absolutely normal. Our aim is to change perception, to start to pay attention to the spiritual side of ourselves. That's all. We start to pay attention, give it time, enjoy it, free it.

The human side offers us the opportunity to learn and grow, the spiritual side just to be, together a human being. Neither is good or bad. Nothing is right or wrong. We choose where we want to pay attention and what we want to lead. Do we want to operate primarily from love or fear? That is the choice.

The two sides are not separate and are not in competition. They are two sides of the same coin. They are the yin and yang of human existence. They are two parts of the whole, they do not fight each other, they complement each other. Together they are whole and perfect, apart they are incomplete, unbalanced.

The Course

The course will return to the subject of surrender in the second part and again in the third part. We keep returning to it because it is an absolute truth that we need to do nothing. Each time we return to it we go deeper into it.

In the first part of the course we are just trying to learn to let go of the body, emotions, mind and ego. There are also two other aspects, at this stage, of letting go. First we have to let go of our human need to do it right. The doing aspect of the course is about improving our skills, in the non-doing we just accept that we are where we are and are in the experience. We try not to judge ourselves, we just surrender to the extent we can today. We are taught to try hard, to work for everything, yet spirituality is awakened when we stop trying. When we are just being, we stop trying. We allow ourselves to accept where we are. If our mind is busier than we want it to be that is Ok. If our body still causes us discomfort, we just accept it as it is. We can come back to the practical doing side of the course later, working with what life offers us, changing, raising ourselves, opening up more. But in non-doing we just accept everything is as it is.

The second aspect is to seek out the quality that surrendering brings rather than concentrate on the blockage that we are trying to release. So in letting go of the body we focus on feeling relaxation to whatever extent we can today. We are surrendering by accepting the body as it is today. We acknowledge our emotions but try to focus on the stillness. We do not try to force the mind to be quiet or to suppress our thoughts, we just try to sit in the silence and keep returning to it without judgement. We do not try to overcome the ego, but focus on the heart centre, because when we come from the heart we are not coming from the ego.

Try to spend some time each day just being. This can either be in meditation or just a few moments when we stop the busyness of life and become aware.

Active Willingness is the balance between doing and being. It is being active in creating change and being willing, giving in or surrendering to the divine. These complementary sides both need attention. The ego is needed as a tool for growth and learning, by creating a process of change stimulated by thoughts and feelings that we find difficult. At the same time we need to do nothing, just be. We need to spend time just being with our spiritual nature whenever we can, in nature, meditation, prayer and increasingly with other people.

There should be both action and non-action, doing and being. We should be open to change but also recognise we do not need to change. Everything is paradoxical, the opposites are carefully balanced. We learn to be at peace with ourselves, happy to acknowledge and own how we feel, happy to change when we want to, happy to just be when we can.

I want to acknowledge two things and I feel that it is very important that I do this now. When we come into this state of being, in meditation there is an opportunity to learn. It is not the objective merely a possible result.

First I never ever wrote any of this course on my own. When the material first came through it was through meditation. Any insight and understanding that is in the course came through the process of meditation. When the material became a book, I could not write anything myself, but it always came though after meditation when I was still in a connected space but able to ground that connection into practical action, writing. I knew even clearer that the writing was guided when the book was completed, because it suddenly ended and it was if I could write no more. It was a long time, years, before I again felt able to write with the connection. I want to clearly acknowledge the universal guidance in the creation of all the writing. I always try to write from a connected place and always try to write with integrity, so that there is as little of the human me and as much of the divine connection as possible. So I want to acknowledge all the guidance and insight that I have been given in order to produce this material.

Second I want to acknowledge the book A Course in Miracles. A book, Gifts From a Course in Miracles was recently returned to me and when looking through it I recognise how much it influenced my teaching. This course in no way is a teaching of A Course in Miracles, because that course stands on its own and needs no teachers. But in doing the course, even though it is beyond my comprehension, obviously its influence has stuck. Also I know that my teachers were also students of the Course, and its influence will also have come to me through them. I want to acknowledge the incredible universal teaching and guidance which is reflected in A Course in Miracles.

With Love and Light

Tony

Review of Part One

This is the end of the first part of the course. There is a pause now, a time to catch up and assimilate what we have learnt.

For me the essence of this course is that spiritual awareness is simple, natural and easy. Yet I have read much and heard so many times how hard the spiritual journey is, but for me this has never been the case. I recognise that people have hard times on the spiritual journey and sometimes we cannot see clearly where we are going. We have doubt and lack trust but for me this has never been hard, merely part of the journey. For me spirituality has always been a place of retreat, a safe haven, to which I can go when life is difficult. It has become to primary way of dealing with this world, especially when times are hard.

Life is hard and that it affects us and as we awaken spiritually we have less places to hide. My advice is always to be gentle and kind to yourself. Let the journey unfold in its own time and do not force it. The universe has a natural intelligence. If we deal with what is in front of us today we deal with the past and the future in a gentle way. Spirituality reveals itself as we walk on the path. It is when we ignore life's lessons that life becomes harder until we have to listen.

It is a core truth that we are all the same irrespective of belief system, race, culture, colour, sex or ability. We are all the same and have the same potential. Spirituality has to be easy, it has to span all shades and shadows. It has to be accessible by everybody, irrespective of their physical and mental capability and their personal circumstances. For me it is time for us all to let go of the belief in the difficulty of spirituality.

Spirituality is simple because we are already spiritual, everybody even the person who once told me that he was "about as spiritual as a plank". The feeling of spirit is already an integral part of us. It cannot be lost. The essence of this course is to start to recognise the feelings of spirit and to pay attention to them. The feelings of spirit are commonplace and natural. We look too hard to find them, because we do not recognise that we already know them. We are expecting to feel something that is extraordinary, but really they are feelings we already know. On my journey I have had experiences that are amazing, other worldly and incredible. These have occurred along the way and have marked moments of clarity, insight and understanding. These have been important and provide a basis of spiritual self knowledge, but they are not the everyday feelings of spirit. These are feelings of warmth in the heart, a stillness and a peacefulness. They are feelings of wonder and amazement, a feeling of awe. They are the appreciation of beauty, of holiness, of love and joy. They are not special they are normal.

The Course

The basis of this course is experience. The aim is to feel and experience what it is like to be human and to be spiritual. Experience is the key, because at the level of experience we are all the same. We can move beyond religion and belief, beyond race, colour, sex, intelligence and disability. No matter what we are like as human beings we are all capable of the same spiritual experience. It doesn't matter whether you believe in God, whether you think the experience is just a chemical reaction in the body, or whether you attribute it to angels, the aim is to come to the experience.

This experience is founded on increased awareness of yourself, developed through energy exercise and meditation. The overall aim of the first part of the course is to know ourselves better and how we operate in the world. We recognise that life is always prompting us, every day, constantly reminding us of who we are and how we behave. We use life as a stimulus to help us to understand ourselves better and to change. This is not something we do once, it becomes as constant awareness in our life.

We learn how to change, through greater understanding but also by transforming our feelings. The course is not about self analysis but about feeling. Acknowledge how you feel, own that feeling, take responsibility for it and if you choose, come to your heart to transform it. The heart centre and learning to open the heart, not as an idea but as a tangible experience, is key to the first part of the course.

Through the heart we start to learn to forgive. First we forgive others, but more importantly we learn to forgive ourselves. We feel at our heart that we are already forgiven, that we are already, at a spiritual level, loved unconditionally, no matter what we have ever done.

Life continues to flow providing opportunities for us to learn, and always to go deeper into love and forgiveness. We develop a skill set which allows us deal with life, using awareness, transformation, forgiveness and love. We are learning that there are two different sides to us that operate from completely different perspectives, individual and absolute. We are learning to choose which to come from. This process of changing and choosing takes time. Let it embed itself through constant awareness. It is not that we do anything different in our life but that we approach life from a completely different perspective. The difference is incredible.

We are already spiritual, we are not trying to develop spirituality, but become aware of its presence. You do not need to try. In the end there is nothing to do. There has to be an active part to this course, or we would not change and as physical beings we need to maintain attention and focus. There also needs to be a practice of non-doing, of just being, where we allow the spiritual side to express itself. Spirituality is not something separate from life, it is who we are.

This course takes time. The lessons pass very quickly and you will need more time to embed the tools, but they are life tools, you learn and develop them as you use them.

The only advice I have is to make spirituality part of your life. You need to create some time and space for yourself, but most of this course requires no time just awareness and action as part of everyday activity. For me spirituality is not about the transcendent experience but the practical application, what I term grounding spirituality. My aim is to do everything I do with love, with the practical feeling of love in my heart. This is the simple everyday feeling we covered earlier.

So far on this course we have been developing this feeling of heartfelt love supported by strength and power. The next part of the course is about how to raise ourselves up more, to become more connected to spiritual truth and creative power. Again this is not about the transcendent experience but bringing wisdom to support heartfelt love and bringing it into everything we do.

There will now be a short break before the start of stage 2 of the course. It is a chance to review, catch up and practice. It is an ideal time to practice bringing love into action, to spend time with family and friends, to give and share, with love.

In stage 2 we will go further into the spiritual aspects of our being. We will explore or spiritual connection, work with creativity, the nature of spiritual community and once again come back to just being. In chi kung we will start to open up the energy body further and go deeper into meditation and the key meditation practices for this course.

Thank you all for your participation. I hope that the course is stimulating, encouraging and inspiring you to go further and deeper into the spiritual journey

With Love and Light

Tony

Week 13 - Connection

Welcome to the second part of the course.

The first part of the course was primarily concerned with the simplicity and normality of spirituality and how, by bringing attention to it, creating space for it, will bring positive benefits for your health and well being. The key message is that spirituality is normal because we are all spiritual beings and that without some element of spiritual awareness we are out of balance.

Having emphasised the normality of spirituality in the first part of the course, the second part is quite different. Now we start to explore the spiritual part of our being more deeply. While spirituality is normal it is also extraordinary. The nature of the spiritual is incredible, almost impossible to comprehend, yet that is what we are setting out to explore.

The exploration of our spiritual nature should be founded on two qualities. The first is a sense of trust i.e. trusting what you experience. I always think it is good on the spiritual journey to be sceptical, to question everything and not just accept it on face value. At the same time we need to be open minded and be prepared to explore with a degree of trust in what we are experiencing. If scepticism overrides our trust completely we will not learn. Eventually I believe that spirituality needs to be founded on direct experience rather than belief. But at this stage of the course we need to allow the experiences to grow and develop. So as we experience something and are doubtful, we need to trust to the extent that we allow it to develop.

The second quality is playfulness. Spirituality for me is very important but it should never become too serious. We are exploring qualities, abilities and experiences that are incredible but they should also be fun. We are trying to open our mind to the awareness of the spiritual experience. To try to comprehend the interconnectedness of all things and how we are an integral part of that and also to understand that we can link with this, connect our intent, be part of the creative power and also the way this changes how we see ourselves and others is mind boggling but also fun.

Connection

When I teach Tai Chi I describe the three treasures, in my own terms, as a vibrant physical body, an open heart and a still quiet connected mind. It is this third quality, the quiet connected mind, that we are exploring. Meditation helps to bring the mind to stillness. In this quiet state the mind starts to open and expand. In this expansion we reach upwards and outwards. The mind seems to resonate, like a higher vibration or song, with the universe. It is as though we are connected with the unifying creative force. This state of mind is being connected and brings a sense of knowledge and intelligence beyond the intellect. This may come to us as insight, as intuition or guidance.

We are all connected. This connection is not limited to a few who do special exercises or meditation, but they do help us to be aware of it. In connecting we are not just connecting to a source but with everything and everybody. Our true nature is to be expansive, without limits or boundaries. All the physical limitations of time and space no longer apply. The limits to knowledge, the limits of physical form apply to our humanity but not to our spirituality. We aim to explore this and to learn how to be with it, its effects and implications. It is often beyond us to even imagine it, so let it grow and develop. The key lesson in this part of the course is to learn that we are not separate from anything or anybody. We want to learn this spiritually, not intellectually, because the implications of this knowledge, in how we see others and for the way we live our life, is incredible.

I like to think of this connection being to a natural intelligence, something that is manifested in a natural state. It is as though it is the sum knowledge of everybody and everything. It is a source of knowledge that we can access. It is an ability of the mind.

When we bring the three treasures together, we are able to bring this open connected mind together with our physical being and our open heart, into wholeness. We can bring spirituality into everyday activity. This state of connection which we become more aware of through meditation is not exclusive to that state. Yes, we can through meditation gain insight but we can also bring it into practice. When I write I try to be in that state, sometimes I am deeper in it than others, but I am always trying to write in a connected state with my body alert and my heart open. In that way I hope that I can bring knowledge and understanding that I can't bring intellectually.

Don't take all this too seriously, in the sense that you have to get this right, that you need to have guidance and clarity. This is a very subtle skill that needs to be comprehended. We remain with two sides to us and spiritual guidance is more like a banner blowing in the wind than a solid signpost. Play with it, enjoy its subtlety. Occasionally there will be great clarity and understanding but more often a vague sense of what to do and what direction to follow. Let knowledge dawn upon your subconscious, rather than feel that you have to learn it. Enjoy it and play with it.

The Course

In this second part of the course we are going to work with the higher centres, the throat, third eye and crown, building on the foundation of the lower centres up to the heart. As the connection with the earth is centred on the Tan Tien, the connection with the light is centred on our third eye. The aim is to raise ourselves up, to open the higher centres and raise our vibration. The body, heart and mind becomes like a radio mast sending out a signal that harmonises with the unifying creative force, so that we become one.

In meditation and Chi Kung we will work with these centres to open and strengthen them. The Eight Silk Brocade has already started this process. We will go further with the meditation exercise working with the centres and also introduce some new and specific meditations.

It is good to start to focus on the third eye centre. One exercise which is very practical and beneficial is smiling to the eyes. In this you feel the warmth of a smile inside and behind the eyes. This is working with the third eye centre and also our spiritual connection. It is so easy, by smiling genuinely, to bring our spirituality into our daily activity.

Once again there are ten lessons to this part of the course, dealing with connection, creativity, community and just being.

The course now starts to concentrate on the higher energy centres. While the first part of the course concentrated on rooting and connecting to the earth energy and bringing that up to the heart, the second part focuses on the higher centres, the connection to the light and bringing it down to the heart. Both Chi Kung and meditation will support this.

Spiritual connection is often associated with our belief system. When teaching chi kung and meditation I often talk about connecting to the light, but we should work in a way that resonates with our belief system. If we put this spiritual connection into the context of our own belief system then I believe the experience becomes deeper and more meaningful, more quickly. The course is not here to challenge belief but to deepen belief with direct experience.

Love and light

Tony

Week 14 - Intuition

What is the essence of connection? It is awareness that we are more than this body, that we are, in some way, part of and connected to everything. This comes at first as awareness of something beyond the physical form. It is an intuition, guidance, a sense of knowledge. It is instinctively knowing if something is right or wrong. The sensing that there is something more than the physical world we know and the awareness that we are linked to it, integrated with it are the foundation of spiritual awareness.

There are two qualities that we are developing; the quietness of the mind and the openness of the heart. These two combine to bring us into a state of awakened presence, quiet and alert. The two seem different but are part of one state. We are becoming more aware that we are not limited. We are becoming aware that we are not just the body and the feelings associated with it but we have a presence which is much more than this.

The mind starts to become quieter. We try to find moments of silence, where the mind is present, alert and ready. As the mind becomes quieter it feels as though it is expansive. The heart starts to open more. The heart expands within the body and beyond the body, it feels as though it gives and can also feel as though it receives. When the heart feels expansive, open, that is a sense of spiritual validity. When you feel with an open heart, it is a good place to make decisions, to choose.

These two are together, quiet and expansive. We start to feel that we are more than the physical as though the whole body is a listening, experiencing device.

Listening

The essential quality is to listen with the body and the mind. When talking to other people, particularly when it is an important or significant conversation for you or them, then listen with your body. What are you feeling? What are they feeling? What they are saying may not be what they are really trying to say. They may be aggressive or angry, but what they are really feeling may be fearful. Listen with the body, feel what the centres are feeling. You put aside your own needs and through your body really listen.

The process of listening is one of being quiet. You listen not just to the words but to what is behind. When we listen, we become quiet, we stop thinking about how to respond and just listen. Seeking guidance or direction is the same, we learn to listen. We come into a silent place and just listen. We let the message come as a feeling. Just let it come.

If the mind is open to it we can receive guidance at any time and in many ways. If we are seeking to understand, to comprehend, to learn, or to know what to do, then be open. If we are trying to learn a lesson, then be ready to hear. Not just in meditation but at any time. It may be a sentence in a book, that stands out. We may hear a line in a song or in a film, that resonates with something inside us. It is something that, for ever reason, stands out. If we are receptive the right message will resonate.

We learn to hear, but we do not always know what is instruction and guidance and what is us. This is where we play. Who is calling us on the phone? Which route do we take? Which item should we select? If you suddenly feel like doing something then go with it. Try to get into the flow. Try to sense the flow in your life and try to feel what flows and what doesn't flow. Play with it ,enjoy it and feel the sense of intuition develop as you do.

Interconnection

The mind is quiet, the heart is open, you are uplifted, the body is awake. You are listening, paying attention, to the feelings and the experience. The words just appear, like thoughts but different. It is as

if the words magically appear on the paper without being written down. The words come freely, without effort. Insight comes suddenly like a flash. It is a knowing, not a thinking.

We are connected. We are a connected being, nothing is separate from us and we are not separate from anything. The effect of what we think, say and do is not limited, but extends outwards. The connection is both giving and receiving. This connection is ever present, we do not switch it on and off. We can tune into it, be aware of it and of its flow. Intuition, guidance and insight are the effect of the connection when we pay attention.

We are a connected being. When quiet the mind will open and expand, upwards and outwards. We raise ourselves up to become part of everything. We are not separate.

There is a process within this course of learning to open and awaken the body. It is as though, through Chi Kung and meditation, we raise the vibration of the body, in order to reach up and be aware of the connection. The exercises and meditation in this course are aimed at assisting the awakening of the body to its capability as a connected being. We have started to work on the higher centres to start to reach up and the Chi Kung exercise will assist further.

Once we reach up then we feel the connection. This is not exact science, there is no right or wrong answer to what we are connected to, but we can feel and experience that sense of connection. The mind is quiet and meditative, the body is awake, the heart is open. We feel that we are expansive. For me it feels like the body and mind create a vibration, a sound that resonates with a common source sound. It is the feeling that each of us are connected together through this common source. In this sense the boundaries between us break down because we are connected. This connection is the foundation of the spiritual perspective.

We interact with this common source and through the common source with each other. There is an interconnection between all things and this interconnectedness enables communication.

This ability to communicate, non-verbally and non-physically is the foundation for many amazing things, like psychic ability, healing, intuition, guidance, insight etc. Our ability to tune into this communication varies but is aided by our ability to reach up and connect. People have amazing psychic ability quite naturally but for many of us we tune out or don't connect with them. As we awaken spiritually this ability is enhanced. We are more likely to gain insight, to be more intuitive and be more guided in daily life. Often this guidance and intuition is very subtle, but it grows and develops.

Do we work to develop it or let it develop? My feeling is to play with it. Let it develop in its own time but also pay attention to it, listen for it and learn to recognise it. Start to act on it and follow any sense of guidance. Let yourself come into the universal flow. Let life become more guided and intuitive.

The Course

Chi Kung and meditation are important tools in helping us to develop the open heart and the quiet mind. Yet they are tools not objectives. The aim is not to learn Chi Kung movement nor to learn a technique for meditation but to learn how to come into an expansive state. There are always different types of practice, those which help us to learn, those which help us experience and those where we just be. Our practice should involve all of these, the practice in order to learn and to make more effective, the practice where we just enter the experience and those times where we just bring the experience into everyday life. This third part is the most important, to find occasions during everyday activity where we come into a connected space, no matter how inexperienced we feel, no matter how much we feel we don't get to where we think we should be.

When you play with the intuitive exercises try to find that space where the mind is quiet and expansive and the heart is open. Try to sense, not think. Try to listen or be aware with the whole of the body.

The secret is to keep very tranquil and control the emotions. This is why the first degree of discipleship entails control of the emotional body - control of the emotions of passion, fear, despair and anger. The Light Bringer, White Eagle

Stillness is another important quality, in this case stillness of the emotions. It is the ability to put aside emotional turbulence. This is the ability to find stillness in the midst of turbulence. It is important because those are often the times that we need our connection the most. If we cannot find emotional stillness then we cannot easily step into the quiet mind and open heart. This does not mean that we should suppress emotion, nor that being spiritual is being emotionless. It is a skill like many others. The transformation tools from the first part of the course will assist in developing this ability.

With Love and Light

Tony

Week 15 - Discernment

Spiritual experience is felt with the body, emotions and mind. It is through the senses, with emotional feelings and with the mind that we can touch the spiritual experience. The body is the means for the experience. Somewhere in the range of experiences there is something which we call spiritual. A spiritual experience is one beyond the range of everyday experiences in the sense that it is greater than or more expansive than the body itself. It feels as though we are sensing something that is beyond us. It feels expansive. It is interconnected i.e. we sense we are connected to other beings. It is like a flow in that it may seem to be both coming and going. There are areas of the body which seem to respond to this expansive, flowing, spiritual experience, that is these areas are more sensitive to the experience. These areas of the body are sometimes referred to as chakras, or energy centres. They seem to respond and react to the spiritual world. Spiritual response is, by its nature, different from the physical world we normally experience through the senses. Yet if we are to react and respond to the spiritual, we do it through the physical body.

The spiritual experience has an intelligence. It is possible through the spiritual experience to get insight, knowledge, understanding, guidance, intuition. Yet in order to ground these spiritual experiences we need to bring them into our intellectual mind. The skill is to be able to differentiate between those spiritual experiences that we bring into the mind and normal thought processes. In the same way we want to be able to touch spiritual experiences and how they feel physically and emotionally, in a way that differentiates from normal everyday experiences.

Discernment is a key skill, particularly where the mind is concerned. We need to be able to differentiate between the thoughts and insight. This needs care because the mind can be both subtle and deceptive. There are some signs that make it obvious. The first is the nature of insight, particularly when we come out of meditation. It is like a flash, a sudden understanding. It is often clarity that we did not have before, i.e. it is new and beyond our previous comprehension. It is often simple, i.e. it has a pure simplicity that the intellect cannot find. It comes out of silence, it is not the produce of a train of thought or a process, it comes easily without effort. The second key area is the heart. The heart is a powerful tool for discernment. This does require that you know your heart centre and how it feels when it is open and tuned in. Something that feels good in the heart, creates a warmth, is in line with the spiritual flow.

There is a great freedom in spirituality. There is little direction on which path to take, what to do etc. We are essentially free. It is rare that we are directed to do something, we can do what we choose. The skill in choosing what to do is more about what feels heart warming, what moves and interests us, than being given orders and direction. Open your heart and follow it.

The Three Connections

Single earth, single heaven, single heart.

The first three lessons in this part of the course are about connection; the ability to connect, the quality of intuition and guidance that connection brings and the need for discernment, to differentiate between guidance and subtle ego thoughts. There is another lesson in connection which helps to change the way of seeing other people and our relationship with them. The three connections is a meditation exercise to help us to perceive others and ourselves differently.

The three connections relate to the Tan Tien, the Third Eye and the Heart. The body comes from the earth and will return to the earth. The body belongs to the earth and always wants to return. We see the body as separate from the earth, but it never is. Every body comes from the earth. There is one Earth and every body belongs to it. Every body is connected through the earth and this connection is felt at the Tan Tien. There is one body.

In the same way our spirit comes from the light and will return to the light. The spirit belongs to the light and always wants to return to it. Our spirit is never separated from the light and everyone else is the same. It seems that they are separate from us but they are part of the same light. Every spirit is connected through the light and this is felt in the third eye. There is one spirit.

The heart is the unity of earth and light. It merges spirit and body. It grounds spirituality in physical presence. When we sense with the heart we sense the same quality in everyone else. We sense their wholeness and we know that our hearts are joined. There is one heart.

In meditation we can feel each of these three connections. The purpose is not to learn intellectually of this unity but to feel it. We can bring this experience into daily life through the heart and feeling the interconnection with others. By feeling at the heart we are joining together all three connections.

The Course

Discernment is about taking responsibility. Spiritual connection is being in the flow and learning how to choose and be responsible for that choice. We are never told what to do, but we can become aware of which choices align to the flow and which don't. We all have the ability to align to the flow. This alignment is the means to cut through the fog, the cloud of unknowing, to get directly to the truth.

It is good to spend time at the end of Chi Kung and meditation just being. Become aware of the two qualities that support discernment; the quiet mind and the open heart. Alert and silent, the heart open and warm, be aware. Feel the expansiveness both of the mind and of the heart. Notice at the end of chi kung and meditation in a group if you can sense each other. Become aware of how the effect of quietness and openness give a sense of each other. Notice how the effect of Chi Kung and meditation are enhanced in a group, because of spiritual awareness.

We start to bring these qualities into our meetings with other people. If we can, start to withdraw and become more aware. If we can quieten the mind and open the heart we can become more empathic, more understanding. We can start to touch the spiritual connection that we have with all other human beings.

Alignment, attunement to the vibration, once aligned we start to awaken to creative power. As we come into the spiritual place we can align ourselves and our purpose to the power of the universe.

With Love and Light

Tony

Week 16 - Creativity

As we become more spiritually aware, it is not so much about becoming something, as about letting go of what we think we are. This is never more appropriate than when we are discovering creativity. It is not about becoming creative but recognising that we are already creative.

To extend is a fundamental aspect of God which He gave to His Son. In the creation, God extended Himself to His creations and imbued them with the same loving will to create. You have not only been fully created, but have also been created perfect. There is no emptiness in you. Because of your likeness to your Creator you are creative. No child of God can lose this ability because it is inherent in what he is... A Course in Miracles

We are creative, there is no escaping it. We are always creating. It is not whether we want to create or not but what we want to create. As we recognise our creative ability it becomes a choice of what we want to create. Creativity, and the whole of spiritual awareness, is about choice and responsibility. As we come to know our true capability we have to start to take responsibility for what we are creating.

The first stage of creativity is to recognise our creative power. Everything we see, and how we see it, has been created by us. The second stage is to understand the creative process and how we create. We need to understand the way in which we create, how we add power to our beliefs and how we can change our beliefs. We then need to learn how to choose what we create. This is serious, because it is really about making choices for ourselves and taking responsibility. If we choose we learn to align ourselves and our intent to the universal flow.

Creative Power

Our creative power is incredible, the extent of it is beyond comprehension. We cannot fully understand it but we can at least be aware of its magnitude.

Within a seed is held all the information and intelligence to create the whole. All that is needed is the right circumstances for that seed to germinate and flourish. Every thought is like a seed, created whole and complete. Every word that supports that thought gives it energy and power to awaken. Every action starts the process of bringing the seed to fruition. It is the extent of our creative power that we seek to understand.

We are always creating. There is never a time when we are not creating. So much of that time we are mis-creating, that is creating without clear intent and purpose. We create unconsciously from our deeply held beliefs. Even without clear intent we are still creating. How easy it is to create. Just consider the thoughts and feelings that you have each day, and how many of those are what you choose to create. I hear so many people who so easily create their reality without realising it "I'm useless", "I always fail". People are careless about what they say about themselves, even being humorous about it, without realising the power of what they say. Even more so I observe the power that the careless or humorous words of parents have on their children. Be careful what you think, be more careful what you say and more careful again how you act. Action is more powerful than words and words more powerful than thoughts. Every thought, word and action creates.

It is very easy to create randomly, but it is not very powerful because it is random. But the effect of this unconscious creation is to create the world we live in. Not by ourselves but the joint consciousness. We do not create alone. We cannot be one body, one mind and one heart and create alone. We all create together but we each individually are responsible for our own creation.

It is quite hard to accept that the world we live in and the specific circumstances in our lives are created by us. It is the reason why our lives provide us with the perfect lessons, because we have created them, perfectly. Everything we create is a perfect creation, not that the result is what we

wanted or necessarily what we chose but is perfect in its wholeness and as a reflection of where it originated. We are responsible for what we have created in this world, on a personal and global level.

Yet we can change what we create. To create is a spiritual quality. The spiritual and the physical are not two disconnected things. The creative spiritual ability manifests in a physical reality. The world each of us lives in is a perfect manifestation of what is hidden, which is why, earlier in the course we saw that the world provides us with exactly the lessons we need in order to change. We cannot help but be creative so do not feel guilty about what is created. There are two things that we can do. First continue with the process of change started in the first part of this course, so that we change the underlying beliefs that we are creating from. Second look at how to consciously create. Next week we will look at how we can create consciously and powerfully.

The Course

The mind is always creating. Every thought is creating our reality. No matter how haphazard our thoughts are, they are creating. Creativity in its essence adds thought to energy, giving energy direction. While the mind is loose and undirected we are creating randomly. Once we understand the nature of creativity we can become clearer in what we choose to create. The essential quality is silence, to be able to enter the quiet place.

Meditation practice and chi kung practice should help us to focus the mind. Try to practice with a still quiet mind. Practice is more about mind than it is about the body and movement. We bring the mind into practice, staying focussed, recognising when the mind wanders and bringing it back.

We should also in daily life start to recognise when we have negative thoughts about others. Every negative thought about another is a negative thought about ourselves. They reinforce the belief that we are weak and vulnerable and not whole and complete. When you can, recognise negative thoughts and cancel them, just say to yourself "I cancel that thought".

Creativity is not really about controlling the mind but about coming into the flow. Our practice is to find that heart centred place. This becomes a natural place to be and in this place we create with the heart. We are developing a place within which is centred and aligned. We are in the universal flow and we are part of that flow. This place becomes less something special and different and more something normal and usual. There are times in meditation, in teaching, in writing that I am consciously in the flow. There are other occasional times when the flow is all that there is. But most of the time I am just being and doing everyday things. The practice and training is developing the day to day centred alignment so that it becomes normal. In this place we can participate fully in life but at the same time be part of the creative flow. This is grounded spirituality. We are in a centred place and able to react and respond to the circumstances that arise. We are ready.

This is all about choosing and taking responsibility. We are responsible for the world. We have the creative power, it is how we choose to use it that matters.

With Love and light
Tony

Week 17 - Conscious Creativity

There is a part of creating that is very difficult. It is not that creating is difficult, but that really getting to what we want to create and what is beneficial to create is much harder. Lots of things can get in the way of creating, but most of all we ourselves get in the way, we are not clear, we lose focus, we change our mind, we try to create something new to avoid facing things. Creating can be frustrating but there are powerful lessons here too.

Conscious Creativity is the change from being unaware of what we are creating, to consciously choosing what we create. Spirituality is making open what has previously been hidden. You will be no more spiritual at the end of this course than you were at the beginning. An enlightened person is no more spiritual than anyone else. It is only a question of awareness of the spiritual. So we are not developing our creative ability we are learning to choose what we create and take responsibility for it.

The hardest part of creativity is not the means but the choice. Many times we do not get to the core of what it is we want to create. This is what we are really trying to learn here. At the core of all spiritual truth is understanding what we truly desire. Only by the process of creating what does not fulfil us do we learn what we really seek.

There is nothing in this world which will fulfil our deepest desire to return to the oneness. Whatever we choose will inevitably be unfulfilling. At the core of all of us is an overwhelming desire to return to oneness. It is always there. There is a time when this longing comes to the surface, a longing to return. When we get into the creative process, much of what we choose can only be created by coming back to Oneness. Our creative power is unlimited but what is it that we truly desire.

There is a constant creative power, we do not generate the power, we enter it. We slip into the power. The hardest part is not entering into it but knowing what we really want and desire. Do we really know what will make us happy? We will create from any state, from personal power or from humility, but is what we desire beneficial, helpful, joyful. When we create from our desire and personal power we create what we choose but we do not really know if it brings joy. To create from personal power takes an immense effort because we need to constantly remind ourselves and bring ourselves back to the choice we are creating. It requires full attention and avoidance of distraction.

To create with the universal wisdom is different. We are empty. We do not need to try. We are free, we merely enter the flow. There is an enormous strength in emptiness and humility, because we get out of the way. What is our highest good? What is in our highest interest? We do not always know, but that is the nature of the journey, we do not really know anything.

Conscious Creation

Conscious creation is the process of being aware of what we create and understanding how we can create more consciously and powerfully. To create powerfully is not about our own personal power, but about how we enter into the universal power. The essence of this is to create from a meditative state, to enter into the universal flow and insert our intent into that flow and let the intent be carried into the world from our heart. We also bring that intent into words and actions, to continue the creative process.

Thought

Know what it is you desire. See it, picture it as you would have it be. Hold it in your mind, see it from all angles. Feel confident and positive. Create with integrity, do not create something which will be harmful or detrimental to someone else.

Create in the still quiet space. Come into meditation, prepare the body, raise yourself up. Find the quietness in your mind and feel that you are connected to the universal flow. In this creative flow, insert your intent into the silence. This is almost like a background thought, a knowing. Do not get back into the thinking mind. Let the intent and all the preparation be contained within that background thought. Let the intent be held, whole, within the silence. Feel as though it is already complete and whole.

Create from your heart. Bring the creation into this world. Bring your attention down to the heart as if you are holding the seed in love. This helps to ensure the purity of what you create. When you are ready open your heart and let the creation extend into this world. The energy extends from your heart out into this world. It is in this world that we are creating. Using the heart helps to ground the spiritual experience into this world.

Maintain your focus. Creation is not just a one off activity. Come back to it as often as you need to. If you want to, carry an affirmation or a reminder with you to reinforce the creation as often as you feel necessary.

Do not let negative thoughts interrupt the creative flow. When they arise then cancel them, be aware and then stop them. See the outcome that you desire. See it whole and complete. Hold the completion. Banish doubts as they arise.

Word

Talk to people about what you are creating. Try to talk about it in a positive way as if this is what is happening rather than what you would like to happen.

Be careful who you share it with. Talk to those people who will support your hopes and dreams and not to those who will diminish them. Remember the power of what we say and the effect of what others say. Do not let careless words reduce the power of your creation.

Try to speak about it with power. There is a quality of power and truth that comes from the throat centre. If you can feel the openness of the throat centre try to speak about it with that quality. It brings a quality of truth to what you say. When we speak with the throat centre open and active it brings strength to what we say. That strength comes not from the power within the words, nor from the voice itself, but from the underlying truth that speaking with an open throat centre brings.

Action

Find ways to act which support what you want to create. Do things which will enable it. Remember to use your intuitive skills to find ways to act. When you intuitively feel as though you should do something then follow it through. Don't let it just pass by.

Maintain the creative intent for as long as needed. Even though when we create we create whole and complete, i.e. the seed is created, it often needs time in this world to come to fruition. Over that time you need to maintain your focus and attention on that objective. Do not dilute it by focussing on something else. Sometimes the growth period is quick and sometimes it takes longer. When I left work to follow my spiritual path it took 20 months from the initial seed being sown to the time I finally left. I could have just walked out and dealt with the consequences, but by being patient and focussed I gave the universe time to bring the seed to fruition. In that time I did three main things, I maintained focus on the objective, I did practical things that helped prepare for a different life and I dealt with all the issues I had with work and colleagues. In the end the conclusion was perfect. I left financially stable. Three training courses, including my Tai Chi teaching course, completed within in the same month I left. It is important to give this world the time and space to fulfil the potential within our creative seeds.

The Course

There has been so much written about the process of creation and how to connect into the creative power of the universe that there is very little that I feel that I can add. As a overall starter of how the spiritual creative process world I recommend Deepak Chopra's The Seven Spiritual Laws of Success. More recently there have been a number of highly popular and successful books including Cosmic Ordering, The Secret and the Moses Code. There is an article on the website about the Moses Code and how to use it at

<http://www.activewillingness.co.uk/Resources/ArticleResources/TheMosesCodeTonyMorton/tabid/191/Default.aspx>

Play with it. Spirituality may be serious and at times there should be the necessary sense of reverence but at the same time there needs to be a sense of fun and excitement. Keep reverence for when its needed, times of deep and wondrous connection, but spirituality as part of everyday life should largely be fun and experimental. All learning is best achieved by making mistakes. To really get to the core of the creative ability learn by experimenting and seeing what works and what doesn't. Remember the core truth of creating is that we are always creating, it is only a question of what we create.

With Love and light

Tony

Week 18 - Creating with the Flow

We can consciously create. We align ourselves with the universal flow and enter the silence. We add our intent to the energy of the universe. This is very powerful. What is created happens immediately, all the necessary elements are put in place, although it may from our viewpoint take time to come to fruition. We create from where we are, from how we see the world. Which is why it is so important to create from a meditative place. From a quiet centred place, we are connected and in the flow, we see clearly. In this state of mind we are open and expansive, we recognise that we and the world are interconnected. We create from our underlying belief. It is not just our conscious thoughts, but our belief in how the world operates and, perhaps more importantly, we create from what we believe about ourselves.

What we create is an expression of where we are in our knowledge and experience of who we are. By exploring and experimenting with creativity we are not trying to create but to learn about our true nature. By creating consciously we are changing our perspective about ourselves, we are changing our belief system.

Exploring creativity is not about creating a new, different or better life, it is about self knowledge. Essentially creativity is a reminder of our true nature. We are created as a microcosm, a model of the whole. We are a model of the universe whole and complete in every way. We have three parts, physical form, spiritual being and an energy that combines and integrates them into wholeness. We are the microcosm and we are also part of the macrocosm. We are in ourselves a complete model, but not a separate model. We are part of the whole and the whole flows through us. We have the ability to sit in the centre of the flow and bring together the flow within us into oneness. The microcosm becomes part of the macrocosm. It is this ability we use when we consciously create. We sit in the centre of the flow and let it flow through us enhanced with our pure intent. Creativity is energy and intelligence. To the energy flow we add knowledge and intent, we give it purpose.

We are born with this creative ability. We are not only a microcosm in the sense of being a model but also because we have this creative ability. We are created in the “image of God”. Creativity is a reminder of this. That is the lesson that we are trying to learn here. We are not trying to create something, we are trying to remember who we are.

At the core of creativity is the lesson that we are always creating. We cannot not create. We can create from within the flow but we also create when we are not consciously in the flow. What we create in our lives is a reflection of what we believe. It is a reflection of where we are. We use creativity both to change those things that we don't like but more importantly we use it to learn about who we are and therefore change. Once we change our belief system about the world and about ourselves then the world we see changes. Our lives and the view we have is a reflection of where we are. We can try to create something different, but actually it is perfect to help us to see and learn. We explore creativity in order to understand that we are whole and complete, that we are created “in the image of God”, that we are limitless and that there is a limitless energy and creative ability of which we are a part. As we learn that, the world we see reflected, that we have created, will change.

Pure Creativity

We can create for a better life, to live in abundance. We can be abundant, have the partner, the lifestyle, job and the material things that we desire. To do this requires great understanding of universal abundance and our ability to enter into it. It requires knowledge and acknowledgement of the true nature of the universe. Yet, we can go further, if that is what we choose. We can, with creativity, really change the world, not for ourselves but for the benefit of all. We can come into the flow to create for abundance, but we can come into the flow to create for no purpose other than to bring heaven to earth.

How do we know what is beneficial to create? To create is a reminder of our true nature. We can use that reminder to make our life abundant, to move forcefully away from a life of lack and limitation. There is though, in terms of spiritual awareness, a stage beyond this where we enter the flow not for abundance but for the benefit and awakening of mankind. To really awaken, we all awaken, to really grow, we all have to grow.

I don't want this to sound altruistic, that we feel we are creating in order to help others. I am trying very hard to avoid giving you the feeling that pure creativity is about helping others, because it is about wholeness. Creating to help others is very different from creating because we are one. I and you are not separate, we are one being, one body, one heart and one spirit. We are one. What I am talking about is creating from that place of wholeness, for the whole. I am talking about creating without any aim other than to bring wholeness. It is about bringing light into the world, because we are light.

This is pure creativity. It is expression our natural creative state. We are, by being creative, coming back to a state of wholeness. We are not doing anything but sitting in the middle of the flow. From creator to creation is a constant flow, which extends from the source into form and from form back to the creator. Creativity is sitting within this flow being empty.

What is it that you truly desire? What will really fulfil us? In the end only the return to being one again, whole and complete, will do this. In the third part of this course we will challenge ourselves to go further, beyond our sense of separation. Pure creativity is a pointer to this, it is a reminder of who we are and of what we are capable.

The Course

When I went through the course originally and the course came into life it was a learning process for me. It was, for much of the time, as if I was undergoing my personal growth in public. Much of the writing for the book came through the process of preparing myself for the course through meditation and contemplation. It is true to say that I learnt as the course progressed and the course went deeper as we went through it each time. It has always been clear to me that this was never my course because much of it came to me as the course developed. I did not consciously understand it, and it was only by going through it that I came to understand. Somewhere we all have this knowledge, I'm sure that deep down I have always understood but it took the course and the process of meditation to bring it out. That is why when we finally understand something spiritually it is always with a feeling that it is obvious and so simple. It is obvious because we already know it and simple because that is just how the world works.

It was not only the writing and understanding that came as the course progressed but two original meditations which I believe form a fundamental part of this course, the three connections and the flow of love. We have already used the three connections meditation and now we focus on the flow of love. This meditation is based on the way in which we are part of the universal flow. The energy enters the heart, merging from heaven and earth, it extends from the heart out into the world, it is reflected back from the world and finally returns to heaven and earth. The experience of this flow is love. As the energy passes through us and the heart the experience that we feel is what we describe as the feeling of love.

We have already used the first part of the flow of love meditation. This was the feeling of being loved unconditionally, when heaven and earth entered the heart. We now use the second part of the flow of love. The second part is extending light from the heart out into the world. The essence of creativity is to extend the unconditional love in your heart, filled with your intent, out into the world. Whatever you mean to create try to feel this extension of love from your heart into the world.

This is one of the most important meditations in this course. It is good to work with it. Try to spend with the meditation exercise, to awaken the feelings associated with it. There are some simple chi kung exercises based on the eight silk brocade which help us to feel this flow. In particular the third

exercise, touching heaven and earth can be extended to get into the flow. Draw the chi to the heart from heaven and earth as normal and then extend outwards to the side from the heart. Draw the hands back into the heart and then finally return back to heaven and earth as normal. Repeat several times as usual but at the end just stand with the hands open level with the heart.

Nature is a great teacher. There is a natural manifestation, the way that nature creates, completely naturally and perfectly. Even in its imperfections there is a beauty in nature. Even when the circumstances for creation are not ideal there is perfection in how nature creates. It creates perfectly in its circumstances and surroundings. Observe nature's creative power, how a seed germinates, and grows. Observe how nature fits with its surroundings. See how nature grows without effort, how it adapts and responds without concern. Understand the natural creative power and how it is able to manifest without trying. Nature is the unlimited natural creative power, it is the creative power without trying and without effort. Spring is a good time of year to observe the creative power in nature as that which has been dormant, perhaps held within a seed, or a bulb, or within a plant suddenly bursts back into vibrant growth. Spend time observing nature and also how nature fits perfectly into its environment.

I think that knowing what to create, for wholeness and well being is very difficult. What we want to create is peace, joy and love but often these are learnt through the opposite. The way to universal peace may be learnt through conflict, the way to health learnt in illness and disease. The way to happiness may be learnt in sadness. What do we choose to create? We bring love and we see wholeness, but not necessarily the means to the end. We speak of love, peace and joy and not of illness and sadness. We act by being who we are in the centred whole place, without fear.

How do we know what is right to create,? We want to help ourselves and others but what do we do that helps.

- Use guidance, follow your intuition, create from that centred place.
- Create from the heart, so that your intent is pure.
- Create for the highest good. Bring love and power together.
- Do not expect specific results, be open to any outcome

Most situations are an opportunity to learn. Sending love into them may not change the situation but will help the ability to learn.

With Love and Light

Tony

Week 19 - Community

Spiritual Community

Your spiritual community, in the sense meant here, are all those people who join you on your spiritual journey. When you walk the path you do not walk alone. Others walk beside you, some ahead, some alongside and some following you, but you are not alone. The spiritual community, the presence of others who walk similar paths, are there to help us.

They are there to inspire us. We see others and we learn about ourselves. We see how others behave and learn from each other. We share ideas and thoughts, opportunities and lessons. We see people who have already travelled and who show us the way. We walk with others who are learning alongside us, who share our lessons. We support each other, helping each other through problems and doubt. We nurture each other, encouraging growth and development.

Our spiritual community are our teachers and our companions. We often see what we get from others, how they make us feel. But do not underestimate that you are part of that. We all play a role together, supporting and encouraging each other.

Our spiritual community is special because these are people who we can feel at home with. When we are together we can lower the barriers, we can laugh and cry together. We can talk together and receive understanding and insight. It is often so hard with family, friends and colleagues to discuss what you are feeling and experiencing. It is hard to share with others who just don't even understand what you are talking about. We need people around us who we can be comfortable with in our spirituality and with whom we can talk freely and undefensively.

This spiritual community is important. In Buddhism, when you take refuge, that is become a committed follower, there are three jewels that you take refuge in, the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha. The Buddha is the Buddha nature, the Dharma is the teaching and path that is followed and the Sangha is the spiritual community, those who have walked the path before and those who share it now. Buddhism makes it absolutely clear to everyone who is committed to the journey the importance of the spiritual community. It is perhaps not as clear but it is present in other religions too. It is important for us for our growth, but our participation with the spiritual community is important too, for the growth of others.

The Web of Light

It is been my journey for many years to walk my own path, not to follow any particular system, or teacher or any particular religion. Yet it would be impossible for me to do that alone, without the strength and support of others around me. Although there is no formal spiritual community, there is an amazing community of people who join and depart, who meet for a while and then move on.

Nobody in the spiritual community ever leaves us. We may move away from each other and travel on different paths but we are still together. There remains a link in our path and we remain joined even when apart. Even when problems and differences get in the way, spiritually we remains joined as our paths are always connected.

Each of us has a place of pure intent. Even when we lose our way, even when the ego takes over for a while, there remains in place of pure intent. Every one of us who walks the spiritual path has, at some time or another, expressed that spiritual intent. It is both our deepest desire and our commitment to find it. It is always there. With people with whom we have journeyed, even if we lose them or fall out, there remains a link, a connection between us at the level of pure intent.

If our journey takes different paths then we have still shared some part of the journey and we have learnt together and loved together. What we learnt together, stays with us, it is part of us and part of them. The expression of love that we have shared is still with us. They remain part of our spiritual community even if they are physically and mentally distant. I still feel a strong connection with and love for all those who have shared my spiritual path. It is a connection that flows between us forever.

I have been privileged to know so many people on the spiritual path as teachers, as companions and as students. There must be hundreds of people with whom I have shared spiritual retreats, workshops and courses. There are so many who have joined me on this course and many others. There are some people who touch us more than others, but we all touch each other a little bit. We remain connected with each other. At that place of pure intent within me and within them we remain joined, some links stronger but always there. Everyone has their own web of connections and each of these webs are linked in one enormous web of light.

We are never alone. Even in the loneliest times our spiritual community is with us. Just be still and think of all the people you have touched and have been touched by, on your spiritual journey and imagine how many people each of them have touched. Feel the connection with all these people and their pure intent.

One aspect of this course is to become master of your own life, to follow your own path with no one else standing between you and the ultimate truth. For me this has meant leaving behind teachers and groups and following my own guidance and direction. This does not though mean leaving behind the spiritual community. Look around you at all those who walk with you and appreciate their commitment and the gifts that you share.

Creating Together

Running the sacred circle has been a fantastic experience for me. Every week we meet for chi kung and meditation, we set out our intent, we raise our energy and we meditate extending out into the world. Every week is the same but different. There are many familiar faces and those who come occasionally, but it is always a powerful, creative experience. At the core of all spiritual teaching is the sense of community, coming together for worship, or just to be together and to support each other. There are very practical reasons, to help each other, to reinforce and strengthen our belief and to offer each other encouragement. But for me, coming from a tai chi and energy practice background, the real reason is that meditation and prayer are stronger when we are together.

When we come together and practice energy work, to open ourselves up, to connect, there is a way in which the practice becomes so much more powerful and the experience is stronger. We become connected. As we as individuals open ourselves up, as we connect to the light and to the earth, we come into a state, or experience, where we connect with each other. This is often in a way in which we can sense each other. We are open and there is a level of integration and communication that takes place.

This is one of the essential qualities of spirituality. Spirituality is that part of us that is not limited by the body. It is beyond the physical experience. The spiritual experience, by its very nature cannot be identified with the body, yet it is something that for those of us who explore it is very real. This spirituality, beyond the physical, is the basis of much of the spiritual phenomena, e.g. psychic ability and healing. These are abilities that are founded on the spiritual nature. They are based on the recognition that we are not limited by our body and that we are interconnected. I do not recommend seeking or desiring these abilities but they do enable us to recognise that there is more than the physical ability.

The spiritual community, help and support us, but they also participate with us in exploring ourselves and our spiritual nature. When we come together we can connect, communicate on a different level.

But it is not just those who meet with us. Our spiritual community is all those people who share the journey with us or have shared the journey with us.

It became very clear to me as the sacred circle developed that the whole of my spiritual community were together with me. That is everyone who I have ever met who has the shared intent of seeking our spiritual truth. While we may no longer see each other and maybe rarely communicate they are still with me and I with them. Their pure intent, that part of them that sincerely seeks their spiritual truth and that quality in me are always joined.

When we come together to meditate, with a common focus and attention, when we open ourselves together, to the universal wisdom and connection, and unify our hearts, then the creative power is multiplied. As I said before, we cannot be one body, one spirit and one heart and create alone. But we can learn how to increase our own creative power by being in the open, centred place. When we come together in that place, and unify our will and purpose, aligned to the universal flow the power increases exponentially. Individually we can make a difference, together we can change the world.

The Course

Who are our spiritual community and what do they do for us? Who is in your spiritual community? Who have you known who are dedicated to their spiritual awakening? Who can you speak to openly and honestly about spirituality without them being negative? Where do you feel most comfortable and with who?

Try to feel the difference when you practice by yourself and with others. When you practice chi kung or after meditation, when you are open, try to sense others. Contemplate on the feeling of openness and connection. Try to link in with others when they are meditating. You could try to connect with the sacred circle on a Friday at 7pm by coming along or just by meditating at the same time.

Your spiritual community is very precious. At the end of meditation or chi kung, bow and acknowledge each other with a sense of appreciation. Feel that appreciation in your heart. *“Feel appreciation for whatever you believe in, for the earth and for each other”*.

Meditate on the higher centres and from that meditation become more open and expansive. Try to sense the interconnection with all things.

Spend time thinking of, or writing down, all those people who have been part of your spiritual community. Spend time in silence and stillness, feeling your connection with them. Imagine also their connection with others in a similar way. Just feel and in doing so reinforce the web of connection between everyone.

Hoping to be with you in meditation
With Love and light
Tony

Week 20 - Loving Others

The first part of community is those with whom we share the journey who help and support us and with whom we can express ourselves freely. But there are others with whom we share our lives who are equally important; our family, friends, colleagues, neighbours in fact everyone we come into contact with. Life is our learning environment and those we meet in life offer us the greatest opportunity. Even those who upset us, those we find it hardest to be with, those who have hurt us, those we find it hard to forgive, those who press our buttons and those who make our life difficult are our greatest companions. As we looked at in the first part of the course they offer us the greatest opportunity to learn. They provide us with the lessons we need to change and they provide with the opportunity to see differently.

We are all one. We are all the same. It is relatively easy to see the light in those of our spiritual community but can we see it in those we don't like or those who cause us pain. People share our lives for a reason. They are drawn to us and we to them. They provide with what we need. One of the hardest things to accept is that where we are now is absolutely perfect. All those things that seem wrong, that we want to get rid of or move away from are absolutely perfect in providing what we need. It is not the situation that we need to change but ourselves and the way we see the situation.

Difficult people, situations, illness, problems provide us with what we are needing exactly at this moment. It may be uncomfortable but if we can just explore it we start to take the first steps to change. The answer is always to explore where we are and what we feel. We should look at ourselves first rather than criticise and judge others. Try not to see why others are acting in a certain way, that is for them, but to see why you respond and feel a certain way. The way we react and respond to a situation is also perfect. Our anger, frustration or any other response is correct, it is how we feel. We are not here judging ourselves for our response. In any situation we start from the validity of how we feel and move forward from there. It is important to move forward, or else we stay where we are in the pain and hurt. The way to move forward is with love. In any situation the aim is to bring love. Learn to naturally bring love and when we can't to work at it.

The people who share our lives, who cause us the greatest problems, also give us the greatest gifts. It is them who offer us the greatest opportunity for spiritual growth. Without the problems and difficulties in our lives we would not grow, we probably would not even set out on a journey of spiritual discovery. Come to really appreciate all those people who share your life and present you with the greatest opportunity to learn.

Everyone is the same. Our aim is to see the sameness in others rather than the difference. It is to see other's qualities and strength, their perfection rather than their human limitations. The deepest teachings are about love and feeling love for everyone. This is the awakening of the true nature, to see the perfection in others and to feel love and compassion. We are not yet ready but everyone in our lives is there as a means of helping us.

Sacred Presence

Within each and every one of us is a spark of light. It is a reminder of who we are and where we come from. It is this light that we seek to find and this light that we seek to awaken. This light comes from the source of our creation and this light calls us back. There is a constant calling to return so that we are called back to our source. There is also a constant calling to awaken so that this light is able to fully express itself. At some level everyone on this course, everyone on a spiritual journey has heard this calling.

Within this light is the potential for spiritual presence. Our spiritual practice helps to awaken that spiritual presence. It helps that spiritual presence to shine and to express itself into this world. This is what this course is all about.

Everyone, without exception has this light. There is not a single person who does not have this light. Many people deny it in themselves, many hide from it or ignore it, but it does not get rid of it or stop it from calling out. When we deny this light within us we deny part of ourselves and our lives are out of balance.

Every time that we meet someone we have the opportunity to try to see their light. No matter who they are and what we know about them, they have a light within them and we are able to see it. We can sense it within them, we can feel it. Merely the intent to see it helps us to sense it. Hold no exceptions to this. Even those people that we know have done terrible things have this seed of light.

Every time that we sense this light in others it reminds us of the light within ourselves. Every time we sense it their light grows and our light grows.

The Course

The feeling of love is a real feeling. It is the way that we feel when the universe flows through us. This universal flow and the feelings of the heart, earth connection and the light connection are what we have been working towards with the chi kung and the meditation on this course. There have been a number of exercises during this course which open us to the experience of the heart centre. The flow of love meditation explores how we come into the flow and the feelings that this flow creates.

We now move on to the third part of the flow of love meditation. In the first part love flowed into us from heaven and earth, bringing us a sense of peace. In the second part love flowed from our heart out into the world. That love that is extended to others is reflected back into our heart. It is reflected from the seed of light within others. Even if they would not thank us or appreciate the love at a human level, at the level of their sacred presence the love they receive is acknowledged and light is returned. Here we feel compassion because on one level we understand and know their pain, but on another level we can also sense their light. So we know their pain but see their light. Our role here is to be open to receive. To just be open to accept the reflected light. It is like an empty bowl waiting to be filled. We keep that sense of openness in order to fully receive. You are worth it, you are worthy to be loved by others. Just be open to accept it.

There is a simple but lovely exercise, beloved chi kung. Which uses movement to a simple prayer.

*To see as God sees,
to feel as God feels,
to know what God knows,
the beloved,
sees only the beloved.*

In effect the prayer is saying that in order to see, feel and know as God does we need to find the beloved, soul quality in ourselves and from that place see that same quality in others. Look to see that light in them and not their darkness. In my experience it is often easier to see the light in others and let that help us to see the light in ourselves.

With Love and Light

Tony

Week 21 - Spiritual Community

In the Company of Angels

Angels, Archangels, Divine masters, Bodhisattvas, Guides, Saints, Gods and their incarnations and more are there to support us. What we choose to call them is not important, we are talking about the community of divine beings, without or beyond physical form, who support us and guide our journey. They are present, alongside us, they are there when we need them. We can call on them and feel their presence, we are supported. We call on those that inspire us, that have meaning for us. We ask and they are there.

They provide us with the qualities we feel we need, they fill the lack in us. They have a meaning and a purpose for us. When we are unable to find our wholeness, they are there supporting us and filling the need. They are real, the feeling and experience is real, we feel their presence. When we come together as a group, when we open up we feel them there. They are so tangible that we cannot deny them. They are important for the journey because there will be times when we need support. They provide the spiritual qualities that we have not yet fully accessed, they fill the gaps that we have.

In truth we have no lack. There are no gaps in our spirituality. Yet we are not there yet, so these guardians and supporters are there when we need them. Maybe in a moment of doubt or maybe for a long time, they are with us while we still have need. They never question and they never fail. They exist both within us and outside of us, they have a presence in their own right but they are also the qualities that are hidden within us. We learn to call upon their presence both to support us and as a means of awakening the qualities we need.

Nothing is separate from us. The divine community is not something that is separate from us, it is a presence and a quality that exists within. Yet we see it outside, something separate and apart in the same way that we see other people as separate. Later in the course we challenge our belief in the divine community being separate. Our beliefs have to be challenged because we cannot break our self perception while we hold anything as separate from us. The divine community are our supporters but they are not what and how they seem. The image of them that we hold provide us with the tools to access them but that is all it is a tool, it is not the true nature of the divine. Hold onto it while you need it but also be prepared to challenge your perception and image, to awaken the true nature of the spiritual.

Spirituality is never us. When we meet and the vibration and experience is raised it is not our doing. We can never make it happen. As individuals we are unable to generate the true spiritual experience. It is only our openness that allows it to happen. We participate but we do not create the spiritual experience. As we become open, i.e. more empty, and there is less of us involved, then we create the space into which the divine can enter. We cannot create something which is already there. All we do is step out of the way.

Gratitude

I'm not the best person to write about angels and other divine beings. I know so many people for whom the presence of guides and angels is clear. They see or sense their presence, they hear them and communicate with them. For them they are real in a very tangible sense. For me the relationship is less clear, I am more aware of an overall sense of connection but not with specific or individual beings. I just know that there is a spiritual presence.

What I can say is that in the most significant spiritual moments in my life, which form the foundation of my knowledge, that there was something beyond me that brought the experience. It was never created by a place or a person, it was something that created the circumstance in which the experience occurred. Nothing occurred that was of my doing although I clearly and willingly participated. When I

teach now, I never have any plan, I am always open to whatever direction the class takes, and open to what I call guidance. I am constantly surprised by the direction the sessions take and the teaching that comes with it. I am often, in this way, able to access new teaching that is beyond any previous understanding. I am aware that I am guided by something beyond me.

They are always there when we ask, and I always ask. At the start of every session where we open ourselves to the divine presence then I ask for the spiritual community to support me. I consciously bring down the light and bow at the heart acknowledging other people, but also the divine.

At the end I am always grateful. At the end of every teaching or practice session, every meditation, every time when nature astounds me, the final act is gratitude. I am grateful for those people who are with me, for this world and for the spiritual presence. There is always a spiritual presence that acts between the physical and spiritual planes. Whatever form it takes, whatever you believe it to be, be grateful for it.

Gratitude is one of the most powerful tools that we have. Gratitude is another of the heart feelings. It boosts our understanding of the true nature of the world and of ourselves. When we are grateful we are acknowledging the divine presence wherever we find it, in others, in nature or in the divine itself. Understand that whatever we believe in does not need our gratitude. Gratitude is a tool for us. The more we are grateful the more the awareness of the spiritual within everything grows and is reinforced. Feel it within the heart, once again this is not about thinking "I am grateful" but feeling it. At the end of every time that you are awakened to the divine presence come back to the feeling of gratitude.

Gratitude is two ways. You are grateful to all who give you guidance and support, but the universe is grateful to you too. This journey is one of free will and the universe is grateful for your participation and growth. When you feel gratitude in your heart, for this world and for the divine, it starts the cycle again. It starts the cycle of the universe showing its love and gratitude to you.

The Flow of Love

The first part of the flow is the love from heaven and earth coming into your heart. The love flows from your heart out into the world. It reflects back from the world into your heart. The final part is the flow from your heart back to heaven and earth. This flow is strengthened by gratitude. When you feel gratitude you are returning the feeling of love to its source, the divine within heaven and earth. The effect is then for the flow to start again. The flow of love is exactly that a flow. We concentrate in the course on different aspects at different times but it is a constant flow. It is you standing in the middle of the universal flow as it continuously flows through you.

The Course

Who we choose to support us is a question of personal inspiration and choice. We have already explored this when we were using mantra, but now we touch them not necessarily by word but by mere thought. Sometimes there is a part of us that needs to be with the problems and issues in our lives to work with them and learn, which is important, but we do not have to do this alone. Even in the hardest times the divine community is there to support us and remind us. We can call on them when we need them the most. We can feel their presence behind us, with us.

Consciously work with the divine. Even by thinking of them we bring ourselves into their presence. It is a way to access the qualities that we need, strength and courage, love, compassion, even the feeling that we are being supported, guided and watched over can bring great encouragement.

When you open at the start of any session and bow at the heart to acknowledge others, also bow to the spiritual community who support you.

In meditation continue to raise yourself up but now start to draw in the divine presence. Work with someone who inspires you, who represents the feeling of the divine for you. When we are together and we feel the stronger presence of the divine, feel that presence, recognise and acknowledge it.

The divine is present when we become open. When our ego and individuality steps out of the way we create space for the divine to enter. Try in chi kung and meditation to let go, to just be with the divine.

At the end of every session, close down and bow with appreciation for this world, for others and for whatever you believe in.

Continue to work with the flow of love in meditation but now include the last part, where the light flows back to heaven and earth, with a sense of heartfelt gratitude.

The course notes include an exercise of becoming one with nature. It is a good time of year to get outside and appreciate nature. The purpose is to start to recognise the presence of the divine everywhere. While on one hand we are reaching up to the divine at the same time it is good to realise the divine presence in this world, specifically its presence in nature. The divine is always present, whether than be in nature or in spirit.

With Love and Light

Tony

Week 22 - Doing Nothing

We live with two very different worlds, the world of form, the physical world, and the world without form, the spiritual world. We are in both. Which is real and which is unreal? Is the solid, physical world more real than the nebulous spiritual world? We do not have to choose one or the other. Both worlds are real and we have to be able to deal with both. This world is impermanent, ever changing, but it is still real. The spiritual world is permanent and unchanging, yet it is also real. We are not trying to swap one world for the other, we are trying to live with both together.

We are a creature of the physical world and a spiritual being. We are whole when the two are together. This world by its nature is transient, constantly changing. Our nature, our physical being is also transient and changing. The spiritual world is unchanging yet intangible. It is a constant emanation, like the sun, constantly shining. It just shines, it does not some days choose to shine and others not shine at all. It is always shining fully. Both these states are within us. We are both transient and permanent. We are both changing and shining constantly. The permanent is what you are, yet this world, your body, emotions, feelings and thoughts are just as real and valid.

While we are still in a physical body, this world is real. It is not to be escaped or avoided. Yet the spiritual world is also real and not to be avoided either. Our gift is to be able to bring these two together as one. This physical form is capable of raising up so that the physical and spiritual are one.

The physical and spiritual worlds are not two worlds co-existing, but one world. One emanates from the other. The constant light shining is transformed into form, which coalesces, changes over time and eventually returns. The impermanent is created from the permanent, transforms and returns, in a constant cycle. We are part of that cycle. We are impermanent, but created from the permanent. The gift that we have is that we are both transient and permanent. We can link the two together to re-unite them and can be in this place of unification.

Communion

We raise ourselves up. We use chi kung to prepare and awaken the body, opening every centre. We let go of everything we think we are and through prayer or meditation we reach up. Communion is the highest form of prayer or meditation. We are at one with the Divine. The body is prepared, the mind is quiet, the emotions still. We are at one. Here there is no separation. We are in communion. There is nothing to do here. Everything we do is preparation to get to this place. We just are.

We are raised up, there is a presence. It is like a sound that we can't quite hear, like an underlying vibration. We can feel its presence within us and all living things. This sound vibration resonates in harmony with the divine sound. People use the Om sound to feel this vibration, for me it is something like that, but more subtle, like Om but just beyond hearing.

There is a sense of reaching, the eyes looking up, the ears reaching to hear the sound, the crown pulled up. There is a sense that we are, literally, uplifted.

The mind does whatever it can to get away from this state. Just stay in awareness. Do not let it become a battle with the mind, try to stay in relaxed alertness. Once we get into a fight with the mind we have already lost. Sometimes just listening for the sound that can't quite be heard, with full alertness, can help maintain awareness. The two sounds become one, the sound within us, uplifted, and the universal sound. There is perfect harmony.

Communion is the union of the wholeness, or holiness, in you and the divine. The act of communion is not one between the lesser and the greater, it is a union of equals. Communion is like a perfect marriage of two coming together in equal partnership, to be one. Where both bring different qualities which unite to make the whole. We raise ourselves up. Communion is between the highest in us and

the divine presence. We are not lower and less, but equal. We are part of the divine and the divine is part of us.

We are already holy, nothing has ever taken away from that and nothing has ever added to it. We carry with us the human side, everything we have ever felt guilty about, every sense of lack. Yet these are unable to take away from the holiness within us. Our human limitations do not disappear, they are with us but they do not, in any way, diminish the wholeness, the light that shines. In communion our light shines. That part of us that is holy, is at one with the divine.

Being

Yet there is more. The aim is not to be in communion with the divine but to establish this communion and bring it into the physical world.

I try, as best that I am able, to write this course from a place of communion. Yet that is not possible. I can get into the meditative state, become quiet and reach upwards, but at some stage I have to bring whatever knowledge or wisdom that I have gained in that place, back into this world. I have to try to put the feelings and experience into words, and thus into form. I have to give shape to the intangible.

The truth that we read is not the real truth, that can only be accessed directly. You cannot know the divine through reading, but through experiencing. You cannot understand intellectually what the divine is. There is a translation from the infinite to the finite. There has to be some interpretation. The translation and interpretation is in the physical world. So is the very act of writing. So at some stage we have to bring the knowledge and wisdom from the state of communion into this world.

This is the state of being, where you are still raised up, still meditative and connected but also able to think and act in this world. In this state I am in my heart, I still feel connected. My mind is quiet but able to be involved. The heart grounds the spiritual into the physical. It brings heaven to earth "On earth as it is in heaven" We raise ourselves up. We are uplifted, we are in communion, but we come back to the heart.

The Course

We keep returning to the same lesson, "I need do nothing". Being is the state of doing nothing, it is being what we are. We are already spiritual, we cannot make ourselves more spiritual. We are already whole, we let that holiness dawn on us.

There has to come a time when we stop seeking out something that we already have. There is nothing that we lack and therefore nothing that we can find that makes us more holy.

We have used chi kung and meditation to help to raise us up. We have worked to open all the centres, to uplift the body. There is an active part to this course, which helps us to come close to spiritual awareness, but it will not get us there. Spiritual awareness can only come when we stop seeking and just be.

We have come a long way on this course. There is still a way to travel, but there is no greater truth than "I need do nothing". Understand this and you are there. Take some time to enjoy the view from where you are. Spend time just being, without the need to do anything. Do not let go of intent, but let go of any sense of need. You lack nothing, you already have everything you need. Just be.

In Love and Light
Tony

P.S. In Light we are in communion, we reach up, the light is shining down. In Love we are in our heart, we bring the light down into this world. In Love and Light.

Review of Part 2

We have reached the end of the second part of the course. This is an important place and an important time. It is time now to stop awhile to recollect and recuperate and, most of all, to appreciate how far we have come. This is a significant place to be.

I want you to rest here. Just imagine that you are on a long journey, like a pilgrimage and that you are carrying all that you need with you. I want you to rest now, put down all that you are carrying, find a comfortable place to sit and enjoy the view. You have arrived at a place where you can look back and see how far you have come. So stop awhile and appreciate what you have done. There is nothing to do now. Take away any urgency to go on.

This is a special place. It is point of transition. This is a good place to stay. We can go on from here but we do not have to.

We have come a long way

In the first part of the course we looked at our human side and how the world presents us with all the opportunities and lessons that we need. It presents us with the problems we face and the beauty we see. We have learnt to deal with life in a different way and see things differently. We started to open up the body and increase our awareness of it. We started to feel at the lower centres but, most importantly, we started to open the heart centre. We worked with meditation as a way of becoming quiet and finding stillness. We learnt that we have two sides, the individual and the spiritual which are present and united within us. The effect of the first part of the course is to help us to live a happier, healthier life. We learn to bring our life into balance and to change those aspects of our self that do not serve us well.

In the second part of the course we have explored the spiritual side of who we are. We have learnt and experienced that we are not limited by the body and that we are an open, expansive, connected being. We have started to develop our intuition and guidance and access a deeper wisdom. We have explored the universal flow and started to understand the creative power. We have discovered the spiritual community that supports us and started to appreciate all those who share our lives and provide with the greatest lessons. We are an open connected being. We have continued to open up the body. We have opened the higher centres, enabling us to go deeper into meditation and awareness. We have reached upwards so that we start to touch the divine. The second part of the course helps us to lead a more creative life, to enter the universal flow, to create whatever we desire and live an abundant life.

The heart is central to both the first part and second part of the course. In the first part we use it to change the way we see others, we use it to transform and to feel the beauty in the world. In the second part we use it to ground spirituality into our life, to bring the spiritual into action. We use it to find peace, to send love, to feel compassion and to express gratitude. The heart is central to the course because it is central to who we are. Where we sit now we sit in the heart. When we look out on where we where we have come from we do so with an open heart and a feeling of appreciation.

Empowerment

The course provides you with a set of tools that you need to deal with the situations that life offers you. It helps you to see the world differently. There are two different view points, the individual and the spiritual. We are learning to pay attention to both, which brings balance into our lives, but also learning to choose which one we want to direct our words, thoughts and actions. The idea is to gather your skills and knowledge and then use them. Life presents us with the opportunities, it is the classroom for this course. You have the opportunity every day to apply the tools and knowledge. By doing so you change and the world changes, the two are never divided.

The aim of this course is to empower you to walk your own path. It aims to give you the skills and understanding to follow your personal journey. Everybody walks their own path. Yet often we are limited by belief and situations. Once you learn to feel and experience for yourself then you are able to walk your own way. Once you are able to discern between what is right and wrong for you, you can step in the right direction.

You are a powerful, creative, spiritual being. You walk your own path, in confidence, but also supported by those people and spiritual beings around you.

To walk your own path you need to be able to feel and experience for yourself. You need to be able to open your heart in order to discern and transform. You need to have a spiritual connection and be guided intuitively. You need knowledge and wisdom, but most of all you need to do it. When you walk your own path you can remove the barriers that limit you. You do not need to follow anyone else. You are your own teacher.

The Course

The course goes on from here. There is not really anything to learn and no more skills to develop. It is now that we continue to refine those skills that we already have, create a set of skills and continue to refine them.

It is good to reflect on how far we have come. We grow incrementally, day by day, changing gradually and it is easy to lose sight of how far we have come. At the end of part 2, is a safe place to rest and refine your skills. We never just stay where we are, the process of refining is taking us forward. For some of you this may be far enough, but as you change and grow there may be a time you choose to go further.

The last part of the course aims to challenge you to go further and deeper. There is the opportunity for those who are ready, and choose to do so, to explore the very essence of who you are. So far the course has been founded on changing the way we react and respond with the world. There is the opportunity now to challenge the very concept that we hold of what we are.

It seems to me as I prepare each lesson that the course gets more and more complicated. I feel that it is easy for the message to get lost in that complexity. I want to return to the essence of this teaching, that spirituality is easy. You are a spiritual being, spirituality is natural. The only thing that ever gets in the way of us naturally and easily expressing our spirituality is us.

The most important lesson, probably the only one that really matters, is to bring your heart into everything that you do. You use the heart to uplift difficult situations and to transform how you feel about them and how you see them. You use your heart to ground the spiritual experience and connection into practical action. Come into your heart at any time, it helps us to feel and experience life in a different way. The heart is the centre of your being it is where you are whole and complete.

With Love and Light

Tony

Week 23 - Commitment

This is the start of the final part of the course. This part of the course is different, it has a different quality and feel to it. I am looking forward to it more than any other part because it has a deeper, finer quality and it has the ability to challenge us all. This part of the course is about letting go, releasing everything about who and what you are. We let go of everything, except those experiences when you were whole and complete, they are your rock, the truth, the light. They are the foundations on which we build.

For me writing this part of the course is the most challenging and the most exciting. This part of the journey lacks shape or pattern. It is your journey and yours alone. It is about accessing knowledge that cannot be read but only found within. I can only try to outline the shape and form of something that remains intangible.

This part of the course relies on the skills and tools of the earlier part, most significantly on our ability to be guided and access wisdom. You will be supported, you do not progress from here alone. Every step of the way from here forward is reinforced as we deepen and refine our alignment. The course strips away everything that keeps us apart so that all that remains is the universal will.

The Question

There comes a time when we must all ask ourselves the question. I remember when I was asked it, on retreat.

“What are you seeking from spiritual awareness? Do you want health and vitality? Do you want abundance in all things? Do you want to become enlightened?”

Perhaps it was only me for whom that question at that moment was significant. Each of us in turn had to answer. It seemed to me that for everyone else the answer was easy. Everyone said without pause “enlightenment”. But I didn’t know the answer. It was as if I had never considered what I really wanted. Just asking myself the question had a profound effect. That is what I would like you to do, not say something glibly to yourself but really ask yourself the question. In your heart you really know. It may not be the reason you set out on the journey, but the reason for you now. I want you to be honest with yourself. What is it you desire?

The first part of the course is about improving health and happiness. It is about dealing with life in a different way, knowing yourself, taking responsibility and changing. The second part of the course is about abundance, coming into the universal flow, becoming more intuitive, guided and creative. This third part of the course is about enlightenment, it is about being prepared to commit yourself, first and foremost to seeking the truth about yourself and this world. It is discovering your Buddha nature, it is awakening the Christ within.

No one comes to spirituality thinking that they want to become enlightened, but usually with a sense of curiosity. Many come seeking a better way, where we can change the way we live. This course aims to give us the tools, the means and the way to change how we live and in doing so change the way we see and act. This course has always aimed to be practical, to bring real change.

The question is not whether you want to change or not, but how much. We do not start wanting to be enlightened but there will come a time when you are filled with passion and spirit and want to go all the way. The question is about whether you are ready. You will know when you are ready to let go completely.

I would like you to consider the question in your own time. I want you to ask yourself seriously and to be absolutely honest about it. No matter what the answer is I hope you will join me on the last part of the course. Be honest with yourself. You have a genuine choice. At this time and any time you have a

choice, you are always able to choose. The freedom to choose is what makes us who we are, but freedom to choose does not change who and what we are. Even when you choose not to be, you are still a being of light. Even if you do not choose to explore it right now, it does not go away, you do not, and cannot, change your fundamental nature. At some time, we all have to seek it out, in one existence or another, it is only a question of is it now.

Commitment

If the answer is for enlightenment then it is time to make a commitment. When it is the right time to seek the truth, then it is time to make a commitment. It is time to devote yourself to seeking spiritual truth, first and foremost. It is time to dedicate your life.

I observe many people who play with spirituality, who enjoy it, who treat it like a hobby, but somehow don't really get to the heart of it. Then there are others who I observe that for them it is their whole life. For me it is the focus of my life, there is no other way. I cannot change and go back to how I was, there is no question. It is the primary focus of every day of my life. I am not alone in this, I see others who are dedicated, in the same way, to finding their truth.

What is it that moves us from being interested in spiritual awareness to it being the centre of your life? There is a moment of commitment. I remember it very well and very clearly, but it was not a commitment or timing of my choosing. It was as though when the time was right, when I was ready, it chose me. When it happened it was like being hit by a train. I had a choice, but really no choice at all, there was never really any question for me. I knew from that moment onwards I would devote my life to seeking spiritual truth. I did formally, to myself and to the universe, make a commitment, but really the commitment was already made when the universe hit me.

I don't know how this happens for others. What is it that changes everything? For me it was words spoken in innocence "Stop playing at your spirituality." Those words unravelled me to a moment weeks before when someone had described me as "a tree in his spare time". He had inadvertently spoken the truth. I had thought I was committed, but I realised that it was just something I did in my spare time. At that moment my life changed. I knew what I wanted, it was and is too important. That was the moment I grew up, when I really knew what my purpose in life was.

There has to be a point of commitment, but it is not a mental choice, something that you would like to do, but something that overwhelms you.

"We make a commitment. It is a commitment to our self and if we break that commitment we hurt all the world. A commitment of the heart is a commitment before God. It promises everything yet gives nothing. It is only in the fulfilment that it is given and everything is returned."

We are committing to seeking out our spiritual truth, to follow our spiritual guidance and to fulfil what is asked of us. It is in the execution and action that the commitment is fulfilled. We renew the commitment every day.

The Course

This part of the course is in no way about seeking enlightenment. Even though that may be the motivation, the real purpose here is to go all the way. The end point may be enlightening but that is not what we seek. We seek to learn the truth about ourselves and the world we live in but we do not seek something for ourselves.

My observation is that there is the potential for spiritual seekers to find a place of relative comfort, where they are still spiritually aware but spiritual knowledge is not deepening. It is possible to still appear to be searching for something but nothing is really happening. This part of the course is the journey to its conclusion, it is the challenge to go further. It is intended to take us out of our place of

comfort. It is specifically aimed at challenging any sense of separation, from the divine, from nature and from each other.

I don't think that there is anything here to teach, there is no right or wrong way. This part of the course is not about tools and techniques or even gaining knowledge or understanding it is about being ready to challenge yourself. We all walk our own path and learn our own way but I feel that there is an opportunity to help you see that there is further to go. This involves challenging the very foundation of our spiritual understanding and the very beliefs that have got us this far. I don't believe that this can be taught, just as I don't believe we can go further based on belief. When you are ready you will know.

With Love and Light

Tony

Week 24 – Letting Go

Who Am I?

We are trying to discover the answer to the question. “Who Am I?” It is obvious that we have a body in physical form and are also a spiritual being. Together they are one being. Yet there are two things to consider.

The first is the impermanence of physical form. It is temporary, borrowed from the earth, it will return to the earth. The second is the nature of this union. If the body is temporary then so is the union. The body is the temporary home for the spiritual presence. The question we all ask ourselves is whether there is part of us that is permanent which exists beyond the life of the body. Are we just consoling ourselves that the soul continues after the death of the body? Do we know and how do we know? Is it merely a question of belief. We cannot argue it with logic and we do not know.

What we do know is that there is a part of us that is unchanging, that is within us. We are not this body. We are not the emotions. We are not the ego. We are not the mind. All these things change, they alter and they vanish. There is something within us, beyond them, which defines who we are. No matter how everything changes there is still a permanence, unmoving, unalterable being which defines us. If we let go of everything that is impermanent then what remains?

What happens when we are born? What happens when we die? What is the creative spark that makes something live? What is the quality that disappears when we die? We know when something is alive and when something is dead. What is the difference between what is alive and dead? They have the same atoms and molecules but something, the spark has gone. What is the spark in us and where does it reside? When we strip away everything that is impermanent, what remains?

Letting Go

There is a gap between who we are and who we think we are. Our practice helps us to narrow the gap, but can never fully close it. We can never close it because one is real and one is an illusion. What we think we are is not real. We can never get to the truth of who we are by thinking it.

There are two processes involved in awakening. The first is letting go of what we think we are. The second is being who we are.

Spiritual awakening is a process of becoming empty. We strip away what we are not, to leave what we are.

We let go of the body. We are not limited by the body. It comes from the earth and will return to the earth.

We let go of the emotions. The emotions are turbulent, constantly changing, but they are not ours alone.

We let go of the mind. The thoughts we have are not our thoughts, they are open. The mind is receptive and reflective. The past and future, guilt and fear, are not real.

We let go of the ego. We are not our jobs, we are not our roles, our house, our car, our clothes or anything that we think we are. They are not the things that we think define us.

Our perception of ourselves as an individual is deeply held. Our perception of our body, emotion, mind and ego have taken all our life to establish. We do not let go of them easily. It is strange that the very things that limit us are the same things that we use to experience spiritual presence.

To let go of something is not to dismiss it as worthless, not to blame it or castigate it. The things that do not define us are still vital to our physical existence. They are the medium through which life becomes valuable. So as we release and let them go we also learn to deepen our appreciation of them.

Letting go can be challenging. It means letting the ego become less and less. We may never fully let go, but we can let go enough to allow the spiritual presence, and knowledge, to enter us.

The more knowledge arises, the more we understand our true nature, the less we become dependent on the limited self. We let go of the body, but the body still exists, it is real but our perception of it changes and its purpose and value to us changes. We let go of the emotions but they are still there, but they are not ours alone. We let go of the mind. We still have thoughts but those thoughts arise from a different place. We let go of the ego, but we still operate in this world, but not for our individual purpose.

Emptiness and Fullness

There is a gap between the illusion of our thoughts and the truth of who we are. Whatever we think is not true. It can help us to come closer, but it cannot get us there. If our thoughts are unreal, then what is real. If we cannot think the truth then how can we come to know truth. If knowledge of who we are is not in our mind then where is it?

Strangely the knowledge of who we are is held in our physical presence. Truth becomes evident when the physical presence becomes empty and the spiritual presence enters. It is through the body, mind, emotions and heart that we feel who we are. This knowledge has always been there. True nature dawns when the spiritual presence fills the emptiness created when we let go of the body, still the emotions, quieten the mind and open the heart. Each quality of holiness arises as we awaken to the spiritual presence.

We cannot get knowledge by thinking more, nor by doing more or trying harder. We can only get to spiritual truth by becoming empty and allowing our self to be filled by the spiritual presence.

It is somewhat ironic that the things that limit our perception, of who we are, are the same things that allow us to experience it. While we let go of them on one hand we embrace them on another. Letting go is not dismissive. It is letting go of the perception that limits us and appreciating the true quality that the body, mind and emotions bring.

As we let go of those things that we are not, we become empty. Into this empty space flows the universal energy and we become full. We are both empty and full at the same time. Emptiness and fullness are the same thing, they are one. When we let go of everything that defines us we enter a different place. In that place we are everything, limitless, full. It is in that place where those things that we think define us are absent that we become aware of the universe that flows through us. We are empty and full.

The Course

This part of the course is both about letting go and being. It is a constant process of both, letting go and awakening to the spiritual presence so that knowledge enters.

We will keep returning to this one subject of perception. We fundamentally perceive wrongly. We cannot change this perception by thinking, only by being. This change of perception is what this part of the course is all about, knowing ourselves, knowing who we are.

Each week we will also examine a different aspect of our wholeness. Our true nature is whole it is male and female, heaven and earth, internal and external, emptiness and fullness, light and darkness.

It is not two things balanced but different aspects of one. There is no separation, each week we will come back to different aspects that are really one. We will explore both what we need to let go but also examine the perspective of wholeness.

There is a chi kung exercise that is good for helping us to become empty and let go of everything and then to feel what remains which is based on the Buddhist Six Element meditation. This can be found on the website as can a version of the six element meditation

With love and light

Tony

Week 25 – Beyond Belief

We have come to the time in the course where we literally go beyond belief. Belief is a very powerful ally that supports us on the journey. Our belief is precious to us. It helps us, supports us and guides us. It has helped us to progress, but there comes a time when all belief must be challenged. There are some beliefs that get in the way. Any belief that keeps us apart needs to be challenged.

There are some beliefs about the nature of the Divine that keep us separate. We keep the Divine outside and make them special and unattainable. We ascribe what we feel to others or to Angels, masters and teachers. Yet we are not separate from anything. While we maintain a separation, between ourselves and the Divine, we limit ourselves and our potential. Every belief is open to be challenged. Every feeling is within us and beyond us.

Christ and Buddha are not the people, they are the quality within that we seek. Angels bring qualities like strength and courage that we learn to find within. Masters bring wisdom that we already have. How can we find these qualities and wisdom within if we keep them outside and separate. The Christ consciousness, the Buddha nature, the qualities of angels and the wisdom of masters are already within us and within everyone. It is both within and beyond.

This is about coming back to the raw experience. When we explore spirituality we feel and experience things and in order to make some sense of them we ascribe to whatever we believe them to be. We may say that the angels are present or that we are guided. We may pray to Jesus or to Mary or particular saints and feel uplifted. We may be attuned to Buddhas and their incarnations. It doesn't matter to what we ascribe the experience but that we feel it.

So we challenge the belief we hold about where the experiences came from, especially if we ascribe it to something outside of us. But we allow ourselves to understand that the experience itself is real. It is not something outside of us, now it is something inside of us, but it is real, it belongs to us, it is part of us and we are part of it. If you believe that Jesus, Buddha, angels, masters, are separate from you then challenge that belief. If you think that any spiritual experience is given to you by something outside of you challenge that belief. The spiritual experience is within you and outside of you

Why does this matter? Because your belief can keep you apart from your wholeness. While you continue to ascribe any spiritual experience to something outside of you then you are denying something about yourself. You are limiting yourself by giving away part of what you are.

Belief in God

I am always very careful about using the word God in this course because it immediately conjours up an image and a belief. This is probably the most deeply held belief that we have. As soon we hear the word God it creates an image of how God might be, what God is, how God appears, where God is or the lack of existence of God. When we come to challenge belief we need to challenge our belief in God or the lack of it.

Just as we let go of any belief in the Divine being outside us we must let go of any belief that keeps us separate from God. Whether that belief is how we perceive God or that God does not exist. Whether we believe in God or don't believe in God it doesn't matter. If God exists It doesn't need your belief. It exists in the absence of belief i.e. it is not your belief that causes God to exist. If God doesn't exist it still doesn't need your belief. Any belief in God is your need.

If your spirituality is founded on the need to believe in God, or the need not to believe in God then there is a lack at the foundation of your spiritual awareness. I understand that this is hard to accept, but I want you to challenge yourself. I want you to challenge the very foundation of your belief.

Whether God exists or not does not matter. The experience, the foundation of what you have felt and know is true, is still the same.

There is one particular belief in God that we need to challenge, which for many of us is taken for granted, that we are less than God. Any hierarchy or levels in spiritual awareness bring separation. That is true of our awareness of others and just as true of our awareness of the divine. So if we place ourselves lower then we automatically separate. This does not mean we shouldn't have a sense of awe and amazement but we try not to see ourselves as lower.

We are taught to be humble, but true humility does not come by being less than God it comes from becoming nothing but God. True humility comes when we let go of our sense of individuality, when I as a separate being no longer exists.

In the end we must come to know God and know ourselves. We are asking the question "Who am I?" but we also ask "What is God?". These are two sides of the same question. When we know who we are we know what God is. While we hold onto any belief in what God is we cannot be open to answer the question. The only way to know God is to experience it. We can just touch it and there are so many times that we have touched it. We come back to the experience, to what is real.

Internal and External

Both internal and external disappear. What is outside is also within. What is within is also outside. Internal and external are not two but one. There are really no barriers between us and the Divine and really no barriers between us and other people.

As an individual associated with the body, our thoughts and feelings are held within and everything else is outside. Spiritually there is no barrier created by the body. What we think and what we feel are not ours alone. Our thoughts are shared with others, even though we might believe we keep them to ourselves. Our emotions do not belong to us, they are shared. Our pain is shared, our joy is shared.

It is the same with the Divine presence, nothing is hidden from it and it hides nothing from us. While we hold the Divine separate from us we hold onto the limitations of the body and we limit our perception of others.

We are trying to change our perception. Yet again we cannot think ourselves into a different position, but we can challenge everything that keeps us apart. The Divine is not separate from us and we are not separate from it. The Divine is in us and we are in it. What is inside is also outside. There are no barriers between us and other and between us and the Divine. We are all One.

When we come into the spiritual presence we become empty and turn inwards. We let go of outer influences. Yet the effect of the spiritual presence is not within, it is expansive, it is limitless. We turn our attention inwards but the effect is to find the infinite within the finite. What is seemingly external, the Divine, is found within. When we touch the Divine we find the unlimited expansiveness.

The Course

This part of the course is changing quite quickly, being presented in a very different way. There were originally only six lessons but I'm fairly sure that there will be more this time around. The internet notes reflect this substantial change and while they remain relevant they may be less to the point than before.

With Love and light

Tony

Week 26 – No Consolations

When Confucius was roaming on Mount T'ai, he saw Jung Ch'i Ch'i walking on the moors of Ch'ang in a rough fur coat with a rope around his waist, singing as he strummed his lute.

"Master what is the reason for your joy?" Confucius asked.

"I have many joys. Of the myriad of things which heaven begot, man is the most noble - and I have the luck to be human This is my first joy. People are born who do not live a day or a month, who never get out of their swaddling clothes, but I have already lived to ninety. This is my joy. For all men, poverty is the norm and death is the end. Abiding by the norm, awaiting my end, what is there to be concerned about?"

"Good" said Confucius "Here is a man who knows how to console himself."

This a Taoist story and is not meant to praise Confucius but to demonstrate how he misses the point. The Taoists are trying to show the difference between the two philosophies. If you want to understand the full meaning read it in "Tao the Pathless Path" by Osho. But I want to draw out something which is very important. The teaching of Confucius can be likened to religious direction which is based on doing the right thing and behaving in a certain way. The Taoist philosophy is about the direct truth which is present and in front of us at all times. The point of the story is subtle but the man is not joyful because he is awake, but because he has consoled himself. For Confucius the point is not to wake up but to learn how to deal with life, how to console ourselves. The key to the story is that the man has not found true joy but a conditional joy. There is only one true joy which arises as we awaken, not many joys.

There are so many ways that we console ourselves and each other. Yet we are not trying to console ourselves but to discover truth. Life is painful, we learn to deal with it, to avoid facing it. There are different ways of dealing with it. One way is to console ourselves. The other way is to seek the truth in the direct experience.

A consolation is a buffer between ourselves and the experience of fear and pain. We let go of every consolation. There is only now, the direct experience. We challenge everything that keeps us apart from what is real and direct in front of us. Heaven is not somewhere else, it is right in front of you, now. We always come back to the experience. Every consolation keeps us apart from our true nature.

Religion

Within our beliefs there are often ways in which we console ourselves. We believe that things will be better. There is the belief in reincarnation, that we will have another chance. There is belief in karma, that if we do good now, then things will be better, or that we can change nothing because what we face is the result of previous actions. There is the belief in heaven, that we will get there if we behave in a certain way. There is belief in martyrdom, that if we die in the service of God we will end up in eternal bliss.

When we hold beliefs that things will be better we console ourselves. Things might be bad now, but the life beyond is better. Religion often uses consolation as a means of helping people to feel better and cope with suffering. Things might be bad but God is watching over you. Behave this way and you will go to heaven or reach nirvana.

It is important that we challenge any religious teaching and come to the truth of knowledge. This knowledge is at the core of all religious teaching, whether that teaching comes from the Buddha, Christ, Yogis, Sages or Prophets. At the core of all religion is truth. However, the dogma, morals and teachings that have evolved from that core truth do not always express it and do not encourage personal investigation. Yet within every religion is a mystic tradition, under the same umbrella, and it is their qualities of self investigation and personal experience that we encourage. We aim to come to

know God, directly and personally. We aim to discover the way to God, the Buddha path, the Christ within. What I do know is that the journey of self discovery and personal experience is the same for everybody irrespective of religion. The answer to the question "Who am I?" or "What is God?" is the same experience for everyone.

We do not console ourselves. We journey to the very core of truth. If that means we have to put our religion and religious teachers to one side to do it then so be it. Seek out the pure unadulterated truth. Let nobody and nothing to stand between you and God.

The Rock

What is our greatest fear on the path? Is it that all of our spiritual belief, feelings and experiences that we have are just to console ourselves. Has all religion through the centuries merely been a way to console ourselves, to help us to behave in acceptable ways and make us believe that there is purpose in our moral behaviour. Is our spiritual belief founded on a need to console ourselves that there is something more, some grander purpose?

Spirituality by its very nature, and religion founded on the spiritual experience, is unprovable. They offer us something, through belief, that we cannot find anywhere else. Is the whole of religion merely a way of making us feel better? What if there were no God, no heaven, no life after death? What if the feelings we have in meditation are just that, feelings and we are fooling our self by ascribing them to something beyond us?

We have to face this doubt. We have to face the possibility that all this is just a means of consoling ourselves. On one hand, it is a better way of living our life. There is evidence that people who live a moral, religious and spiritual life are happier, but this is not enough at this stage of the course. We are not doing this merely to be happier, we are seeking the truth about ourselves.

We come back to the experience. There is often one experience, maybe more, that forms the foundation for our spirituality. We ask ourselves was that experience real and we know that it was. We know that what we felt and experienced at that moment was real. There are moments of deep spirituality, when the spiritual world and our experience become one. These are moments when we cannot deny the truth of the experience. These experiences are the rock on which we build. We might be prepared to let everything else go but these experiences are solid, real, tangible, undeniable. When we test the truth about spirituality, when we have let everything go, when we have challenged all of our beliefs these experiences still remain. Now we have the rock on which we can build. Now we have the foundation. Now everything that was in doubt can become real.

Joy and Pain

We have learnt to console ourselves. We learn to get by. We know that life is painful but we find a way of coping with it. We know how to console ourselves and we know how to console others. We know how to help others to soothe their pain and fear.

We all suffer.

The source of suffering is desire.

There is a way to end suffering.

It is the eightfold path.

The four noble truths is the essence of the Buddha's teaching.

"I teach suffering, its origin, cessation and path. That's all I teach", the Buddha.

The essential truth is that we all suffer. We have learnt in the first part of this course to be open to all life throws at us, to feel and experience it, to own and to transform our feelings as a way of growth.

Yet there is other pain to deal with, the pain of others. Just as Christianity is focussed on understanding the true meaning of forgiveness, Buddhism seeks to know the true meaning of compassion.

Compassion is not feeling sorry for. It is not trying to understand someone else's pain based on our own experience. Compassion is knowing the pain of others directly, it is feeling their pain. To feel someone else's pain is to recognise that we are one. Their pain is our pain. We cannot divorce ourselves from other's pain and we do not distance ourselves as a way of consoling ourselves.

There is a dance between joy and pain. We know the pain of others but we also know their light, both are true, their pain is our pain their joy is our joy. As we feel compassion we also feel joy because we know the pain but we also know the light. As we come closer to the pain we come closer to the light, to their true nature and our true nature.

Compassion is a great gift that we give to others but it is also a gift of awakening, for us and them. Some people need to be consoled, but it is better to feel compassion. We share their pain and see their light. We do not join in their consolation.

All pain comes from the same source. It comes from being separate. When we are whole and complete joy spontaneously arises. Joy and pain are two sides of the same coin. While we remain in a body we all suffer. The origin of suffering is separation from source. There is a way to end suffering, to take the journey back to our true nature. No consolations.

The Course

This is a new lesson. It is one that has kept returning to me over and over again, but I have always struggled to express it. It keeps coming back to me because I haven't yet fully grasped it, there is something for me to learn. Lessons keep returning until we get to their essential truth. In this part of the course we seek to get to the core of the lessons we need to learn. Superficial understanding is, in itself, a consolation. We are trying to get to the heart of the lessons, literally.

I find it very interesting that as I have investigated direct spiritual knowledge for myself and looked at many religions, I find that it has deepened my original religion. The religion of my childhood has become more important to me because it is in that teaching that I can gain the deepest understanding. In that teaching I am not struggling to establish the basic knowledge, it is already there

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With Love and Light

Tony

Week 27 – Mother, Father, Son/Daughter

"To know that what is impenetrable really exists, manifests itself to us as the highest wisdom and the most radiant beauty, which our dull faculties can comprehend only in their most primitive forms, this knowledge, this feeling is at the centre of all true religiousness. In this sense, and in this sense only, I belong to the ranks of devoutly religious men." Albert Einstein

Often knowledge is not about what we know, but understanding what we don't know. We know more about this world than ever before, but there are some things which remain impenetrable. Yet even if we can never understand them they are forever accessible to us if we open our mind and awaken our hearts. What we cannot understand is presented to us as pure experience. What we cannot see, touch and know beyond physical form is presented to us as a direct experience within this world.

In spiritual awareness the earth is our greatest teacher. The earth is the pure manifestation of God. It is manifestation, unlimited by the ego, the sense of individuality, personal will and desire. Through nature we can learn what we are and what we are not, we can observe our potential and inherent beauty. We can sense the immense power and creativity of which we are part.

The earth demonstrates pure power and pure manifestation. The earth is God in form. It is the physical manifestation of God. Form and non-form are not separate, they are one. They seem separate but have never been so. One emanates from the other into form which changes and eventually returns back to non-form. The physical manifestation is in constant flux. Form and non-form are in constant flow. They are One, but we see them as two, separate.

The nature of the physical manifestation is to seek its source, it emanates, coalesces and diminishes back to source. So we can sense within the physical, the interconnection but also the pull back to source. There is always a sense within us of that innate desire to return.

The Divine Feminine

In our minds we have made the miraculous, the incredible and the amazing seem normal. We have stopped seeing that the normal everyday natural things are absolutely miraculous and the manifestation of God. The way a seed grows into a plant, The way a bird flies. The beauty of a flower, and its delicate scent. A tree that lives a thousand years. There are millions of examples of the miraculous. Life itself is miraculous. Anything that is alive is an expression of the essence of God.

We ourselves are amazing; the way the mind works, the way we feel emotions, the life within us, the way the body grows from the earth, the vitality, the hearts ability to feel, to love, to give and receive. Everything about us is miraculous. We are often looking so hard to find something that is supernatural that we fail to see the miraculous present in nature and in every human being. Everything that we find normal about the natural world is the amazing, spectacular expression of the spiritual presence.

This is the Divine Feminine. It is the recognition of God within physical form. It is the recognition that God is present, not just as a spiritual source, but in every living thing. As we become empty, as we let go of what we think we are, our beliefs and consolations we awaken to what is directly in front of us, the presence of God in nature. As we let go, this presence of God, in our physical form awakens. It is this that lifts us up. The earth is our greatest teacher, it shows us what we are not and opens us up to what we are. We awaken to the Divine presence in physical form, in our body, energy, emotions, beauty, joy, life and in the underlying presence. This is the divine presence within the earth and within us, it is the Divine Feminine.

Male and Female

The symbolism here is very straightforward. The female represents the earth energy and the male the spiritual energy.

As we learn the lessons of the earthly mother we let go of those things within us that maintain a sense of separation. As we do so we feel that the earthly mother raises us up to the father. As we let go at each of the energy centres the body's vibration raises. We become empty. The underlying vibration of the earth, the very presence that is within the earth's emanation is the same vibration from which it came. The origin is still within the emanation. So when we raise up and become empty it is this vibration, original sound that is heard. It rises up to merge with the original source, the father. The two, which were never apart, sing the same song. They sing in harmony.

Now the male enters the female, the masculine energy enters the empty vessel created by the feminine energy. The emptiness is filled by the male energy and the male and female are re-united to create the son/daughter. This is the reunion of the feminine and masculine aspects of God. Yet in reality they were never apart. They only seem to be separate to us. We feel that we are separate, from God, from each other. Spiritually returning to the perception of wholeness, the son/daughter.

Manifestation

As we become empty the earth manifests itself within us. This is the feminine aspect of God, the spiritual presence within form. It enters every energy centre, raising the vibration and reaching up.

The masculine aspect of God enters the body, which is ready for this purpose. The light manifests itself within us. We start to become the manifestation of light. This is not the light flowing through us, this is the light manifesting within us.

Now the earth and the light, the male and the female, both manifest themselves within us. This is the creation of the son/daughter. The Son/Daughter is the result of the union it is pure awareness. It is awareness of the spiritual presence through physical form. It is only through physical form that this experience is possible. It is only through the body, emotions and mind that we are capable of this experience. This is the incredible, amazing ability that all human beings have, to experience God. The two that seemed separate, the earth and the light, physical and spiritual, are one within us.

We keep letting go, emptying ourselves of how we perceive ourselves. We raise ourselves up and the light enters. Every time the light enters a little bit of the son/daughter is born in us. The light continues to manifest itself in us and in this world.

The Course

This course is grounded in the mundane, in the ordinary, because spirituality is normal and part of our everyday experience. It is always part of what we are doing. It is always part of life. What life is offering us is founded in the spiritual. Yet it is only grounded in the everyday experience because within the mundane is the incredible. Within nature is everything. The normal everyday experience is the superficial yet below it is the spiritual presence. Within the everyday experience is the presence of the divine.

We are extraordinarily ordinary. We are normal people, yet what we experience is amazing. We have no supernatural powers or skills but the miraculous is happening all around us. This is the foundation for this course, that ordinary people are capable of experiencing the extraordinary. That extraordinary experience is the means by which we change ourselves, others and the world. We are not trying to create anything supernatural but we are trying to recognise that the extraordinary is present within the ordinary. What we experience, right in front of us every day, in the natural world, in every person that we meet and in our own body, emotions and mind is incredible, unbelievable, amazing. What we call normal is fantastic, hidden within the normal is the incredible.

We might only glimpse it, just about sense it, yet we know that it is there. This world and the people who live in it are incredible. The spiritual experience is not other worldly, it is rooted in this world in what is right in front of us, now. The spiritual experience is not about the supernatural ability but the recognition of just how incredible the ordinary and mundane, the normal and usual everyday experience is. This world is as much an expression of the divine as the deepest meditation experience. The two are not separate, the divine is as much present within natural physical form as it is within the highest prayer.

There is an chi kung exercise, Salute to the Four Corners, which helps us to awaken to the divine presence within the natural world and to raise the body up. This can be found on the website. Use this in conjunction with the Seven Prayers of the Earthly Mother which is also on the website.

With love and light

Tony

Week 28 – Descend, Pretend, Ascend

Come into the quietness. Relax your body, quieten the mind. Become alert and alive as if all the senses are heightened. Open the heart, become centred on that point. Become aware of the natural world around you. Go for a walk, but walk slowly with great awareness. Observe all the detail of the world around you. Sense and feel the world. Sense its natural beauty. Touch and feel the plants, the earth, the water. Feel the breeze on the skin, the warmth of the sun, the coolness of the water. Appreciate, with all your senses the incredible, amazing nature of this world. Feel the life flowing through the living world. Pretend to be enlightened. Pretend that you are fully awake. What does this world feel like? Come out of meditation but stay in that sense of heightened alertness. Go out into the world in that state. What does it feel like to be enlightened?

You know what it feels like, to be an enlightened being in a physical body. You can pretend. Yet you are not pretending. This is your natural state, you can touch it. You pretend to be what you are.

There are two basic states that we can be in, asleep and awake. We spend time in meditation and chi kung to help us to come into a state of connected awareness. We reach up, we feel as though we return. We feel as though we can come into a state of connection through prayer and meditation. We can reach up, we long to return. Yet all this is back to front. We still see the world the wrong way round. We still see the world from ourselves outwards. We connect back to source, we reach out to God, or whatever we believe in. There are times when we can touch the divine. It is all the wrong way round.

We are an enlightened being who for a short time has come into a physical body in order to experience. We do not reach up, we have come down. When we are not aware of the connection, of our spiritual nature then we have descended into the body. When we feel that connection, that is our natural state. The state of feeling connected and at one is who we are. We descend into the body, we sink down into the sleep of humanity. In humanity we forget, we deal with the problems and the issues, we wallow in the experience of separation, we are aware of the darkness more than we are aware of the light. We feel pain and sadness in ourselves and in others.

When we come back to a state of connection we bring some of that pain and sadness back with us. We offer it up to the light and lift it up for it to be taken away.

The pretense is not that we are enlightened. The pretense is that we are human. When we forget and slip back into the dream for a short time that is when we pretend.

We are an enlightened being, we are part of the oneness. For a time we are in a physical body. Even in the physical body we are still the enlightened being. Yet when we descend we let ourselves come down into the dream. We pretend to be human and we live with all the human feelings and emotions. We allow ourselves to believe even for a short time that being human is what we are. Then we awake again and remember, we reach up with the body, in the quietness of the mind we expand again. We ascend, we return for a while into the wholeness. When we are ready, we come back down we descend again to lift up more of the pain and suffering. We descend again into the body to bring more light to dispel the darkness. We pretend to be asleep again, we pretend to be human.

This is not the cycle of reincarnation but the daily cycle of the light worker. Every day we descend into the body to experience life in human form. We pretend each day to be human and separate. We remember each day to lift up, to come back to who we are to lift up some more. We descend, pretend and ascend. We are not a human being occasionally reaching up to the light, we are a spiritual being who descends into humanity.

Every time we descend into the body we gather in some more of the pain and suffering in this world.

We work with what we feel, we own it and feel it and lift it up. We work with the pain of others, we feel compassion we feel their pain. We lift it up as we return. We are the light not the darkness.

The Flow of Love

We have worked with the flow of love meditation. We feel the love coming into the body from heaven and earth, the love flows into the heart and we feel that we are loved unconditionally. This brings a sense of peace because there is nothing we have to do to earn that love.

We let that love extend out into the world. We let the love extend from our heart into the world. We feel unconditional love for others.

We feel the love reflected back from the world into our hearts. It is reflected from the pure light within all human beings. We feel the pain and suffering of others and we see the light in them. We feel compassion.

The light returns back to heaven and earth from our hearts. It returns back to heaven and earth carrying with it a little bit of the pain and suffering in the world. We feel gratitude, for the earth, for our body, for the light, for the spirit and for all those who share our world and support our spiritual journey.

This is the flow of love. The flow is continuous. Love flows through the body continuously. We focus our attention on different parts of it at different times, but the flow is continuous.

When you pay attention to the flow, to any part of it. When you pay attention to the sense of peace, to unconditional love for others, to compassion or to gratitude you return back to awareness of who you really are.

You are not the body paying attention to the love that flows continuously through the universe, you are the love. Rather than being the body, the human, experiencing the love, you are the love experiencing through the body. This is what you are, you are the universal love. You experience by travelling through the body which is the tool for this experience. You are not the body, the mind and the emotions you are the love and you experience that love, through the body mind and emotions. You experience what you are by participating in this world.

The Course

We are nearly at the end of the course. There is very little more to cover now. As we approach the end of the course there should be gentleness. There is no urgency, no desire, no expectation, just a feeling that all is as it should be. We have come a long way and covered a lot of material, now we just let all that we have learnt become absorbed. We are trying to change perception and this takes time. This is a gradual process, let the lessons that we have been given become part of us. Although we all read the same lessons, what we learn is for us alone, it is what we need and are ready for.

This last part of the course has meant to challenge us, but that sense of challenge is finished. Now the sense of one of peacefulness, and gentleness, acceptance of who and what we are.

The flow of love is a tool to help us to change perception. Work with the flow of love, to try to feel the love flowing through the body and then just change your mind. Become the love. As the love feel the experience through the body.

Pretend to be enlightened, spend time within any activity pretending to be enlightened. When we pretend to be enlightened we return again to what we are, it is no pretense. Every time we return to what we are a little bit of light manifests itself within us, within the physical form. Even when we

descend again into sleep a little bit of light stays with us, we do not completely lose awareness. Even when we pretend to be human that light continues to shine. Every day the light shines brighter.

In love and light

Tony

Week 29 – Polish the Heart

Emptiness and fullness, internal and external, joy and pain, male and female, heaven and earth, light and darkness, all present within the circle. They are whole and complete, none is denied, we acknowledge them all. They swirl around the centre point. There is a point at the centre of the circle, at the very centre of the universe where nothing moves. This world is in constant flux. There are two parts to the whole, the centre point around which everything revolves and the turbulent world which emanates from that centre. We are the microcosm that reflects the whole. We are part of this turbulent world, we have all the parts together as whole. We have a still centre around which everything revolves. This is the centre of the centre of the centres. It is the centre of the heart.

When we recognise who we are, we are both the turbulence and the centre. We are both asleep and awake. We reflect the whole, that which is formed and that from which everything is formed. We acknowledge everything, yet we move towards the centre. The turbulence is not going to go away it is part of what we are and what the world is. We come more and more to the centre of the heart.

The heart is the core of our being. It is where the spiritual is grounded into the physical experience. It is the point around which the whole revolves. When we are in the heart we automatically bring the whole together.

We polish the heart. We let the light in the heart shine more clearly. We bring love into every action. That is the process of growth now, we polish the heart. Polishing the heart is the process of continuous growth. Polishing the heart is bringing the spiritual into this world and into our lives.

To polish the heart is to continue to refine the qualities of the heart. We polish the heart until it is like a pure crystal through which the light can shine without blemish.

Polishing the Heart

There is nothing new, now we use the tools that we have. We continue to use them so that we get better at using them, so that the skills we have become more refined, the feelings more subtle and delicate. We use the tools so that we continue to grow and most of all we continue to awaken the heart.

There are two parts to this. First we continue to let go of anything that gets in the way of a truly open heart. We continue to work with all our feelings and experiences. Second we spend time in the heart centre feeling and experiencing, learning to let the heart become an expression of the divine.

Whatever you do, try to do it from the heart. Bring the feeling of the heart into action, bring it into your work and into your play. Let everything be an expression of love.

Bring love to everyone you meet. Every time you meet someone, even if only exchanging a few words or pass them in the street come into your heart. Extend love out into the world, to individuals, to groups and to situations. Bring healing into the world.

Get out of your mind and into your heart. Try to avoid negative thoughts and use the heart to create positivity. Try not to become too intellectual about spirituality, keep returning to the heart.

Bring love into every relationship. There is only one relationship, between us and God. Whether that is giving or receiving. The light flows through the heart from God in form and without form. It flows from our heart to others, it touches the expression of God in them. It flows from that part of them to that part in us, and it flows back from the heart to heaven and earth. Every relationship is between you and God. Whatever the surface communication there is an inner communion between your heart and

theirs. Stay in your heart so that communication takes place on the inner plane. Do not let the outer communication disrupt the inner.

Feel gratitude for whatever you believe in. Feel gratitude for the physical presence experienced in nature, in the people in your lives, in the planet as a whole, in yourself in your physical form. Feel gratitude for the spiritual presence, for the insight and intuition and guidance, for the overall spiritual presence and divine beings who guide and support.

Be open to the feelings of others, behind their mask. Be aware of the pain, suffering and sadness in this world. Feel what is behind their action and behaviour and feel compassion. Feel in your heart the souls of others crying out. Look to see their light, look behind the mask to see their light. Feel their heart with your heart.

Spend time just being. Be open to be loved unconditionally. Forgive yourself. Nothing that you have ever done has added or taken away from your true nature. It is only you who judges and condemns yourself. Free yourself, by allowing yourself to be loved, no matter what you have done. Feel the unconditional love that the earth has for you. Feel the unconditional love of the light for you. Be at peace with yourself.

The aim is to be at peace with yourself. That sense of peace of knowing the unconditional love of the universe for you and for everyone.

The Love of God

A pure emanation of love, which does not question, does not doubt. It is just a pure expression of love, constant, flowing outward forever. It is like the sun which always shine, even when obscured by the clouds. Imagine the warmth and light of the sun as love shining on you and others. Being shared in no way limits what shines on you.

Imagine that this continuous love takes shape. It becomes the embodiment of love. This world is the embodiment of love expressed in the earth and in nature and in us. Can you accept this love, with and without shape, shining unconditionally on you and expressed through you? Just sit in its presence, without question or doubt. Can you let go of everything you know about yourself that clouds the light from shining on you? Can you forgive yourself?

Only we limit ourselves. Only we stop ourselves from reaching our potential. Forgive yourself. There is nothing you have ever done that has added to or taken away from who you are. You are, and always have been, a pure expression of love. You are nothing but love. Even your physical presence is a pure manifestation emanating from love.

"Your only calling here is to devote yourself, with active willingness, to the denial of guilt in all its forms." A Course in Miracles

We forgive ourselves completely. We allow ourselves to be loved by the spiritual source and the spiritual emanation, by heaven and earth.

The Course

It was never intended, nor possible that this course could be complete in itself. It attempts, not to take you anywhere, but to describe the journey and the tools that we need. This week is about the tools that we use.

The heart is the key to all spiritual action, it is the centre of our being. It is through the heart that we experience peace, love, compassion and gratitude. It is the heart that grounds the universal energy into action. It is always the heart. Yet the heart is not alone. The heart is only able to act in this way when

it is supported by the body and mind. It is not love alone that is the spiritual presence, but love, power and wisdom combined. It is the three together. So yes we polish the heart, but in the knowledge that it means that we continue to awaken the body and quieten the mind.

The core exercises for awakening the body, on this course, is chi kung, but it can be tai chi, yoga or any holistic exercise. It is not about the perfect physical body. It is about the ability of the body to feel and experience. Ill health and disability may hinder our ability but do not prevent it, they might distract us from the experience but do not deny us. It is the body's ability to feel and to raise up that is important.

Once we have the skill, that is not the end. We awaken the ability in the body so that we know how to come into the state of physical awareness, but then we need to keep doing it. We hone the ability, we make it more accessible but also we counteract the effect of living in this world. We are still present in this world, we are still affected by the turbulence. We hone the skills and we maintain the energetic levels within the body. This is the only body you are given, appreciate it, nurture it, care for it.

The core exercise for the mind is meditation. It is the ability of the mind to be fully alert, yet quiet. It is the readiness of the mind and the openness of the mind. It is the mind's ability to be open and expansive. Intelligence and intellect are not needed, they may hinder us and offer us lessons, but we do not need them. The capability of the mind to be still, quiet and connected is what we are developing.

We aim to be able to come into the quietness more easily, but we also develop the skills of wisdom, to become intuitively aware. The quietness of the mind is a tool of wisdom. The skill is in listening within the silence and in our ability to enter the silence and create. We cannot just learn to become quiet we have to listen all the time. The body and the mind provide the ability to listen.

The heart is the centre, but it is not alone. When we talk about the heart in the context of this course we are talking about the awakened heart. Love on its own is not enough, the heart in this course is love, power and wisdom in harmony, united by the heart. It is the heart with spiritual knowledge and guidance. It is the heart with power and vitality in its actions. It is the heart supported by a vital physical presence, an awakened body and by a still quiet mind, intuition and guidance.

With Love and Light

Tony

Week 30 – Working With Light

The Inner Plane

There is so much suffering in this world, so much pain. Yet that suffering is an essential part of this world. This is so hard to accept. Suffering in this world is everywhere. No suffering is worse or better. Some people are suffering the hardships of physical lack, they can hardly find enough food to live. Some people live in appalling conditions, with a lack of even the most basic of sanitation. Others are affected by natural disasters, their homes and livelihoods swept away. Yet there is suffering among those whose lives are relatively comfortable, even where people have food, shelter and work. There is even suffering among the rich and the famous, nobody is exempt from the suffering in this world. Yet everything in this world is as it should be. Everything in this world is perfect. If everything is perfect then what do we have to do? We are motivated to lift the suffering of others. We are motivated by our own suffering and by the suffering of others. Yet the suffering in this world is the great motivation to grow and change. It is the suffering in the world that brings forth compassion and change. We may be motivated to help others but how do we know what is helpful and what is not. How do we know if what we do helps others to grow or merely helps to prolong suffering?

What do we do? Do we sit on the sidelines aware of the pain and suffering or do we jump in? How do we know what to do? As the light awakens in us, our awareness of suffering increases, yet we also want to act in a beneficial way. What do we do? First and foremost we continue to work on ourselves, we continue to let the light grow in us. We continue to let the light shine. Being a light worker is exactly that, letting your light shine. By letting the light shine, by letting our quietness develop we are demonstrating a different way. As we awaken the most important quality to express, on the inner plane, is our light. The more we let our light shine, the more others are touched by the light. It may be hidden, but it is extremely powerful. We continue to let the light grow in us and then we bring that light into the world. We bring that light into the world through the things we do and the people we meet. We also bring light into the world in meditation. We bring light to the people that we know who are suffering, those who need healing and need support. We bring light to situations in the world, where there are natural disasters, wars, famine anywhere that touches us and moves us.

It is one thing to bring our own light, yet it is another to bring light together. It is so much more powerful when we come together, to bring light in to the world. It is as if the individual light is magnified, when we open together. When we meditate or practice together the effect is for us each to open and in doing so to we connect and unite, through the divine, through the earth and through our hearts. The effect is to multiply, not add, the effect of the individuals. These are not healing sessions, we are not in these sessions trying to take away the suffering, but to help alleviate, support and grow. How the light works to assist is not our concern, it may be through healing but it may not be, our aim is to bring light into the situation so that individuals and the whole grow through the experience.

Their pain is our pain and our light is their light. We cannot take away the suffering of others nor the opportunity it offers them but we can bring light to ease them, bring love to support them and compassion to light the way. We cannot complete the journey alone, We are not two, we are one. We cannot complete by ourselves. We are only complete when we are all complete. While one person continues to suffer we are not complete. We bring light into this world for the benefit of all.

The Outer Plane

If our primary role is to bring light into the world, what do we do on the outer plane? What do we have to do in this world? What role do we need to fulfil? What action do we need to take? Does the universe has a purpose for us and how do we know?

When I look back at my life it seems clear to me that everything was meant to be. That everything in my life has brought me to this point. From the moment that I started to awaken that path seems to

have been clearer and more direct, but I also see that before that time the way was being prepared. It seems, in hindsight that the universe had a plan, yet every choice that I made, I made freely. It seems all the more remarkable because I never had any intent or desire to teach Tai Chi or to teach at all. Yet teaching has been to most perfect path for me in order to learn. I have ended up in a place that seems to be in itself perfect yet at the start one which I would never have chosen for myself. Yet, in every decision I have had free will.

When I look forward my path is clouded in mist. Where do I go from here, do I continue to do what I'm doing, do I push to do more or do less? Is there something that I should be doing that I am not doing? What do I do?

What do we do? We follow our intuition and guidance. We follow what we feel passionate about and we move away from those things that no longer give us joy. Things touch us and move us more than others. We bring our attention to those areas of our life. We follow the inner guidance in meditation, but we also follow the guidance of our feelings. We do what excites us, on the inner level. We do what excites the heart, we follow the feelings of the heart. We do not need to plan too far ahead but let the path take us. I would never have chosen to teach but life and opportunity has presented itself. So we let life unfold, but that means that we listen to the inner messages and act on them. We do not need to rush but let it unfold in its own time. We also need to live in this world, we need to pay the mortgage, feed ourselves and families and be responsible. Following inner guidance does not mean giving away our responsibility but actually means taking responsibility.

There are many paths, and ways to learn, for me it is the path of a teacher, but there are so many ways in which we can learn. The most important thing is to continue to learn. Let your own path unfold, whether that is as a healer, minister, wise one, teacher, messenger, protector, or warrior or through any path that helps you learn.

Be alert to your journey. There are times when we focus on the outer journey and learning and times to withdraw to the inner plane and consolidate. It is not always about doing but sometimes about being.

Intent is the most important of all qualities. We have an incredible power to create. We create most powerfully by bringing our intent into the universal flow. Yet it is so hard to know what to create. The most important thing is to maintain the intent for our own awakening, because the journey takes time and perseverance. It is not for me a question of persevering because I want to do something else, for me it is an extension of the commitment that I have made. Maintain intent on the goal of awakening and the rest follows.

You are a Light Worker. When we have come so far on the journey you work with light. You bring light into this world. You continue to let it grow in you. You bring light, through your heart, into the world. It is for you to find a way. You do not need to do anything different, but bring love and light into everything you do.

The Course

I have followed a path of teaching. I was inspired to share the benefits of Tai Chi, Chi Kung, meditation and spiritual awareness. I could see the effect that stress and pressure had on the people I worked with and was inspired to share another way. While that was my motivation I quickly recognised that the real purpose in teaching was for me to learn. My journey was to teach so that I could learn.

It is part of my process of learning to share this course. In many ways this course is my learning made public. It has never been my course, it contains much that is beyond my understanding and every time there is some deeper understanding in it. So I share this course with you not in order to teach you but so that you may find your own way to learn.

I am not your teacher. I am still on my path, I am still awakening. The Divine is your teacher, you have your own connection, you walk your own path and find your own way. You are guided in that path through inspiration, passion and feeling. Follow what excites you, do what you are passionate about and you will be following your guidance.

Everything I have done in the years of teaching has helped me to awaken. There could not have been a better way for me to learn, in teaching I have learnt so much. For me this course has been an extraordinary gift. This course is freely given because the creation of this course has been such a gift to me. This course is freely given and you are free to use this course and the material in whatever way assists you in your own growth.

With Love and Light

Tony

Week 31 - Awakening

Everything is simpler than we think it is. There are two fundamental perspectives in this world, one where everything is whole, complete and perfect in its own right and one where everything is separate and independent. Only one of these makes sense.

How we see the world changes. It changes from separation to wholeness, as we experience wholeness. Being apart from everybody and being separate from nature makes no sense once we have experienced our wholeness.

The two worlds of wholeness and separation do not co-exist. Only one exists and one is imagined. There is only one reality. It is not as though we have a choice. We may still participate in the illusion from time to time, but even when we do we still know which is true. We may not yet have shaken off all the illusion, but now we know where to find the place of truth within us.

Sometimes the illusion seems overwhelming, it seems that its hold is so strong that it cannot be broken. The illusion dominates the lives of so many, so how can we completely stand apart. We live with wholeness, we act from wholeness, we become wholeness. That is all, it is very simple.

Doing Nothing

In each part of this course we come to the same lesson "I need do nothing". We always come back to this lesson because it is necessary to realise it. In everything there is perfection, in us there is perfection. Only in the realisation of our perfection can we complete this course. We do not need to do anything because, in the wholeness, we are perfect. Anything we have done in illusion does not matter. Only we can see this perfection for ourselves, we see it in others and in our self.

There is no secret. There is no hidden key. There is nothing that you lack. You are part of the wholeness. Everything that you have ever done within the illusion of this world does not matter. It is not even that these things have been forgiven, because there is nothing to forgive. Only the wholeness is real, the separation is not. How can anything that is part of the illusion of separation, anything that you have done wrong, affect the truth of wholeness. Only you hold onto your sins, the wholeness does not even recognise them. The wholeness only recognises your wholeness, it does perceive any lack in you.

Now is the time to do nothing, to rest in your wholeness. In the end this course is about being at peace with yourself. It is not about some state of being that is beyond us. It is being at peace. Serenity comes from that perception. Peace comes when you recognise who you are, the wholeness not the illusion. When you recognise the wholeness you know the answer to the question.

Awakening

"Yet all that happens when the gap is gone is peace eternal. Nothing more than that and nothing less." A Course in Miracles

To wake up is to be at peace, with yourself and with the world. That peace does not come from outside, from the world we live in being peaceful, but arises from within. We seek peace but we seek it by trying to make the world peaceful, to bring stability and consistency, but it never happens. Peacefulness only arises from the centre, it is the nature of this world to change. We do not change the world, nor do we change ourselves, we are at peace with the world and at peace with ourselves. Peace comes from knowledge, from knowing who we are and the nature of the universe. We have used the flow of love to feel this peace, but there is a time when what we pretend becomes real. The unconditional love that the universe expresses for us is real and there is nothing that we have to do to earn it. In this knowledge lies the peace of God.

Out of this peacefulness arises love and compassion. We do not love out of need but from the expression of peacefulness. We are right in the heart of this world. We are in the centre of wholeness. Love and compassion are not means but ends. We can only express love from wholeness, love is the expression of wholeness. Whenever you have expressed love or compassion it is from wholeness. You are loving because you are whole. You do not love from choice but because that is who you are.

Joy bubbles up, like a spring rising from the ground. It is as if it arises from nowhere, yet it seems to be everywhere, in the most simple of things. Joyfulness seems to be present in everything and in us, bubbling and infectious. It is, with peace and love, a quality that exists in itself, it does not exist in anything else, it does need anything else to make it exist, it just is.

Peace, love and joy are one, they are the same thing expressed and experienced in different ways. They are wholeness experienced. You know them, they are your companions. They have joined you on the journey and when the journey ends they are there.

The Course

“Spiritual nature is peaceful, joyful and loving and this course is based on an approach which reflects these qualities. From a spiritual perspective we are already perfect, and if we can completely open to that awareness then this course is already complete.”

The above quote is from the introduction to this course. The qualities of this course are peaceful, loving and joyful. That is the way to approach this course. Now we see that the qualities of peacefulness, love and joy are the course and are the conclusion.

In the end you are at peace with yourself. What more is there to seek? Awakening comes when we know the state of wholeness. The intrinsic qualities of wholeness are peace, love and joy.

With Peace, Love and Joy

Tony

Week 32 - Completion

This is the last lesson, congratulations for coming this far. This is the end of the course. The course is complete, even though our journey and purpose may not be.

Uncertainty

There is one final lesson, a final question, something that is just out of reach. There is a final question that needs answering. We feel as though there is something that we are missing. It is like a nagging thought, trying to reach out for something that we cannot quite grasp. There is still something that seems to be missing.

It seems that no matter how much we learn about ourselves there is still something else, something missing that we cannot quite reach. We feel that we cannot quite get there until this question is answered. We do not know what the missing question is and we cannot reach the answer.

Now we realise that we will never know this question, never have its answer. No matter how many questions we answer there will always be one more. No matter how close we come to the conclusion of the journey there always seems to be a little further to go. We will never be able to reach that last question and you will never get that final answer. This doesn't mean that we cannot complete the journey. It means that we will only complete it when we stop seeking. We can never know all the questions and all the answers. Unless we stop we will always be seeking.

When we stop, we stop in uncertainty. Uncertainty is important, it is how it is. There is always some mystery, some level of unknowing. We can't complete the journey unless we accept the uncertainty.

You have come so far, you have climbed so high up the mountain, yet it seems to continue for ever. Yet when you stop, the mist of uncertainty clears and you look out on the beauty of this world and the light that shines on it. Now every thing is clear, now everything is in light.

Uncertainty is important, because we rest in uncertainty. We do not rest in all the answers. When we are certain about something then we do not really know. If we are confident in the answer then we are still missing something. We can never know, we are happy not knowing. When we finally let go of any need to understand and rest in uncertainty then we are there. We get out of the head and into the heart. In the heart we know.

Awareness

Stop learning and rest in awareness. We come into a state of awareness. We are awareness. The exercises open us to awareness and meditation helps us to maintain it. In awareness we are here, now. There are no more questions and no more answers, just this moment.

It is not us alone aware. It is us as part of one awareness. We feel we are part of one being alive, one breath and one awareness. It is as though each one of us is a sensitive nerve ending of one being. We are all one connected awareness.

There is unlimited power. There is a wisdom which touches all knowledge. There is a light that shines without question.

We sit in the middle, right at the very centre. We sit in the centre of power, wisdom and light. We have no need. There is nothing that we need to do, nothing that we need to learn.

We choose to bring light into the world.

Gratitude

As the light returns to heaven and earth we are filled with gratitude. This is the out breath, the final part of the universal flow. We are filled with a deep sincere gratitude, for the earth, for the light, for each other.

My deepest thanks to you for sharing this course with me. I am overwhelmed with gratitude. What we have shared is sacred and I thank you for your participation in this course. What we are sharing is sacred and I am so grateful to you all. Without you there would be no course and without the course I would struggle to express the quality that exists within me and within each of us. I am grateful to you all for shining your light. It is a great gift that we give to ourselves, each other and the planet when we undertake the journey. I acknowledge the light within you, but I also acknowledge your humanity. We are light but we also, as human beings, make a choice to take this journey and I thank you all for that choice to express your light. I thank you as individuals but also as a group. We never lose the connection with those we touch spiritually even though we may be in different places. I am grateful for you sharing this journey with me. I thank you all from the centre of my heart

I am so grateful to spirit for this course, for the insight and knowledge. Spirit is an amazing intangible, beyond yet within. It shares a natural intelligence that guides us to what is intrinsic. I am grateful for the love and guidance helping me to uncover the truth within. More than ever this time, the spiritual energy that flows into the course has been clear to me. I am deeply grateful.

I am grateful to the earth for being the learning ground. This planet is so special, it is extraordinary, it is miraculous. To live on a planet which is so alive, so abundant, so generous is such a incredible privilege. This planet is a pure expression. It offers us a reflection which shapes and forms the lessons we need, but with such gentleness and love. The earth, and the body we are given, gives us the ability to experience, directly. It is a great gift that we are given. Even now, for this lesson, the earth helps me to feel and experience, by bringing something for which I am deeply grateful, while also reminding me of great sadness. I am grateful to everyone who shares this journey.

In gratitude the light returns to heaven and earth, we are all uplifted by the experience.

The Course

This course reflects an ancient truth, but in a way that is appropriate to the time it is written. Truth never changes but the way truth is expressed changes over time as we need to learn different lessons. Truth does not change but the way in which truth is applied is relevant to the time and the state of universal growth and the lessons being learnt. We live in extraordinary times. It is no coincidence that this course is expressed at this time. This is a time of amazing change and this course reflects this time. This course is part of the awakening. This course encourages the qualities of the new era.

This is the time to bring spirituality into action, in everything we do. It is not separate from the rest of our lives. We seek the direct experience, felt through the physical form, it is real and alive. It is time for the re-awakening of the physical experience of spirituality. This is not to reduce the otherworldly nature of spirituality, now is the time for the two together. We seek that spiritual experience directly, not through anybody else. It is time for each of us to awaken, ourselves, and not merely to sit in the presence of others.

There is one quality that is key at this time. It is time for spirituality to be part of everyday life. It is the spiritual experience to become present and known in all of us. It is the gentle awakening of everyday spirituality. Spirituality for people with families, with jobs, with mortgages, it is for everyone. Spirituality is grounded in the mundane. In the normal and usual. Spirit is in everything and everyone. There is a great awakening and we are all part of it. We will never quite understand it but we can sense the excitement of the change.

I hope this course has moved something in you, that it has touched you in a tangible way. Each time this course goes deeper. This last part of the course has been both challenging and exciting and I hope that those qualities have been carried through the writing to you. We live in challenging and exciting times. There is an opportunity for us to take great strides forward and I hope you will grasp the opportunity for growth. There is a part of you that is ready to learn and ready to express the truth in whatever way is right for you. I thank you all from the centre of my heart.

And finally we rest. We have reached the end of the journey, and now we rest in the light. The journey is complete, we are ready. We know who we are and we know God.

With Love and light

Tony