

PIERRE ZIMMERMAN ARTICLES – ARCHIVE for 2023:

FROM THE DESK OF PIERRE ZIMMERMAN: The Purpose of Intentions – 2/1/23

One beautiful way to honor the turning of the seasons and bring more light in the dark time of the year is to set intentions for the new year. It is not about setting resolutions; they usually don't last long. It may be as simple as, "I vow to be more kind this year." Or, "I will be aware of nature more often and honor the earth." Setting your own short or long term intentions has the power to guide you, day to day, or in moment to moment living.

The causes and outcomes of every action stem from the heart's intentions. They can lead us to unconsciously act out, due to habit and fear, or can spring from deliberate thoughtfulness and care. Often in meditation practice we start with setting an intention, a kind of check-in where we connect with our deepest aspirations, so that they may inform our intentions and motivations.

Intention is the articulation of a conscious goal that inclines us in the directions we truly mean to go. We need motivation to keep up the drive to act, which is the spark behind any intention. Our intention sets the tone for the day.

We can contemplate the following questions:

"What is it that I value deeply? What in the depth of my heart, do I wish for myself, my loved ones, and for the world?"

Work on the questions themselves, even if you don't have ready answers. Questions like: "Can I avoid hurting others deliberately? Can I use my day in a way that is in tune with my deeper values? Can I relate to myself, others and events around me with more kindness and less judgment?"

Most of us will find that we often fall short and we are able to notice the gaps between our behavior, aspirations and our actual life. It's important not to beat ourselves up with self-criticism. This awareness will help us be more attentive the next day, opening opportunities to bring our everyday thoughts and actions into closer alignment with our goals, practicing compassion and self-compassion. The Tibetan word for compassion means the "king of heart," the highest spiritual ideal and the highest expression of our humanity.

May all beings attain happiness and its causes

May all being be free from suffering and its causes

May all beings never be separated from joy that is free of misery

May all beings abide in equanimity, free from bias, attachment and aversion

PZ/2/1/23

FROM THE DESK OF PIERRE ZIMMERMAN: Many Doorways - 1/1/23

We will explore the intersection of psychology and spirituality, looking at each one and how they complement each other.

Psychological work is a process of unfolding, of opening up to our experiences and finding out what is there, hidden or implicit. It is sort of like unpacking a suitcase that was packed a long time ago, and we have forgotten what we stuffed into it. Through a process of inquiry, we discover a gradual unfolding, in steps.

Meditation practice involves cutting through the stuff of the mind, moving into deeper stages of presence in each moment to explore or understand particular experiences. The practice is not so much to unpack or resolve issues, but drop many concepts and freshly meet this moment and the next, making direct contact with our essential being. We surrender to something larger than ourselves, pure non-conceptual presence and timeless awareness, we discover sudden openings and dimensions of spaciousness, allowing us to accept and embrace who we are.

Nothing is lasting, each moment ends, a new one arises, and the only thing that persists is the story in our mind that we are creating. It's the mind that maintains the sense of continuity, believing that who we are today is the same self we were yesterday. Impermanence breaks down the illusion of a movie that keeps unrolling. In truth this movie is made up of sequences of separate frames, just as consciousness isn't anything solid, continuous or enduring.

Waking up means that we notice the vibrancy and openness of each moment. The energy and pulse of life moves in waves with continuous ups and downs, expansion and contraction, ebb and flow. Spiritual practice is to learn to ride each wave and be at one with it. Very little in our lives fits our image of it, while being in the moment doesn't include any should's or could's.

Open presence with others tends to be difficult because we suffer from interpersonal wounding, feeling a deep sense of not being lovable or worthy, not able to love ourselves. This cuts us off from our deeper and essential nature. Letting go of a generalized sense of grievance against "the other," the need to create an adversary that we carry around inside, allows us to drop the sense of deficiency and the "holes" inside.

This letting go can open the doorway through which we gain access to our deeper nature, the true source of love, wholeness and presence. This source is trustworthy because it doesn't disappear and means we can be present in relationships, while also abiding in our own nature.

PZ/1/1/23