

## **Simple Brilliance: A Return To Innocence**

Innocence is not synonymous with naiveté. Innocence is... the suspension of our belief of what we think we know to be true, so that the totality of our Being can experience the world, our lives newly. Our senses then awaken, enriching us with new discoveries of patterns, cycles, systems, relationships that perhaps may have escaped our perception prior.

How do we return to a state of innocence? ...To a full life of beauty, curiosity and exploration? Is it possible to live a fully expressed, authentic life amidst the challenges of a modern world? Our innocence, this way of being that we knew so well as a child, has never left us; we simply have forgotten. Due to the conditioning from our family, our peers, the media, our lover, and our inherent longing to have a sense of belonging, it is sometimes difficult to re-experience, re-ignite our innocence. Our lives often become routine or rote; a struggle of wills, inner and outer. This is not to say that discipline is an unhealthy character trait. Within discipline innocence can be found. However, for discipline to lead to freedom, one needs to be conscious and aware or should I say focused, have an intention behind the action and action that is fueled by \*enthusiasm.

Have you ever been driving in a neighborhood that you were very familiar with, but for some reason, at this particular point in time, it looked unfamiliar, it had the appearance as if you had never seen it before. What is it that happens during these times? What inside yourself had completely suspended that you were perceiving the world so differently? In this moment you are in a state of innocence, and with this innocence is a joy, a Beingness, a delight for this magnificent World, this embodied creation we live in. A world of our own making. We might call this a state of grace.

A good example of this is when we are in love. When we are “in love” there is a youthfulness, a childlike exuberance that enters into us. There is wonderment and excitement, an attraction that scintillates every cell. (Albeit, there is a physical, a chemical component that contributes to the sensations of being “in love”; hormones, serotonin, dopamine, oxytocin, vasopressin, adrenalin etc.) Yet let’s not have our physiology negate our experience. These chemical reactions are part of our natural state of Being. They are inherent to our human experience. Our elaborate chemical soup is synergistically vital in awakening our experience of the multi-dimensional reality of what it is to be human.

As an adult one of the primary experiences we might have when we find ourselves in this state of innocence is when we fall in love. The other person, so new, so novel. Our brain chemistry is flooding our bodies with “feel good” elixirs keeping us in a state of euphoria. We are in love, hyper-present, relaxed, experiencing every aspect, every nuance, body feature, word, and gesture of our beloved. We are rapt in attention, minutes move like hours, hours like minutes, we have transcended time and space. This is the state of innocence, transcendent awareness.

So, how does one look and experience the world with new eyes? What causes such inspiration when I walk outside of my door and see the first fawn of late spring, when I see the first monarch butterflies dancing together on the breeze, the first corn flower blues, Iris purple. What causes this wonderment? Is it simply novelty? If so, how do we retain the novelty of life? By cultivating joy? By living with an open heart? By engaging ourselves in those activities than nurture our nature? By living a life of gratitude and gratefulness? These questions can be an ongoing inquiry, a road map, a discussion to have within ourselves that will help to propagate "I'm knowingly experiencing every moment as new." Living as Soul, in the present, can be and IS a tangible experience. It is a kinesthetic experience. Once you have the feeling within your body, a somatic memory, you can reference it to enter into this state of consciousness, this innocence, this joy, at will and then the will, the "becoming" vanishes and you simply Be.

*I had decided to offer a free evening of music at a local bookstore and café where I live; a casual offering and a time to relax with friends who frequented the place. I brought my variety of instruments, cedar flutes, guitar, zither, frame drum and my voice. It wasn't an event I had planned out, I was simply impulsed, guided intuitively to do this. I didn't prepare anything in advance and wasn't sure what the flow of the evening would be. I trusted creation to flow through me. A small group of people gathered on the outdoor patio. It was a beautiful Spring night. I noticed some new faces I hadn't seen before. Whenever I play I inwardly give thanks for my gifts, ask for the love of the Divine to flow through me and that my sounds reach the hearts of those that are listening. This night my prayers were answered. You could feel the love and peace in the air. I was in a state of grace, of Being and innocence. I was playing the instruments yet I was being played. It was a co-creation.*

*Many came up to me afterwards to share their experience and give thanks. One woman, in particular, was deeply moved and wanted to meet with me to discuss the work she was doing in the world and my possible involvement. We met and she proposed that I go with her to New Zealand on a government sponsored trip. She was internationally recognized for her organization, Resiliency in Action.\* They had hired her to train some educators that work with children in the government funded Children's Health camps. She had always wanted to add a module in her training about the role of music in childhood development. My music had touched her heart. I had little to do with it except for being the vessel that allowed the music through. It is a mysterious experience when both creating and witnessing life as it unfolds and.... out of the mystery, doing what comes naturally and allowing my childlike presence freedom, I was soon on a plane to the land of the Maori. ♦*

There is something deep within us that cries out for this simplicity; that yearns for our inherent state of grace. There is a knowing that we cannot be fulfilled by things; by consumer temptations. The cultures of both East and West have bowed before a material God and have been left empty, spiritually bereft. We are grieving and the grief will continue to haunt us until it can be named. Each of us has our own name for it and once we can name it, it will no longer have power over us. It will be revealed as the illusion and fabricated perception that it is. These perceptions are thought patterns, electrical impulses, accompanied by images and expressed as words. They are flexible, change-

able, fluid as a mountain stream. It is with this fluidity that we flow back into the ocean of innocence; the ocean of love and mercy.

If you would take the time in the morning before you rise and in the evening before you retire to give gratitude, even if it's for the smallest thing, you will experience a shift in your consciousness, an opening that feels spacious and connected to something greater than your "little" self. Take the time to reflect on your day. Were you feeling joy? Did an unexpected opportunity occur? Did you notice thoughts, ideas that came to fruition? Who were you Being (not what were you doing) that this occurred? Were you living as possibility or probability? Were you living in the present or distracted by the past or out ahead in the future?

When you return to innocence it is synonymous to living in the present. What does this mean? Some call it being in the zone or a sense of timelessness. Boundaries between you and your experience seem to dissolve, senses heighten, the "little" self or ego steps aside and you interact with the world from an awareness as Soul. For children this comes naturally, there is not the analysis I am giving to it now.

Part of living in a state of innocence is watching, learning and observing the environment around you. Like an infant, absorbing, as a sponge, all that is around you, with no judgments, no opinions, simply experiencing with all of your senses.

I like to live in a conscious "yes" to the Uni-verse, the Multi-verse. Constituting myself as a receptor for the magnificent intelligence that permeates all of creation. I've had so many unexpected opportunities present themselves because I am a "yes" to life. By remaining receptive as a vehicle for that which is greater than my small self I have been able to expand my skill set, share my gifts, and sustain myself through right livelihood. The fears that arise every time I have reinvented myself or faced the unknown in a new situation have become my companions. I listen to their concerns yet refuse to allow them to have control. To do so would be like allowing a two year old behind the steering wheel of a Ferrari. It would end in disaster and others may get injured. I use my fear and uncertainty as an ally.

Our fears can be a warning when accurately perceiving a dangerous circumstance however, many times fear is a repetition of an old pattern, an ancient wound or even a cellular memory handed down to us through our lineage.

As we grow into adulthood the accumulation of our unresolved psychic wounds solidifies into unconscious behavior patterns. These experiences create an energetic imprint on a cellular level and are running in the background of our lives much like Muzak playing in a shopping mall that you aren't really listening to, but there as an influence none the less. These patterns are like the barking dog living next door that you don't hear or pay attention to after a while, yet, the noise is still creating tension and stress.

Simultaneously we are imagining and creating a future, often out of our desire to escape the pain of our past. Our lives become a reaction to, rather than a response to, or choice based on what our inherent inclinations are and authentic nature is. This past wounding becomes collapsed onto our present life and then carried into our future. In actuality, time

is relative, it speeds up and slows down according to our consciousness and perceptions. Ultimately, we are experiencing the past, present and future simultaneously. This is why it is so important to understand what is informing our behavior and decisions. It is vital to do the work to free ourselves from debilitating energies, thought forms, feelings and perceptions that keep us from living in total freedom, joy and purposefulness. There is a future that is calling us forth. It is already created. It exists in the here and now and we are living into it moment by moment. To the extent that we are free from our reactive minds and unconscious neurosis is the degree to which the future will be free from these energies as well. This is why it is said the present is all there is. The bed we make today is the bed we sleep in tomorrow. The wonderful thing is we can remake our beds or get a new one entirely with new sheets, comforter and pillows. Give ourselves a fresh start. Course correct. Complete the energies in relationships that are preventing us from transforming our lives. Have the conversations that we have been with holding because of our fears. Make choices from a compassionate self-loving and forgiving heart. All of these efforts support returning home to a state of innocence. This freedom, and it is a palpable feeling, is the corner stone of peace, within and without.

### **Some exercises:**

Remember, this is not about what you are doing, but who you are Being as you re-discover your innocence, create a life of authenticity and engage in those things that inherently reflect your true nature. Passion and joy are your birthright, claim them!

1. Make a list of the activities you loved as a child. Those things that you completely immersed yourself in and brought you joy.
2. Which of these do you still engage in now? Which of them do you not?
3. Are part or all an aspect of your chosen career path?
4. What "happened" that caused you to stop being involved in some of them?
5. What do you need to do, if anything, to "complete" any feelings around this?
6. Are there any activities you would like to reinstate in your life?
7. What do you need to do and who do you need to "be" to do this?
8. When will you start? Find a committed listener to share your intention with.
9. Begin to schedule in specific times to nurture yourself with these activities?
10. Write a living vision for your ideal life. Be specific and detailed. Use powerful descriptive language.
11. In a journal, begin to write down about your breakthroughs, confronts, resistance etc.

\*Enthusiasm - from Latin entheos "inspired, possessed by a god," from en- "in" + theos "god"