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# FAIRIES AND ULTIMACY

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YVONNE NOTARO IS A STUDENT AT JOHN F. KENNEDY UNIVERSITY IN ORINDA, CALIFORNIA. AS PART OF A CLASS, SHE TOOK PART IN A HAKOMI WORKSHOP LED BY RON KURTZ. THE STUDENTS WERE ASKED TO WRITE A PAPER THAT INTEGRATED THEIR EXPERIENCE OF THE WORKSHOP WITH REFLECTIONS ON ONE QUOTE FROM A LIST PROVIDED. YVONNE CHOSE THE FOLLOWING QUOTE BY DA FREE JOHN AND INTERWOVE IT WITH HER PERSONAL THOUGHTS AND EMOTIONS FROM THE WORKSHOP.

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"Then existence is not problematic. It is creative. It is a process of the confrontation of conditions, but it is humorous, already Enlightened. Nothing ultimate is at stake."

--Da Free John, Talk: The Religious Ambivalence of Western Man

The above quote speaks to my experience of learning about the Hakomi method on a weekend in February at JFK in Orinda. Hakomi emanates a feeling of nonjudgmentalness. It is no coincidence that mindfulness as a mode of observation plays an important role in the approach. Practicing mindfulness is a way to observe the body, behaviors and patterns from a nonjudgmental stance. It is simply noting what is happening. In this way one can bypass the usual protectiveness and defenses created out of fear of being problematic, untogether, crazy, and other loaded words that we use to describe ourselves from our everyday consciousness. Mindfulness creates an environment in which we can see ourselves more fully. It is a necessary step before change, to be able to see what exists. From the viewpoint that "existence is not problematic" we can find peace with who we are, and take note of what is, in a very direct way.

In the exercise we did where a partner gently lifts the shoulders to hold some of the weight on them, I was able to stay with my experience without feeling wrong for having the feelings I was having. Part of me was being an observer and was simply taking note of what was happening. I felt great heaviness in my legs and it was hard not to collapse. Having a little weight taken off

me, I felt like having my partner take all my weight (and all my burdens). At her suggestion I sat down and my reaction was to curl up and be as small as possible. By helping me carry some burden of responsibility, she helped me get in touch with how heavy things were and how I just wanted to be little and be held. In this stage of being a little girl, I felt how I was very fearful, how I had taken in the fearful images of my mother. I also felt how I had not been able to express my fear and how I had felt pushed to grow up and be strong. Now at this moment in my life, in which I am confronted with myself after having separated from my husband, the feelings of fear that are covered up by my attitude of "I have to be strong" are once again a theme.

Because I was able to experience all this partly from a mindful stance, I was just allowing the process to unfold. I didn't feel restricted by any judgments that I was wrong, my mother was wrong, my husband was wrong, etc. I was simply noting in what environments I had been and what effect they had had on me. I also saw that my marriage had been a replication of my youth in the sense that my husband expected me to be strong. Finally I was out of the bind of my youth and my marriage, but my body was holding itself in the old way and I wasn't quite able to shake loose from the past and benefit from what the present had to offer me.

"Existence is creative." If one doesn't have to put lots of energy into the problematic nature of oneself and everyone else, it opens the door to creativity and new ways of

being. That evening while I was still in touch with my feelings of wanting to be held and not wanting to be alone and strong, I acted differently than usual. That evening I had a date and after the movie we saw together, I decided that rather than saying "Good night, that was a nice evening," I agreed to his suggestion of coming into my place for a bit. While he held me, I cried. Allowing myself to do this was quite different from the usual, "I'm fine, thank you" air that I exude. Also I had to later creatively get myself out of a situation in which my date was reacting sexually to my closeness, while I was at another level of wanting to be held as a child, which is quite different from being with a man as a sexual and attractive woman.

"It is a process of the confrontation of conditions." Usually the word "confrontation" sends shivers of anxiety and fear through my body. In the atmosphere of mindfulness, though, confrontation simply means something like "meeting." There is the sense of becoming acquainted with the conditions, getting to know them, exploring them as a scientist would approach his objective material. Getting to know the conditions that made us who we are becomes like going for a hike and discovering nature. Rather than having the emphasis on oneself, one can look more objectively at what the conditions were that shaped me the way I am and what were the choices I made along the way. By understanding the conditions, it is easier to look at the choices one has made, from a nonjudgmental perspective. Instead of overloading myself with criticism over having chosen a husband who reinforced my "strong" stance, I could see how at that time my awareness was limited and it took me five years to find out that the environment I was in with him was halting my growth, as we were stuck in our patterns and unable and unwilling to break out of them together.

"But it is humorous, already Enlightened." Not only is confrontation not something heavy and fearful, it is being talked about as something light, funny and complete. By distancing oneself from right and wrong values in which the individual is always being judged, it opens up this lighter path from which one can actually laugh at

aspects of the human condition. The struggle of existence is seen as a game, something light, already complete at every step. There is a feeling of wherever one is, whatever one experiences is right, already Enlightened. It takes off the pressure of having to be a certain way, having to work hard and having to accomplish.

"Nothing Ultimate is at stake" is the ultimate expression that cuts right through my belief system of right and wrong values. It makes right and wrong be one and the same with slightly different faces.

In being with the process of two other women during the weekend, the sense of "nothing ultimate is at stake" was a theme. Both women were in trouble with their marriages. One was contemplating the idea of a separation, the other had decided, but was still living with her husband. Both women seemed tortured by the choice. Right and wrong were pulling them apart. I was impressed by the result of the process which seemed to have put the choices and the values in the background and themselves as alive individuals in the foreground. There was more of a sense of "this is who I am, and if this is what I have to go through, I'll do it."

During a session that I facilitated with one of the women, I felt uncertain about whether I was doing "the right thing." I was trying to stay with Hakomi methods and not fall into the more familiar terrain of psychosynthesis. After the session, the "client" (S.) commented on how she really felt my presence and my caring. I had completely forgotten about the most basic aspect of my being. She reminded me that when love is present, nothing ultimate is at stake.

I am just shocked about how much of my life I spend in the right-wrong and accomplishment modes. S's issue in the session I did with her was also concerned with this subject. The most central phrase had to do with forgiving herself for "allowing" herself as a 5-year old to be sexually abused by her older brother. She had internalized the value system of her parents, and was beating herself up for "having gotten herself into" this awful situation. What triggered the

turnaround was when she asked me to say in French (the language her mother spoke to her as a child, and the language I grew up with) "S., you can forgive yourself." The little girl in her needed to hear from her mother that she had not been "wrong," or at least that if she had been, she could now leave that burden behind her.

I am determined to allow myself to grow out of my right-wrong judgmental paradigm. I can see how my parents grew up in this paradigm, since they were influenced so much by the second world war in which good and evil came so close to their survival. It is time for me now to not inherit their reality, but to embrace the vision that comes with the words of the quote. The vision I have is in the realm of the fairies, in which lightness, love, curiosity and exploration are the important themes. For sure, for fairies nothing ultimate is at stake.

THE BASIC WORK OF HEALTH PROFESSIONALS IN GENERAL, AND OF PSYCHOTHERAPISTS IN PARTICULAR, IS TO BECOME FULL HUMAN BEINGS AND TO INSPIRE FULL HUMANBEINGNESS IN OTHER PEOPLE WHO FEEL STARVED ABOUT THEIR LIVES.

CHOGYAM TRUNGPA  
"BECOMING A FULL HUMAN BEING"

WE DON'T NEED TO IMITATE NEARSIGHTED SCIENCE, WHICH PEERS AT THE WORLD THROUGH AN ELECTRON MICROSCOPE, LOOKING FOR ANSWERS IT WILL NEVER FIND AND COMING UP WITH MORE QUESTIONS INSTEAD. WE DON'T NEED TO PLAY ABSTRACT PHILOSOPHER, ASKING UNNECESSARY QUESTIONS AND COMING UP WITH MEANINGLESS ANSWERS. WHAT WE NEED TO DO IS RECOGNIZE INNER NATURE AND WORK WITH THINGS AS THEY ARE. WHEN WE DON'T, WE GET INTO TROUBLE.

BENJAMIN HOFF  
"THE TAO OF POOH"