

Daily Meditation 09/12/2021

On Responding to Government Arrogance

Good morning.

In today's meditation we're meditating again on an offshoot of the 9/11 anniversary that we remembered yesterday. And it continues to be a meditation on arrogance and the medicine to combat it.

And one way to combat arrogance is to listen to others, to learn from others. I think all learning really is a medicine against arrogance. We look to people who are wiser than us, who are smarter than us, who study things that we do not know, because learning is such a community experience.

We need teachers of all kinds, not just teachers in the flesh, in the classroom, but of course scholars and others who write books. and people who make movies, and playwrights, and all the rest. This is all about learning, and therefore it is about combating arrogance.

Because arrogance by definition is almost saying, "I don't need you, I don't need to learn anymore, I don't need to learn from you, I don't need to learn from anyone."

So, I tell the story about when America invaded Iraq: there was a tremendous upheaval around the world about that event, and I was as upset as anybody. And I wrestled with what I could do about it, and of course marching is one thing.

But then as I point out a radio program fell in my lap, and I ran with that for for many months. As I point out in the essay, I invited many people to, in effect, teach me and others listening in the program. People whom I admire and respect because they do have something to teach me, beginning with Buddhist teacher Joanna Macy. I want to share with you some of the other names, because I just rediscovered this in my autobiography -- I was looking at the whole 9/11 moment in my own personal history, and I thought these were really very exciting individuals to know about.

And in fact, the tapes for these interviews are still available: Dennis Edwards, our administrator, will inform us more about how to get them if you're interested.

So, after Joanna Macy -- so I'm going now in chronological order -- I interviewed Daniel Sheehan, who was the chief counsel in the Karen Silkwood case, and in the Three Mile Island case, and also in the Iran-Contra civil RICO case. He's now working with the indigenous tribes around pipelines and so forth in Canada and the United States.

I interviewed:

- Marianne Williamson;
- Rabbi Michael Lerner, the editor of Tikkun Magazine;
- Richard Bolles, who wrote What Color is Your Parachute;
- Buddhist scholar Robert Thurman;
- Father Bill O'Donnell, who is a local social justice and peace activist here in the Bay Area, now deceased;
- Dorindo Moreno, a human rights advocate;
- Benedictine monk Lawrence Freeman;

- Anita Roddick, founder of The Body Shop and a wonderful, wonderful human being I call a postmodern saint in her own right;
- Andrew Harvey, well known to all of us;
- Lucia Chiavola Birnbaum, who wrote the book *Dark Mother and Black Madonna* -- a wonderful book on the divine feminine and especially the traditions of the southern Italians on the Black Madonna;
- Swami Beyondananda, a wonderful and humorous speaker on human events through comedy but profoundly so;
- Robert Muller, the former assistant secretary general of the United Nations, who wrote me because he was very taken by Meister Eckhart himself -- he's from Strasbourg and Eckhart spent time in Strasbourg. That was a very exciting dialogue because his story itself is very powerful, but he was deeply affected by Meister Eckhart, as was Dag Hammarskjöld of course, one of the most important directors of the United Nations over the years;
- Alternative economist David Korten;
- Dr. Estelle Frankel -- she's written some wonderful books on therapy, *Sacred Therapy* is one of them, and *Mysticism* -- she's a psychologist as well as a mystic in her own right;
- Dr. Clarissa Pinkola Estés, well known to all;
- New Testament scholar Bruce Chilton and New Testament scholar John Dominic Crossan;
- Carolyn Myss;
- Julia Butterfly Hill, who sat atop a tree for two years in Northern California trying to preserve this ancient being from being chopped down - and she succeeded in that;
- Tom Hayden;
- Bishop William Spong;
- Dr. Dorsey Blake, who knew Howard Thurman well, and is still the pastor at Howard Thurman's church in San Francisco, the Church of Fellowship of All Peoples -- he was also vice president at the University of Creation Spirituality;
- Sharif Abdullah, author of *Creating a World that Works for All* -- I love that book and I love that title;
- The Aramaic scholar Neil Douglas Klotz, also very active in the Dances of the Universal Peace movement;
- Bernard Amadei, founder of *Engineers Without Borders* and a former student of mine;
- Connie Barlow and Michael Dowd, who brought spirituality and science together, especially in the Christian tradition;
- Starhawk, a Wicca practitioner;
- Dennis Kucinich, who was a politician at the time;
- John Seed, the eco activist from Australia, who's worked closely with Joanna Macy;
- Alex Gray, the artist;
- Poet Jenny Lim, a local poet in San Francisco, wonderfully grounded in in the people's work;
- Scientist Larry Edwards, who taught courses on cosmology and so forth with us....

So those are some of the people that I went to in this effort to learn and to stay grounded. And I think this is an important way of combating arrogance: to realize we all have things to learn all the time, and we need one another. The need for learning itself creates an authentic community.

Thank you! We'll see you tomorrow.