

HEART JOURNEY – Signs of an Opening Heart

Stage Three: Spiritual Input, Thoughts, Emotions, and the Physical

The heart is complex. It is not just a physical organ in the body. It is a multidimensional component with connections to the other levels of experience. For example, the heart is linked to our emotional nature. We know what it is to be heartbroken and experience a physical sensation in the chest of loss and missing. Love loss can literally lead to heart disease, as in "he or she died of a broken heart." We also know that the thrill of a new love can elicit a physical sensation of lightheartedness. Older committed couples in love relationships experience less stress. The joy and peace established over many years of togetherness lowers blood pressure and fosters good health.

But the heart does not just *respond* to stimuli; the heart can be the initiator of physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual change. When we pray, the heart opens and healing impulses are sent to the person prayed for. Studies show that patients prayed over do better than those who are not. Physical healing of the body, not just the heart, can be augmented by prayer. When we meditate, an open heart can foster a climate of love and peace that flows through the meditator as well as to others. This is why some prefer to meditate in groups. Thinking also changes during and after meditation. Insights arise as one draws closer to God. Just opening your heart and communicating with your co-creative Partner introduces you to spiritual concepts, intuitive perceptions, and compassionate responses. As insights trickle down and generate mundane applications, thinking evolves, emotions are calmed and uplifted, while actions become loving, meaningful and productive. All this arises from an open heart.

Spiritual Input and the Spiritual Level

The spiritual level of awareness includes any and all spiritual, philosophical and religious beliefs you have along with wisdom and insight gleaned from your communications with your co-creative Partner. Keep in mind that first and foremost your beliefs must be kind and have a positive influence on your life and on the lives of those you touch. Fanatical beliefs meant to justify harming or controlling others are incompatible with Heart Journey, unconditional love, and heart openness. Regardless of their source, judgmental beliefs that condemn others need to be purged as they restrict openness and thwart compassion.

Spiritual beliefs are meant to guide you in becoming a better, more loving person who leads a productive, fulfilling, and sacred life. The support you receive from your communications with God can give you a sense of purpose. Why are you here? What is your path? Are you leading a purpose-filled life and making a contribution? If you are here to do something, what are you meant to accomplish now or in your lifetime? Who can you help? You may have a life-long calling or be in a position to provide occasional assistance as needed. Your focus may be on family or extend out to the community or beyond. The point is to understand your calling, whatever that might be. It is the nature of spiritual growth and maturity that you see how we are connected and perform good

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works or acts of kindness that assist others or have a positive impact. Each contribution is important, no matter how small or infrequent. Through the co-creative partnership, God will encourage you to respond accordingly.

Your happiness and fulfillment are also God's concern. You are not meant to hammer yourself into something you are not. You are meant to manifest the innate beauty and joy within you. Divine communications can guide you when dealing with mundane choices, problems, and issues. This will ease the decision-making process and improve your results. Spiritual principles have practical applications to daily living situations that can sanctify your actions. Your co-creative partnership with God and your beliefs on a spiritual level are your touchstone for right action, right living, and positive choices. They provide structure and guidance through the good times and bad.

Task: Follow a routine of reflection and awareness of spiritual beliefs and principles through meditation and prayer. Regular contact with your co-creative Partner fosters internal and external peace and spiritual cohesiveness. Consciousness that is developed and maintained at this level is an important asset on your Heart Journey. This is the spiritual headwater which can flow into your life, impacting your thoughts, feelings and actions. Awareness of the heart connection at this level is crucial.

Thoughts and the Mental Level

While the spiritual level may consist of beliefs and Divine communications, the mental level consists of thoughts. When you are young and in school, your thoughts primarily consist of what you have been taught, what you have read, studied on your own, or been told. The mind does not endeavor to believe, it needs to know, and keeps a catalogue of both useful and trivial information. Thoughts naturally gravitate to logical information and rational comprehension. Sometimes scientific investigation and/or proof is required, depending on indoctrination and experience.

The mind also learns by figuring things out. Understanding cause and effect reality arises from the intellectual ability to analyze the connection between actions and results. "If I do this, then that will happen." This process is an innate form of learning and acquiring knowledge. It is how we grow mentally from a toddler who experiences gravity by dropping toys and watching them fall to the floor, to an adult who understands consequences and knows what actions, experiences, and situations are advantageous and those that are not. "I will never do that again!" The goal is to establish behavioral patterns that lead to successful outcomes through knowledge, good decisions, practical applications, appropriate actions, and an understanding of causality.

Thoughts also enable communication, whether it is communication between individuals or communication between levels of experience. This leads us to the most important task of the mental level in regard to Heart Journey and heart openness. Thoughts enable the translation of

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spiritual beliefs and wisdom gleaned from the co-creative partnership with God into appropriate applications, responses, and actions. This is a crucial step in the process of adhering to your beliefs. You must apply spiritual input to issues you face in life, make wise decisions, and construct an appropriate plan of action. The mind is the translator of spiritual principles and thoughts can be the translation of those principles.

Task: Awareness is the key. In those quiet moments of reflection, pay attention to your thoughts. Are they representative of higher input from the spiritual level or are they anchored to emotional debris and physical needs? This all important question determines the probability of spiritual growth or the lack thereof.

The mind is the builder and thoughts are the building blocks. Being aware of your thoughts means being aware of what you are building. This is an important link in the chain of command to living a sacred, abundant, and loving life. In the same way that a focused, sustained thought translates your desire for the purpose of manifestation through attraction and receptivity, the mind also translates spiritual principles into thoughts that reflect co-creative intentions and open-hearted lovingness that can impact emotional responses, relationships, and actions.

Emotions and the Emotional Level

When it comes to emotions, separate the needy, codependent, jealous, angry, and controlling emotions from those that are joyful, helpful, loving, and rewarding. The distinction is essential. Emotions are not all created equal. Some are constructive and some are destructive. The best emotions connect us with others and life in a meaningful way. Emotions like love foster strong bonds and stable relationships. They allow us to connect to one another and enable intimacy. Compassion leads to understanding others, and perhaps forgiveness. Passion and joyful productivity lends purpose and fulfillment to profession and life. Depending on your spiritual path and directive, any and all of these positive emotions can be in keeping with input from your co-creative Partner.

On the other hand, negative emotions such as jealousy and anger are never in keeping with spiritual input. Negative emotions create distance between friends and family members, and can destroy relationships. Blame and guilt deny compassion and understanding, eventually leading to isolation and loneliness. Depression robs life of meaning while hopelessness thwarts the ability to create positive solutions and change. It is the negative emotions that steal our potential and hold us captive in detrimental, counterproductive life-cycles.

Unfortunately, for most of us, emotions simply are and are not subject to control. You can be happy one moment and angry the next. Both positive and negative emotions tend to rise spontaneously. You might be feeling great until you get stuck in traffic on a hot, sticky day. You

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might cry watching a sad movie even though you know the story is make-believe. Conversely, you might cry at happy occasions like weddings or the birth of a child. Emotions are fluid. They can change quickly from one feeling to another and rise spontaneously without any conscious choice from you. Attempts to control emotions generally fail and suppression is not the answer. What you feel is what you feel, but what you do with the feeling is what counts.

While translation of spiritual principles occurs at the mental level, transmutation of negative feelings occurs at the emotional level. Translation is the spiritualization of thoughts; transmutation is the spiritualization of feelings. Transmutation is an alchemical process that raises one form to a higher manifestation, for example, the transformation of lead into gold. On the emotional level, transmutation changes a negative emotion like guilt into forgiveness, or anger into creativity. This is only done through training of the mind and emotions through the assistance of your co-creative Partner. It is a skill that is not easily taught, but is ascertained through insights gathered in the gap between thoughts and breaths in meditation and reflection. Don't hesitate to discuss negative emotions or difficult situations with your co-creative Partner. There will be no condemnation or rebuke, only insight.

This is the power attributed to the spiritualization of the emotional level. Rather than control or suppress the energy of a negative emotion, it can be channeled into a higher, more positive, and powerful expression that has a practical and productive application. Someone who is angry about a particular situation can create an effective solution to a personal or professional problem. For example, think of the changes in our consciousness and changes in state and federal laws that have been created by Mothers Against Drunk Driving, or the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children. These organizations were established by grieving parents who experienced personal tragedy and needed to do something positive for the sake of all children and in memory of their lost loved ones. These two examples are extreme cases of the transmutation of anger into a creative and positive response, but any act of forgiveness, even for the smallest transgression, is also a transmutation of a negative emotion into a positive one.

Task: Awareness is vital, so be cognizant of emotions as they arise. Do not attempt to suppress or control them. Honor your feelings and they will teach you, eventually. It will be difficult to let go and let God while scenarios replay again and again in your head and self-talk occupies your mind. This is common with a new transgression or wounding. Suspend judgment for the moment and allow feelings to cool a bit. Be gentle with yourself. When you are ready, take the situation to your co-creative Partner. At first, you might not get a response, or a response you are willing to accept. Time is on your side and insight will come when you are truly ready. It might arrive in a rush or be revealed slowly over daily exchanges. If you are persistent, and this is needed, especially with your first attempts at transmutation, you will see ways to grow and create from negative emotion to

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move ahead in a positive and productive manner. As you gain perspective and repeatedly reach for higher ground, negative emotions will be brought into closer alignment with your spiritual intent.

Body and the Physical plane

Translation of spiritual principles occurs at the mental level, transmutation of negativity occurs at the emotional level, but implementation is the process associated with the physical plane. This is the level at which manifestation occurs, where creative ideas are brought into form, where emotions are expressed for better or worse, where bodily needs are met, and actions produce either positive or negative results that have consequences. All actions are motivated by factors on the physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual levels. The all important question you need to ascertain is: what is the source of the motivation? Is the next step you are taking part of a logical progression? Is it instigated by an emotional reaction to an event or comment? Is it an ingrained habitual response? Or, is it inspired by spiritual input from communications with your co-creative Partner? Awareness of the motivating source for any action contemplated or taken heightens your understanding of why you do what you do, feel what you feel, say what you say, and believe what you believe. Although knee jerk responses seem to occur without thinking, they are not without causative emotions regardless of how involuntary they appear to be. Understanding motivation puts you in touch with the purpose, goal, and projected outcome of your actions, important pieces of information. If you wish to keep your heart open, you need to monitor thoughts, emotions, and actions.

Task: As with the other three planes, awareness is the key. The physical level is every bit as important as the spiritual, mental and emotional levels. This is where it all begins to come together . This is the bottom line manifestation. You can want to pay off your debts intellectually and feel that the emotional stress over unpaid bills is detrimental, but still go out and buy a big ticket item. You may need to lose weight, want to lose weight, and feel depressed over clothes that do not fit, and still eat too much of the wrong foods. Your actions need to reflect your beliefs, thoughts and feelings.