

**Daily Meditation 10/31/2021**

## **More Wisdom about Work from Deep Ecumenism**

Good morning.

Today we continue our meditations on work and deep ecumenism. And Meister Eckhart, who talks frequently about working without a "why."

He says until you can learn to live without a why and love without a why and work without a why, you really don't know how to live, how to love, how to work, or why.

I'll tell you a story when this teaching really came home to me.

Many years ago--I said this over 37 years ago--when I was first working on Meister Eckhart, it was a Sunday, and I was going to teach that teaching on Eckhart on Monday during summer school. And that weekend, two friends and I--three of us--went swimming in a little lake in Illinois where I was living. And five minutes into the swim, one of my friends dropped his teeth. They went into the lake, and the lake was not clear by any stretch of the imagination.

Well, the three of us spent the next hour diving for those teeth and we never found them. I think it was about \$4700 worth of teeth. And when we got out of the water without the teeth, I realized that I was not refreshed, even though it was a hot summer August afternoon and we had done what you'd do to cool off in the summer. Maybe we went into the water and got wet and didn't drown, nevertheless I was not refreshed.

And then it hit me what a radical thing Eckhart is saying. Because we had introduced a "why" to the playfulness of going swimming on a hot August afternoon. The "why" was to get those teeth, which we failed at, but what I got instead was an insight--an important one--about the value of Eckhart's teaching "working without a why."

To introduce goals, purposes...that has a place, but it's not the whole place when it comes to work or anything important in life. As Eckhart says, Work, love, and living are for their own sake, they're not for the purpose of finding a pair of lost teeth.

So that's one of my stories about working without a why.

The other story that really comes through in this meditation today is the beautiful way in which Eckhart talks about relating the outward and inward work. Your outward work can never be small if your inward work is great, he says. And the outward work can never be great or good if your inward work is small or little work. Your inward work always includes in itself all size, all breadth, and all length. It's cosmic! It's cosmic what we give birth to.

You've heard the story about how moving the air here can move butterfly wings elsewhere, which in turn can move storms and the rest. Well, that's what I'm kind of saying. And this isn't about a butterfly wing or about going like this (waves hands.) This is about your trudging off to work every day, doing your work--the impact it has.

Think of throwing a pebble in water. The impact it has is vast; it's cosmic! Our work is cosmic! And that fits perfectly with Eckhart's other teaching. He says that we're always birthing the Christ. We're birthing the Cosmic Christ--in our work, and in our preparing for work. And he compares it to the Holy Spirit birthing Jesus in Mary's womb. And he says we, too, take in the Holy Spirit, and we co-create, giving birth to the Christ in our culture, in our time, in our history.

So, all these teachings from Eckhart and from these other great teachers, and the Bhagavad Gita, in today's reading, saying that we are not the actors when we work. There's something much bigger going on. "All actions take place in time by the interweaving of the forces of nature; but the person lost in selfish delusion thinks that he himself is the actor."

So, we are co-creating with Spirit, and that makes our work so noble, and so glorious, and so important as we serve one another.

Thank you. We'll see you tomorrow.