

Daily Meditation 07-29-24

A Plan for Inspiring the Young

Good morning.

In this morning's meditation, we're continuing our exploration of what can be done about the unhappiness, that science tells us we are finding in populations of young adults all over the world today. In wealthy countries and in poor countries and in between, the young are in a kind of state of depression or despair. What can be done?

So I propose a 10-point medicine for this despair. And first I'm setting the stage for it, if you will, in today's meditation, by pointing out that we're moving out of an era. The modern consciousness, the cosmology, that was very, very human-centered, very mechanistic, saw the world as a machine, and responded in kind.

And the forms are made of education and religion, and so much more, because we pass people through education. Then they become doctors, become lawyers, they become politicians, they become clergy, profoundly influenced by the worldview that one's cosmology dictates. A cosmology that is very patriarchal, very structured and very mechanical, claiming to be very objective, then that's going to come out at the other end.

And so I'd like to, in this meditation with you, to name 10 areas that I want to explore, that I think young people would benefit from. They would recover their sense of adventure, their sense of agency, sense of creativity, and a sense of spirit that can be readily lost, when a culture is still committed to an old worldview that is passé. It kills the spirit. And that's why people are depressed. That's what despair is. It's a killing of the spirit. It's a killing of hope.

So in Tuesday's meditation, we will speak to the first of these medicines. And that is Cosmogogenesis, the new cosmology about a universe that is creative, and has been from the get-go, that is expanding, that is vast, and yet has found a place, our special, precious planet, and all of the amazing beings we share it with, including one another, Homo sapiens.

And so I think this is understandable, that we're in a triage if you will, a dark time, because the old cosmology is out of date. It's not working. And as a result of that, our work worlds, our professions, politics, law, religion, the media, are distorted. They are not echoing the dynamics of the universe anymore.

So how to bring it back? First of all, then, is to focus on the new cosmology, on Cosmogogenesis, how creativity is built into all the dynamics and all the accomplishments of this universe. Just so organic, so much like a living being.

Over my shoulder here, is a painting by M.C. Richards, which she names "Birthing a New Cosmos." And to me, it is a series of three seeds and plants that are broken open, and beginning to emerge anew. And so she is naming creativity as being at the heart of this universe.

And so that's the second dimension to healing. The young need to hear about this Good News that creativity, agency, is built into things, and it needs to rebuild that vision. Needs to rebuild everything, from education to religion, politics to economics and media, and it can't be done passively. We have to take responsibility. That's what creativity is. We have to make decisions that are oriented to the future.

And of course, hope, the opposite of despair, is about the future. And built into creativity, there is optimism. Things happen in our brains: many endorphins go off when we are being creative, when we're thinking creatively. And all that is part of the energy of rebirth and finding purpose and joy in our lives. Creativity and joy go together.

And of course, our great creation mystics emphasizes so much the role of creativity. As Eckhart says, "We give birth to nothing less than God, nothing less than the Christ," or the Buddha, or the image of God, call it what you will. Mary didn't do it all.

Another dimension, the third dimension, fights medicine for despair, is the understanding of Original Blessing, about how much goodness there is in the world, how much goodness has preceded us, and how the universe has created us, so we fit. And the oxygen we breathe has been fine-tuned for our needs, and so much beauty in the world. We need to sink ourselves in this sense of Original Blessing.

Just 10 minutes ago, I was driving home and listening to a talk on National Public Radio, and it was by a fellow who had been falsely arrested and accused and sentenced to life imprisonment for a murder he did not commit. And it took him 13 years to find a district attorney who would take up his case, and set him free, and finding the evidence to make that possible.

But he was talking about what it was like, now, that he was a changed person after 13 years in prison. And the bottom line, he said, was he didn't take for granted anymore, being able to go to a refrigerator and find food when you want it and felt like it, as he said. Or just going for long walks outdoors in nature, breathing fresh air. And he kept repeating this mantra of "not taking for granted, not taking for granted."

Well, I say that is at the heart of all authentic mysticism. And that's Original Blessing, recognizing the goodness that is there. A lot of it that we take for granted.

Another dimension that needs developing, and we'll be doing this in subsequent daily meditations, is the role of elders: that elders need to undergo rites of passage, to awaken them, to awaken *us* to our responsibility, to awaken the young to their sense of the sacred and their sense of purpose in the world, and to encourage them.

And still another medicine is, of course, rites of passage for young people, for those who are entering into adulthood. In the West, we have Bar Mitzvah if you're Jewish, we have Confirmation if you're Christian. But we see the need something more today that goes deeper, and really names the significant shift that occurs, not only physiologically, but spiritually and vocationally in young people. Acknowledge this, and bring them forward into the world of adulthood and responsibility.

And then the whole role that other rituals play: gatherings of people, call it ceremony, call it liturgy, call it worship, but it is a space and a place for people of all generations and of all backgrounds, should be able to gather on a regular basis, to say thank you together, and to that flow of the common experience of joy, the common experience of grief and suffering and letting go and loss, and the common experience of eating together and sharing together. And then of gathering our energies, so we can go out and be instruments of change, so we can have prophetic dimension that is part of being a full-blooded mystic, full-blooded lover.

So here I've named about seven of the 10 dimensions that I see necessary to awaken a culture, to awaken the young, to awaken spirit in all of us, so that inter-generationally, wisdom and hope can flow again.

Thank you. We'll see you next week.