

Walking Forever: Mystical Principles 4

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Thomas: Yes. We're back after a deep quiet week, and I had some, also, thoughts that came out of this silent week that I want to share with you throughout this session. As we can imagine, we are doing this course because we are looking how does a profound spiritual practice enable us to find a different relation to the process of dying and death. Also, how does it enable us to find practices, as we started off in this course with practices that charge our battery, that create a healthy, more conscious lifestyle, and what are resources that, in a way, help us to sustain our substance, to live a life that is in an energy economy balance and where we bring in, through our spiritual practice, more energy—and not to forget that spiritual practice is more energy enriching the life that we live. Because usually we start off, as we explored already last time, that there is the birth blueprint and the birth condition, but our spiritual practice actually adds light, consciousness, and information.

River of Time: Integrating the Past, Creating Space for an Emergent Future

Also, in a kind of culturally-oriented spiritual practice, like when we live in the marketplace in culture, we do lots of integration work in order to integrate the past in order to have a future. I will say that again. We talked about this, but I want to use this session to talk a little bit about time, so that in the mystical understanding—I think I mentioned this already a little bit—we don't see tomorrow as the future necessarily. We see tomorrow as a potential future, but that for many people, tomorrow is actually a replay of yesterday—of our parents', our grandparents', and whatsoever reality. It is being replayed as our tomorrow, and that's why it's not the future, that's why it's a repetition of the past. And I think, from a mystical standpoint, if we look at why are we actually looking at death, why are we spending our time with exploring death, if we can live our life now, so why, if it's not currently a real issue in my life, so why do we spend time with it?

But the spiritual practice also says, “Of course, we want to explore life in all its dimensions, and we want to use what we can learn from death for our life, but also for our spiritual anchoring in the Divine.” It’s ultimately our first priority. My first priority is not to understand death. My first priority is to be anchored in God, the Divine, and the awakened state. What can I learn about that when I look at death? Because that’s very important, because otherwise it seems like, okay, we are having a course about death—but we don’t. We have a course about God, about the awakening, about a deep anchoring in consciousness—and the exploration of aging, death, and dying is one way to learn. What we learn is a life of honesty, a life of completion, we learn about energy cycles—and why? When you remember—I will just disappear for a moment here.... I’ll disappear, and we have, as you remember... We said, the zen circle—that usually looks much more aesthetic than that—but we imagine that it’s a zen circle.

Why is it a circle? We said energy is being born, and once energy has been born, it cannot be stopped. It can be stopped, but it needs to fulfill its energy, like a soccer ball. You kick it, and it needs to discharge its energy. However it discharges it, it needs to fulfill its movement. So our life energy, we said, needs to fulfill its movement until it returns into nothing here. Nothing. And so where the energy stops, the zen circle is open. That’s space. That’s the space that we deepen in our contemplation practice, so when I go into deeper states of meditation, I practice space. Why? Not only is space a resource in the digestion of life, digesting, it’s a resource of detoxification. It’s a resource of integrating, or a resource in integrating life experiences, and it’s a resource that embraces, ultimately, our lifetime. Many processes in our life are circular, especially un-integrated energy—it’s circular, so it comes back again, and again, and again. We call it, in our life, these are our life patterns.

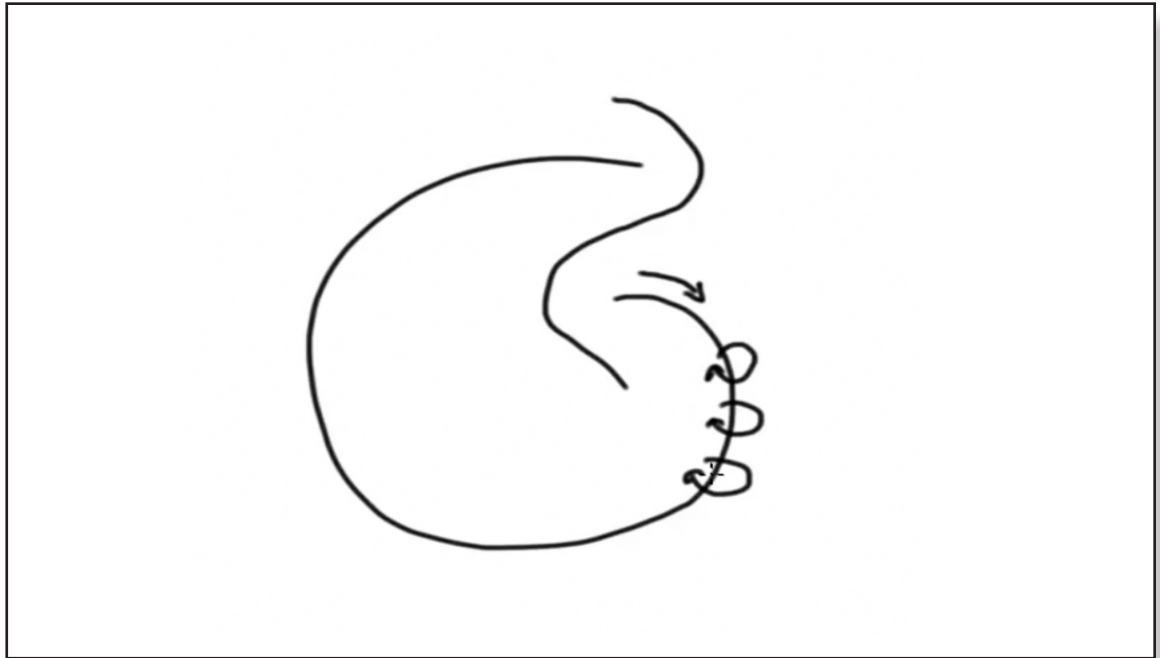
Our life patterns are just unresolved circular energies, soccer balls that are moving around in the room and are disturbing, in a way, my presence—because I have past memories, past feelings. I'm suddenly afraid in situations where there is no reason to be afraid, I think thoughts that are coming and I cannot calm my mind, I have body sensations, tensions, stress patterns, contractions. All of it—the past. So the past continuously speaks within us and through us, all the time. Because why? Because it wants to integrate itself. The self-healing mechanism of life wants to integrate the undigested experience. What happens if experience digests itself? Peace. So if presence in meditation is peace, is pure witnessing, is deep, deep, spacious capacity to embrace life as space, to embrace energy and structure as space, so then, when we explore death, we are first of all exploring experiences. How will it be? What will I experience? How will I feel? What's the process? Am I going to suffer? Am I...

[00:10:00]

I'm focusing my energy onto the experience, which is energy. And in order, I think, to dive a little bit deeper—last time we looked at... the last two times, basically, we looked at a very important aspect, which is that I become a friend, a partner, even a lover of my fear. Why is that important? Because if the fear is unintegrated, it creates my future. Unintegrated energy is the road that I take from behind me and I put it in front of me, and I call it 'future'. The unintegrated energy will have a voice in the future.

So when we talk about death, we're talking about completion. We are talking about cycles [that] complete themselves, and we will, probably next time or in one of the next sessions, we will talk about what happens if life cycles are interrupted—by accidents, by crimes, by suicide, by...— what happens if a cycle is not completing itself, but eventually, let's say, the underlying process is a cycle of life. Life has a question—through me, through you, through everybody. Life has a question.

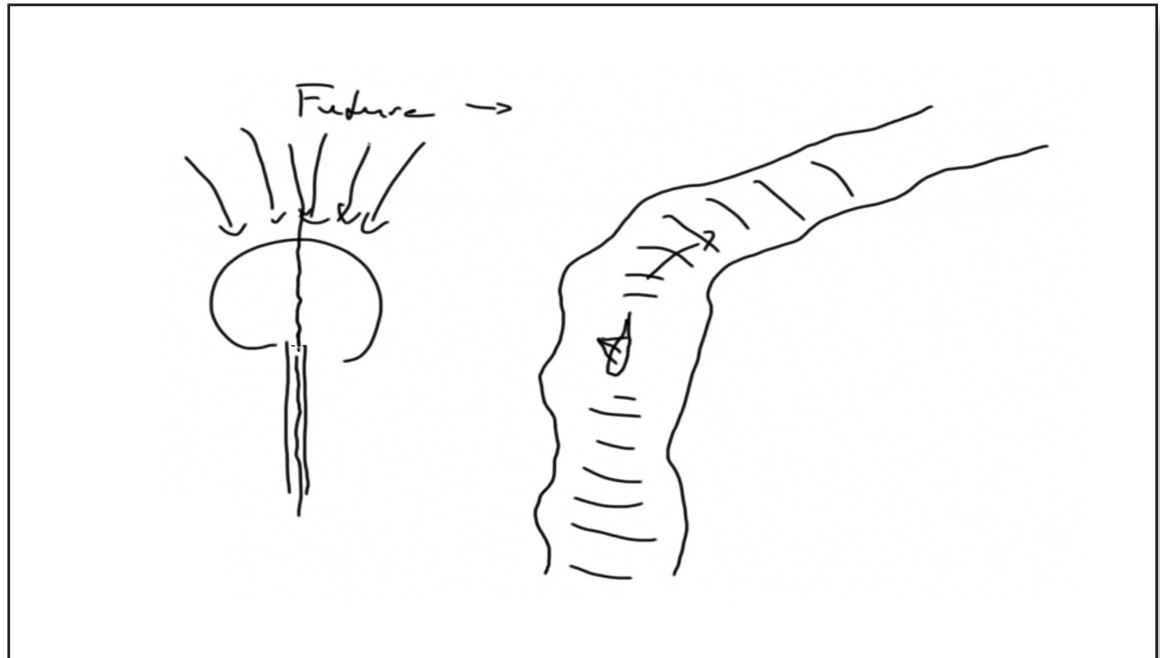
The past and the future make love, and that question walks itself through my life. I'm a walking question. The past, the karma, and a shot of the future, inspiration, innovation, creativity create a life together.



Drawing 1

The river of time, the river—what does it mean, the river? Let's say... I think, a very beautiful way to describe our life, but also mechanisms of our life, is when you see: here is a riverbed. That's water. That's the water of our life because, as you remember, when we do meditations, contemplations, we see that everything that composes your moment right now is movement. There is nothing that's not moving. There is space that seems to be still, and everything else is moving. Either it's moving very slowly—our planet's moving through the universe, my sensations, my body is moving, I have aliveness in my body, I have emotions, I have thoughts, I have perceptions and imaginations, intuitions—but when I sit quietly, I see everything: every little thought, every perception in the room, everything is movement. Everything is brainwaves, with information. Everything is experience, qualities—changing, changing, moving.

So many of the wisdom traditions call life, therefore, *the river of consciousness*. It's a river. Now, we could say if there is a small boat, and that boat is moving forward, we could say the boat meets its future in the future, tomorrow, but the boat sends energy into the future and into the past. Every one of us, all the time: the wave backwards and the wave forward. That boat, also there's a driving energy, if you remember, in our central channel. If this is our brain [*draws a sphere to the left of the river*], and here is higher light, higher energy coming in [*draws arrows above the 'brain' sphere*], our brain is like a receiver of future. That's the real future. That's the higher consciousness future. That's updates. That's emergence. That's innovation, creativity. New ideas, new thoughts come in through energy and land in our nervous system. And here is a central channel [*draws a line underneath the sphere*]. That's alignment. Alignment.



Drawing 2a

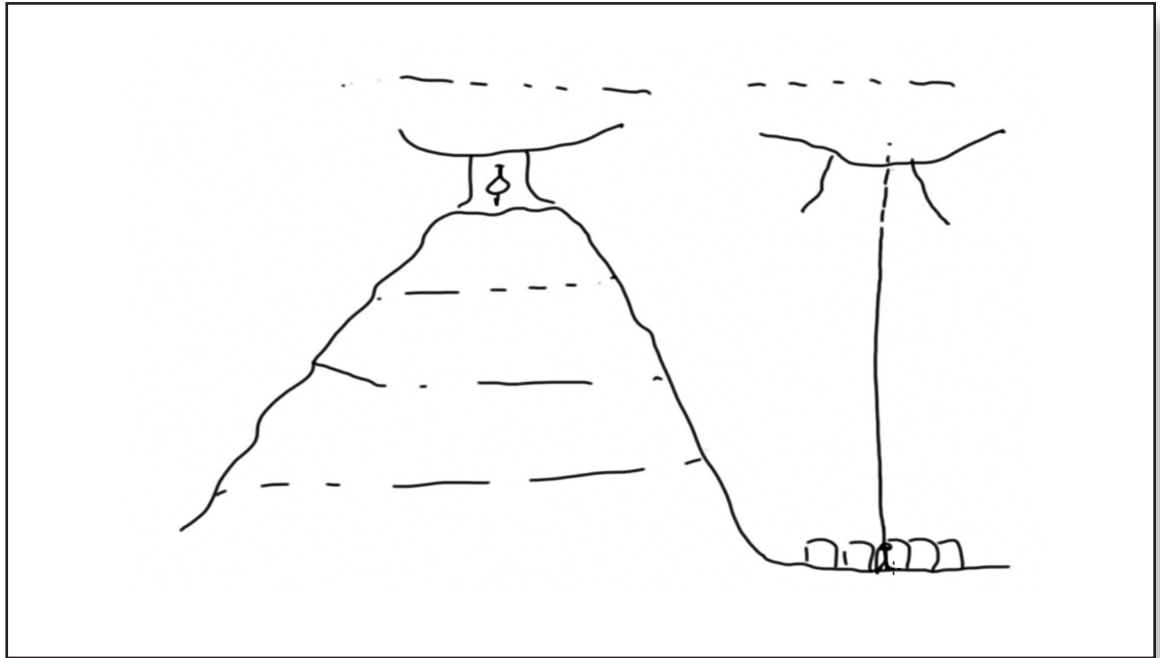
In our meditation retreat, we had a beautiful metaphor of—because in MP1, we started off the journey of the mystical principles with the way up the mountain, and on the mountain, there is a temple.

[00:15:00]

Tikkun: Living in Alignment, Honoring Our Spiritual Needs

In the temple, there is a flame. The temple is empty, and the flame is creation. The consciousness is empty, the nature of consciousness is empty, and the nature of the manifest world is a creative force that moves the universe. Like that, out of nothing, energy is being born. And in the mystical traditions, the non-dual state of consciousness is the not-twoness of emptiness and fullness, the not-twoness of creation and nothing, pure consciousness. So the pure consciousness, in every form, is not-two. Inside and outside is not-two.

When we practice, we usually, we called it we are walking up the mountain, and we are getting higher in our practice until we can stabilize ourselves in a kind of non-dual state. Often that's seen as something that many people experience when they went out of culture. Many saints, they went into the mountains, they went into caves, they went into monasteries and they had a very intense practice. But nowadays and for us, it seems, here is the valley [*continues the horizontal line next to the mountain*], here is the city, here are our cities [*draws blocks on the horizontal line*], here is our life—metaphorically, of course. And on the mountain, there is peace, there is non-dual state. And now, alignment means that the temple finds its home in the marketplace. For tantric—that's a monastic or a retreat version here, the mountain [*draws a dotted line over the mountain*]—and this is the tantric, or the *in life, in culture* version of spiritual practice [*draws a dotted line over the valley*]—and so in order to have an alignment, all the stages of my spiritual practice need to be represented in my life. If I live here in the city, the temple needs to be within me. I need to make space for a life that allows me to live in alignment.



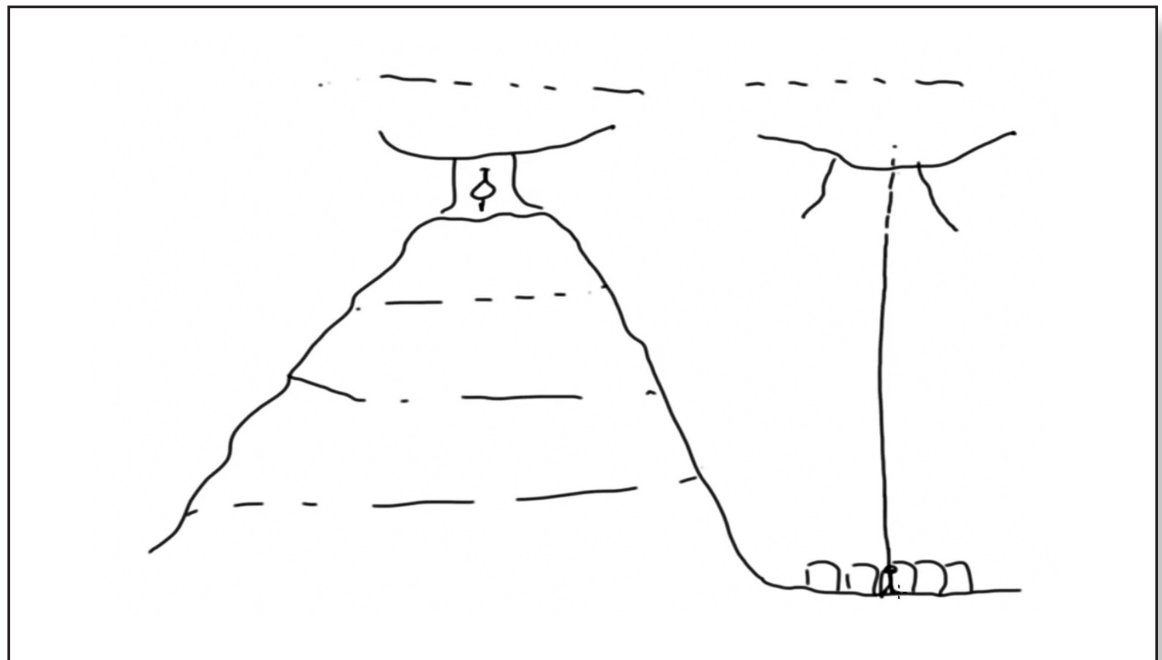
Drawing 3

Alignment means with all the needs: my body has a need, so if I live in a—I brought this example today—if I live in a city and I want to eat healthy food, so if I live in a city and I want to eat healthy food, and I go out of my flat, and next door is a fast food store. The easy way would be: I just go to the fast food shop and I buy fast food. But if I feel my body and if I feel that certain food is actually not the food that I want to eat because it doesn't sustain my body in a healthy way, so I need to, maybe, go and buy organic food or more healthy food in a shop that is further away, further down the road. I need to invest more energy—but more energy, once it's clear that I want to do enough exercise in my life, I want to eat appropriate food in my life, I need to have an emotionally healthy life, and I will work on it to integrate it, or my traumas will be integrated so that I am more and more able to participate in life, with all my capacity. If I feel my body, I feel what food my body needs, and I will naturally choose the food that is healthy for me. If I'm not fully in contact with my body or my emotions, maybe I will eat food that is not healthy for me, then it will support tendencies in my body become more manifest.

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If that's true for physical needs—like food, and oxygen, for an environment where I can live a healthy life, where I have a healthy sexual life, I have a healthy emotional life, I have mental life, I have mental needs—but I also have spiritual needs. Alignment means that those inner needs create a line. I am responsible not only to put food into my body that keeps my body healthy, I am also responsible to have a practice that allows spirit to consciously, fully take its place through my life. That's basically what in the Jewish tradition is called 'to make one's *tikkun*'. It means that I... That which is out of alignment in my life, that which is out of alignment in my life is like a puzzle piece that doesn't fit into the puzzle, and if many puzzle pieces don't fit into the big puzzle, we don't see the image that the puzzle holds. We don't see a temple in life. We don't see a functional society. We don't see a healthy aligned life with nature and all its natural laws, and the system that is synchronized.

We see that the system goes out of balance—in myself, maybe, in my body, my emotions, my thoughts, and my relations with the world: or in the world at large, like the society, and the way we deal with nature, the way we deal with each other, the way we inflict trauma, collective trauma. We are born, usually, into a world that is partly out of alignment because of the past.



Drawing 3

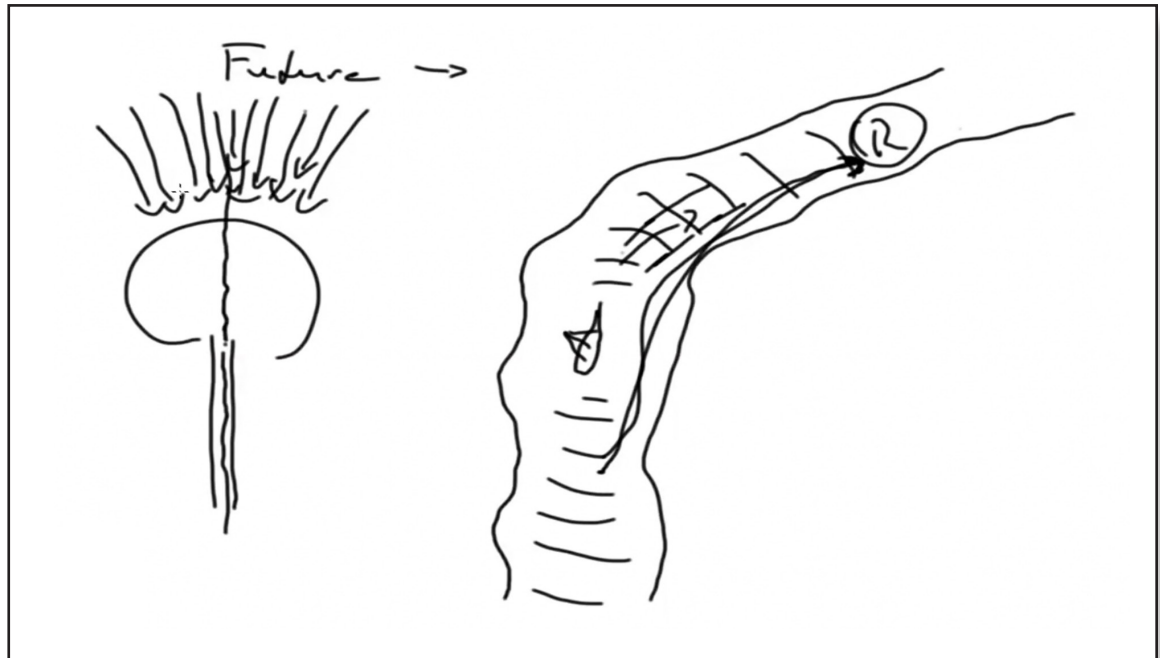
And why I'm saying all of this is because our small boat... there are tendencies in me, there is a past that I send already into the future, and then when the boat comes along, that future becomes my reality. But it's actually part of the past that appears here again. It's an unresolved cycle that tries to fulfill itself again—so I don't meet my future, I actually meet my past. It looks like my tomorrow, but I send waves, partly waves, into the future.

Exploration of Death, Completion of Cycles

But the future is not only the repetition of the past, it also is the real future, which is inspiration, creativity, the fuel of the genius, the fuel of the artist, the fuel of the scientist, the fuel of the higher innovation capacity that lands through us and really adds something to the reality that we know—because it's fresh.

Eros and creativity have the perfume of oxygen and freshness. The erotic aspect of life is erotic because it's fresh, so the creative eros—when I have a new idea, it excites me. Why? Because it's fresh. I think something that I haven't thought before, and I find it inspiring, spontaneous, and it's uplifting. Creative people know the feeling that they often have insights that are new, fresh, and they make us more awake.

I believe that the genius principle, if the genius is not a person but a principle—it's like I said this in one of the other courses, like virgin birth. It's like it's being born out of the flow, and it's non-reflected, and it's new. Afterwards, we are coming and we said, "How did you do that? What is this? What is that phenomenon that happened here?" Then we create the theory around it, but in the moment it's being born, it's... In the moment it's being born, it's fresh. It's coming.



Drawing 2b

[00:25:00]

I believe many of us on the course have these moments when you know you say something, it's kind of fresh. It's kind of, it's here, and you didn't think about it, it kind of just came. This is where the real future lands. That's what we call, in the meditation practice, 'when the light descends', 'when drops of light come in', and that's something we can strengthen.

The reason why I say that is that, in the exploration of death, I think we are exploring completion. We are exploring completing cycles, because the baggage—fear, the baggage of not letting go, the baggage of holding on from people that are dying and people that are in life, that stay in life, relatives, or friends, or so—that the culture of death and dying discerns, because we are connected. If we are, for example, in a family, family members, or we are very close to somebody, then we are connected through the gate of death. If somebody has a traumatizing death experience, and there's a family that stays here, and it was very sudden, so the trauma is in both.

It's in the afterworld, if you want to call it like this, and it's in this world, and they're going to affect each other. After war situations, or the Second World War here in Europe and Germany, or in other places, through collective traumatization, there's a lot of energy that is still locked in the system, and it has a past, and it needs generations to unravel that past.

For us in our life, it's the same. Our life, what does it mean, a spiritual life? Spiritual life only means that we live life in alignment with the flow, with the essence of life, so that the essence of life and how life is being passed on from one generation to the next is being honored as sacred. The sacredness of life is the essence. The electricity in the cable, that's sacred—how one generation passes on life to the next generation. As we said, I think, last time, I said that it's very interesting to think about that life put all the treasures of hundreds of thousands of years of evolution into all the people that live right now.

Few generations hold everything that life learned, in hundreds of thousands of years. Our bodies, our emotions, our mental structures, our capacity to build society—life invested all of that, like a learning process of hundreds, thousands or more, millions of years into us, all of us. All the electricity through all the nervous systems, bodies, the biochemical processes, everything that creates life energy, chi, and we are holding in our genetic codes everything we learned so far. I think that's pretty amazing. If it's something that I contemplate, that on the one hand, how fragile the system is, a few generations hold a lineage of so many, so much, so many lifetimes and, at the same time, we are a part of those effects, so some stuff that happens in our life is from generations ago—effects, waves that have been sent into the future that appear in our life as our life. The spiritual practice is, in a way, say, “Okay, I am here.” I am here in this birth blueprint. This is what I get from my parents, from my ancestors. This is what I get from spirit, from the future, and my practice is to more and more live a life where I complete cycles.

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I clear up relations. I deal with the unintegrated parts. I bring energy home, and then that's my practice: living a life of honesty, of clarity, of compassion, of love, presence. These are all qualities that bring energy home. And the more energy comes home—because of conscious attention, and grounding, and living a lifestyle that, maybe, takes the effort to go to the health foods store instead of the store that doesn't provide food that is sustainably healthy—so that I do the necessary steps in creating my life that allows me to bring energy home, bring energy home, bring energy home.

I think what I suggested last time, the exploration of... If you just write everything that you associate with death, that we look at the fears: am I afraid of dying because of early attachment patterns, of trauma in my life, of epigenetic or trans-generational trauma in my life, or because I experienced death in my family as traumatizing through some people that are in my family or close environment.

All of it has an echo: waves in the past, waves into the future. We are sitting in this resonance field of echoes, all the time. So finding presence in space, and depth, grounding myself in my life more and more through presence, presencing, allows me to digest those unfinished parts. Why? Because presencing, space, and the switch in the nervous system from activation into relaxation—relaxation allows my body to digest, relaxation allows my body to detox. We know this from many people. When you are very stressed, or when you are in a high activity for a longer time, and then you rest, it's even hard to rest, or sometimes people get sick, or people express all kinds of symptoms because the body keeps holding, holding, holding, holding, holding the energy, and then when it relaxes—poof!—that energy comes back. It has to come back in order to integrate itself, but that's also what we do through spiritual practice. We create a field so that we can digest and integrate the experiences that are still waiting, which, in other words, we call it the past, that we can live a more present and contemplative life.

I think, before we continue with more of the theory about the theme I want to explore later, kind of the death process more from the inner science aspect of energy, maybe let's, again, start with the meditation. As I said, the primary "*Mystical Principles*" courses are here to highlight the first priority and then, from there, we can explore whatever we explore—in this case, death and dying—but it's clear that it's anchored in my first priority and not the other way around, so that the first priority is the awakened state, my connection to consciousness itself, and the experience is held in it. That's kind of an awake moment. Let's use the time now to, again, have kind of an inner journey, and then we continue the exploration.

Begin Meditation

As we started already a few times, let's with our exhale, again, take us into the sitting. And every time I exhale, I allow the wave of my exhale to guide me into the body, into the sitting, and into the beauty, that just sitting here is beautiful.

[00:35:00]

There's a simplicity to the physical sitting. My body's breathing. I can feel the posture of my body. And every time I exhale, there's a wave of my breath going into the ground.

Then again, if I anchor myself in the body, there are all kinds of body sensations. Maybe my body feels pretty relaxed and open, flowing, streaming, breathing. Maybe parts of my body are tense, painful, more stressed, or not available to me. Maybe I feel kind of activated. However it is, presencing is a kind of loving embrace of whatever I find.

Again, when I drop into my body, there are more subtle sensations—palpable, available. Maybe, I also get kind of an emotional flavor, just of this moment right now. I notice an emotional quality—very subtle or very strong, doesn't matter. Or do I feel disconnected, numb, or cannot clearly say what I feel, and that's also good. However it is, yes.

In the sitting, of course, I also feel my mental activity. Maybe your mind's very fast. Maybe the mind's very quiet. Open or contracted.

[00:40:00]

As I sit, I of course have impressions or perceptions of my surrounding, I feel the temperature, hear subtle noises, there is atmosphere in the room. My external, my internal sensory input, in a way, compose my experience, as we said. Everything is moving. Perception is movement.

And as I presence that composition, I might already sense a quality of inner expansion, spaciousness, timelessness. I can listen and stay with that sense of expansion, a kind of inner stillness.

Then we can... I can see, when I explore my life and I think of completion, what, in my current life circumstances, what are the things that are asking for completion—within yourself, within relations, commitments, with the whole journey of your life, where you feel, ah, here are certain loose or open ends where, if I pay more attention, if I clarify relations, if I, in a way, clear up or clean the house, there's more space, there's more fresh oxygen, there's more peace, stillness; are there things that keep returning again and again that actually need clarification, need attention.

[00:50:00]

Maybe it's also connected to uncomfortable feelings, if you were to clarify those parts. And there might be parts that might not be, where it's not possible, or where you might not be able to add to a certain completion. There might be other parts, maybe, where you don't cross a certain threshold to take care of those things.

And there might be parts that are easy to complete, where energy can come to a rest—doesn't come back, and come back, and come back, and come back, and come back.

If you pick one, you picked one of the incomplete situations, areas, relations, then you see, okay, what's needed here to kind of bring the energy more to a completion? Maybe, what prevents you from doing it? What might be steps to bring more clarity and clarification, resolution, integration? And/or what would you need—support, help, insight—what do you need in order to take care of the part? Then, on a second part, let's let that question now go. We saw some aspects, maybe some possibilities how to take care of it, and maybe resources that you need.

[00:55:00]

Then, let's practice now. Let's see, okay, when I sit, there is a central channel through my spine. Maybe you can feel that central channel: that you're sitting, and from your pelvis up there is a central channel that ends up the top of your head. Let's place our awareness, for a moment, on the highest point of our head and just listen. The space above your head is open, it's a receptive field. Nervous system of the brain is a receptive antenna. I can listen. I can listen to the space above me. My brain is listening. Of course, it's not just the brain, it's whole capacities that I'm listening with.

And for the ones that already are more experienced with going upward, if you want to experiment with raising your awareness. If it's easy for you, you can raise your awareness and bring it higher above the head. For the ones where it feels harder, keep listening as you are. Just listening and being receptive, and relax in the space above you. And you want to elevate your felt awareness, you can bring it higher above the head and see if, at a certain altitude, you get some sensations of light.

You look above your head, sense above your head, and if thoughts come, don't pay attention to them, just stay concentrated with the movement, to explore the space above your head and to feel and look with your inner seeing, and listen higher above your head.

If you connect to some sense of illumination or light, tune in with it, feel it. Let it become like a feelable sensation that stabilizes you there and/or allow the sensation of light to flow downwards, into your central nervous system. If it's hard, or it feels blocked to elevate your awareness, so then just keep listening and receiving in the same way—just open, receptive, with sensations of energy that flow down, occur without light, visual light, doesn't matter.

Then, slowly let your awareness come back into the body so that you can feel your body and, maybe, there's still a kind of inner space or expansion.

Before we finish, let's just listen a few moments if there's any information, any insight, any intuition that wants to surface, that wants to show itself.

Now is an open space. Anything that life wants you to become aware of, now is enough availability.

Then, take a couple of deeper breaths. Feel your body and your feet on the ground. In- and exhale a few times, deeper, to really get connected to your body. And slowly come back.

End of Meditation

Gross, Subtle, and Causal Fields

Good. Good. So, two things. As we said, presencing, creating space, digesting, surfacing what wants to be completed, and inserting space into the way we live our lives and into practice within our life, I think, are essential and crucial and essential aspects of living a life that allows us to digest and deepen our conscious awareness of life. and also in the question of life and death. Because as you remember at the beginning, we started off saying there is physical reality, that my physical body lives in, there is a whole energetic or subtle reality that all my subtle bodies live in—that's what we said when we... For example, when we dream.

When we dream, we travel with our kind of energetic subtle body and, in some of the yogic practices or inner practices, we can learn to travel, to make this a conscious process, or also use the same body to travel within the subtle realm.

We use that, that subtle realm, for healing work, for feeling other people, ourselves, getting information—that's the world how insights and intuition, inspiration comes to us. It's a whole realm. We will talk about this today a bit more, about the science of that energetic world.

And that's also where space is an expanded feeling, but already more silent feeling inside: when I'm not just bothered by my thoughts, my feelings, my life, where it's going, what's happening, but that I can faster and faster, in meditation, drop into a sense of calmness and of expansion. And then, within that expansion, maybe, stuff starts to surface, but it's kind of a different brain wave state. It's a different experience.

And then, at a certain depth of meditation—and I'm sure many of us know this—space changes into a real, fundamental presence, and that fundamental presence is not expanded. It is not like a feeling of space. It's a feeling of kind of burning is-ness, presence.

[01:05:00]

That's where lots of my body sensations are already kind of resting in that silence. That's what we call a causal awareness state. I will, again, put my artistic outbursts here.

Okay, so we said there's a gross reality [*draws a line and writes "gross"*], there is a subtle, and there is a causal reality. Here my body lives [*draws a human figure under the "gross" reality*]. Here, my whole energy bodies live [*draws energy bodies under "subtle"*]. And here all of it rests. Nothing [*under "causal"*]. Empty.

And so, in our spiritual practice, we move from me being identified with my physical body and my physical identity, moving the center of gravity slowly into the subtle world, so I live simultaneously in the physical and in the subtle world more and more. And eventually we move the center of our life into the causal, which means I live simultaneously: I have a causal state awareness, I'm more and more conscious in the subtle world, and I still live in the physical world, but I have three big states that the major wisdom traditions describe. If you look into Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity, wherever, you'll find a description of three—and the non-dual state, of course, the next—but these three states seem to be universal in the different traditions.

So when we talk about death, we talk about, usually, a physical death, so it's my physical body, first of all, and then the big unknown comes. In the mystical teachings, we find that the journey of the death process and the afterdeath process is a subtle journey. That's why, once I can shift my center of gravity into the causal, there is already kind of an embrace of the physical and the subtle universe, because the causal state is more fundamental, it is more aware, and holds a bigger perspective than the subtle and the physical.

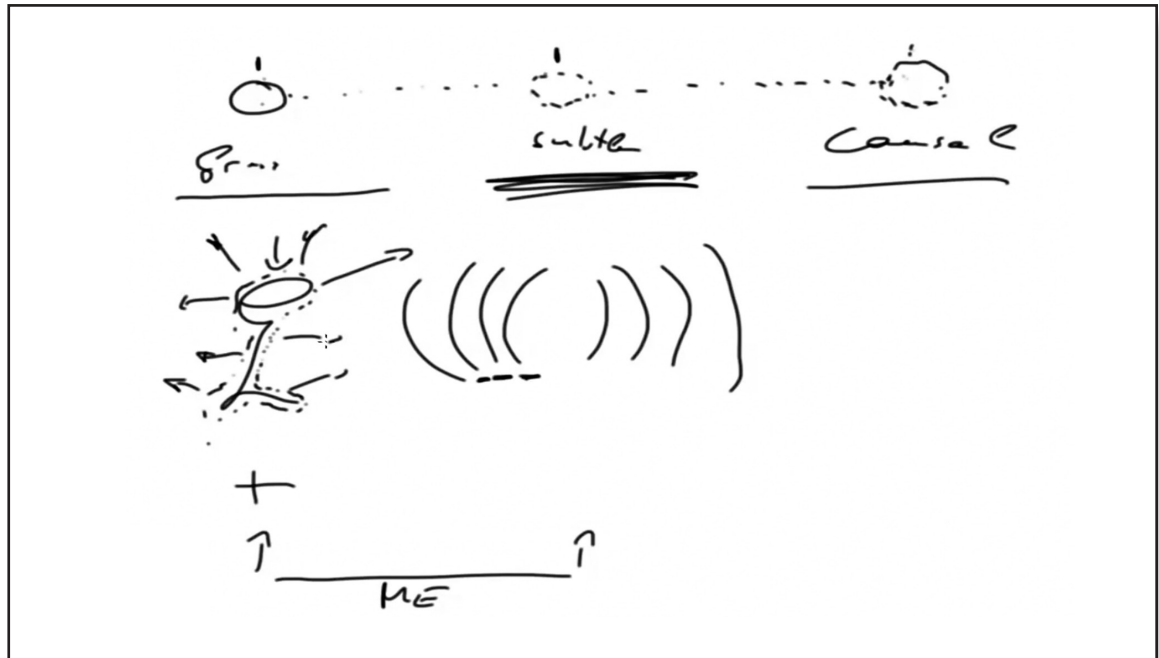
One spiritual development is, through our spiritual practice, to shift our center of gravity more, that we are more and more rooted in the causal state of awareness and/or that we can access that state of awareness more and more easily, because we drop through the subtle dimensions into the causal field in meditation. That over time becomes like a state—from peak experiences, when it happens the first time, and usually for most of the people it disappears again, and then it comes again, but there's no... it cannot be made at will.

[01:10:00]

It seems like it happens to us because, not to forget, that ‘us’ is usually this dimension [*gross*], and this dimension [*subtle*]. That’s what we call ‘me’. It’s my physical self, it’s my, maybe my emotional self, my mental self, and maybe some other subtle dimension that creates my identity. So ‘me’ is here [*connects “gross” and “subtle” fields and writes “me”*]. When it happens to me, or I want the causal state, I want something that I’m happening in, so the sheet of paper contains my writing. If this little figure [*the human figure in the gross field*] wants to pull in the paper, it’s going to be hard, because it’s on the... it’s the smaller entity. And so causal states usually come, or state consciousness, also subtle realities come into our life and disappear because they are bigger than the identified self.

Now, I want to shift a little bit to the subtle dimension, this dimension, because in the death process, when the physical body, in a way, stops its functions, one of the first things that happen is that there is a layer around the body that many anyway know already. It’s kind of an etheric energy. It’s our life energy.

It’s very close around our body, and that energy usually dissipates. This energy is like kind of a glue that, in a way, explodes. Not explodes, but it dissipates in the environment, into the environment. That’s why we, sometimes we can feel it when we, every one of us that accompanied people already through the death process or was present in those moments, we can really feel this—“poof”—how there’s more life energy in the room suddenly, energy that gets set free.



Drawing 4a

That energy, and then like a whole journey starts—and I said this already in one of the first classes, and now I think it's time to come back to it—is that when we have our body here [*draws a human figure*], then we have different energy centers here. Here, here, here, here, here, here, here [*draws circles along the figure to represent energy centers*]. We said, one thing is alignment, it's kind of an inner coherence—when our centers, through our spiritual practice, become one line and not many fragmented, different lines here [*draws lines off center on both sides*], so one line is alignment. Then those are energy vibrations, also. Energy vibrations. And usually, the higher we go, our spiritual practice upgrades the vibrational state.

Usually somewhere in our life, there's somewhere our center of gravity of our ... That's the state of consciousness that most of our moments compose together. Sometimes I'm a bit higher, sometimes I'm a bit lower, but eventually it comes here to this center of gravity, or it comes here to this center of gravity. These different... it's like a whole wave network. It's kind of a wave field, and so when we said before that in the process of completing energy when I—incomplete energy fixates a part of me on one of those vibrational layers. There's a lot of unprocessed, early trauma energy, so many moments will call me back into that frequency. I spend the time of my life being existentially afraid, but when I am existentially afraid, I'm magnetized into my existential fear, so I cannot process life according to my life's potential—that I am a multi-perspective, integral human being that can host other people's perspectives, can host contradictions, is compassionate, clear, interested in development.

[01:15:00]

In my most triggered moments, I am not able to perform that function, so I'm not resting in my overall center of gravity. I am fixated in a lower vibration, in a regressive vibration. So that's... that all compose... my highest moments—sometimes I have very high, expanded moments, of course, when I practice, sometimes when I walk through nature, and I'm really open, and everything seems to be perfect, and everything seems to be in a flow—but this gets balanced, when life triggers my early trauma or my attachment trauma, so I might be in a relationship where I'm so fixated onto my partner that I spend a lot of time in being afraid of losing my partner.

All of it creates kind of a center of gravity consciousness, and that center of gravity is important because, in a way, we are the designers of our afterlife process. The afterlife process is kind of like in the dream world. It's kind of... when we dream, we also walk through our own, mostly through our own subtle landscape—the unintegrated energies often, and sometimes future insights—but the whole landscape of my subtle world is the landscape of my dreams.

I, in my dreams, I experience stuff, dissociated stuff. All the people that hunt me, run after me, or the beautiful things, my potential, maybe even premonitions, many things that are in the subtle world are displayed. There have been many books and myths about this underworld, and the higher worlds, and the heavens—and so all of it is subtle composition. That's why in the spiritual practice, we are looking for completing energy, integrating energy, completing these cycles of energy that are stored in me.

If I have relations that I can bring into deeper harmony, or honesty, or clarity, so that my whole life becomes more integrated. That adds, everything that's not integrated pools energy into a certain fixation, and everything that's integrated adds energy into my central channel. Everything that I integrate is fuel into higher consciousness. And so, on the one hand, I create a more coherent central channel, through integration. More energy runs through my spine because more developmental cycles are being integrated back into my channel.

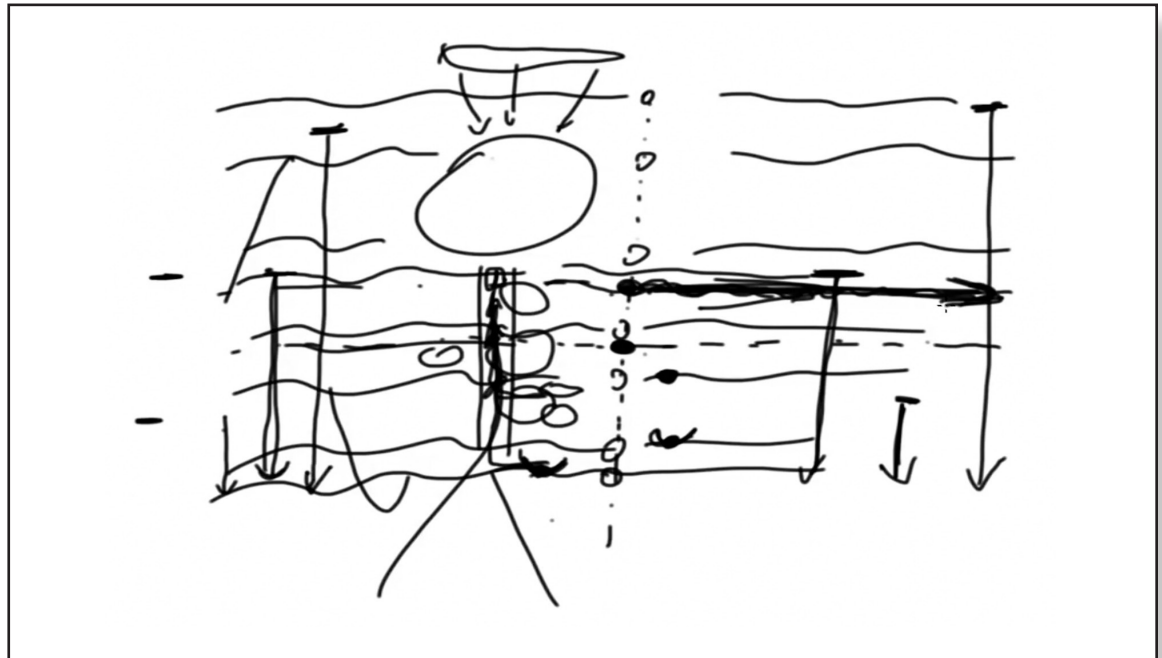
Through my spiritual practice, I connect to light of my soul, and I practice presence, so all of it creates a growing of vibration. I upgrade my center of gravity, and the higher is the center of gravity, the more I see. If my center of gravity is here [*draws a dash to the left of the figure, at the chest level*], my world is that big. If my center of gravity is here [*draws a dash at the waist level*], my world is that big. That's a difference. My center of gravity is here [*draws a dash at the crown level*], the universe is that big [*draws an arrow connecting crown level with the base*]. That's a difference.

In the Kabbalistic Jewish mysticism, there's a saying that 'we need to build an instrument in order to perceive'. Every kind of technologically skilled person might agree: if I want to use the wireless capacities, I need to have a device that is able to perceive wireless radiation. If I want to use the mobile networks, I need to have a device for it. Without a mobile device, there are still all the vibrations of the mobile networks, but I don't have a device, so I don't feel it. I cannot use it, and it doesn't exist. Maybe it exists in my mind, but it doesn't exist in my life.

[01:20:00]

Maybe I know about it, but it's not my reality because I cannot use it. That's the same here, that with the upgrading of reality, more of the world appears in me. More of reality appears in me. That's why, when we awaken into the subtle world, suddenly the universe gets much bigger, because suddenly there's a subtle universe, in addition to the physical universe. The reason why I say this is because if we train, if we do a spiritual practice to prepare ourselves, of course, we live a fuller and fuller life, but it's also that our life comes to a completion, so that we can leave one day, so it depends—my center of gravity is usually the exit gate. So if I'm identified with my life, then my current reality perception is the exit gate when I die. Which means that size of this is my... that's the death that I experience [*draws one more arrow from the chest level down towards the base, on the right*], or that's the death that I experience [*an arrow from waist level down*], or that's the same thing [*an arrow from the crown down*]. In life. After life.

If I exit on that vibration, that's going to become the architect of my afterworld. If I exit here in this center of gravity [*at the chest level*], that's my vibrational state in life, that becomes the architect of my afterworld, how am I... how I will experience the death process. It's like in a dream. If my energy field is charged with a lot of tight and maybe envious, or aggressive, or vibration that is unintegrated, so it comes up in my dreams as nightmares, it comes up as all the experiences in order to digest itself. It's not because it's good or bad—it wants to digest itself and it wants to come into my waking consciousness, so when I have a lot of violent dreams or scary dreams, energy tries to surface. The same is in the subtle afterdeath process. That's what I stay identified with, because I'm identified with it in life, that's how it's going to look like, the landscape. This is important knowledge because we have practices how we can prepare ourselves.

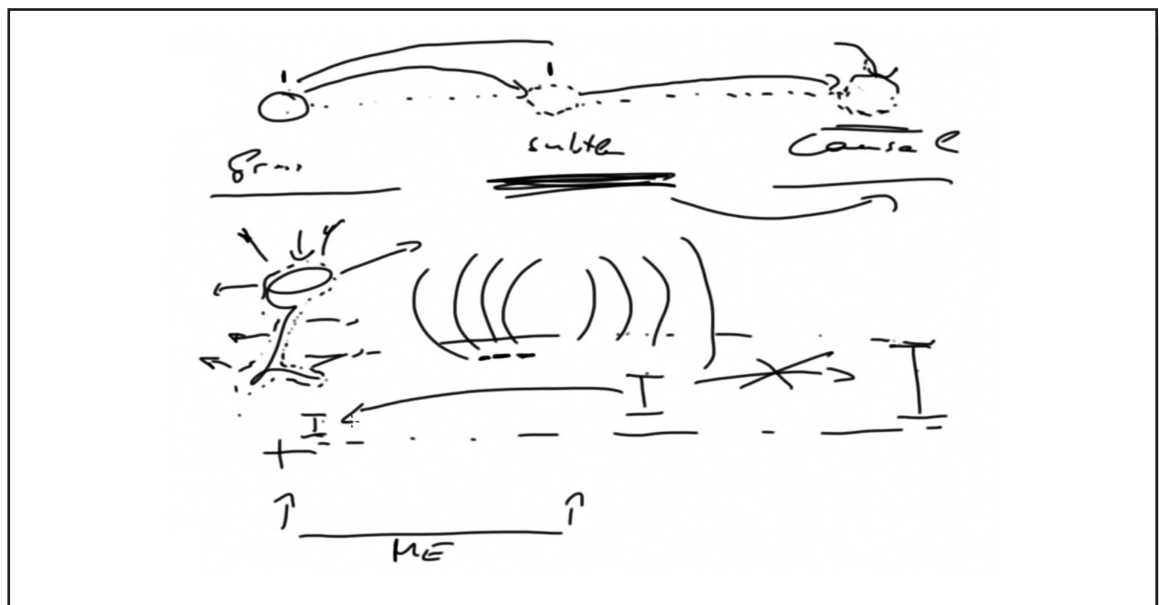


Drawing 5

One practice, in order to transcend this process, is... Let's see here... This one [revisits Drawing 4]—that we shift our center of gravity from here [gross field] to here [subtle field], and from here [subtle field] to here [causal field], or we have a satori experience that shoots us from here to here [gross to causal]. It's also possible, it's not always a linear process. So that we go from gross identification, "Oh, I'm my body, I am my emotions, I am my thoughts, and that's me, and everything else is other." So I have a healthy individuation, so I know about myself, but then I transcend myself, which means I de-identify myself from just being that into a bigger reality. Suddenly my body is in me, my emotions are in me, my thought process is in me, but the identity of me is growing. It's a deeper and deeper consciousness that hosts those aspects and creates a bigger and bigger perspective. And so, one practice is practicing deeper and deeper stillness states until stillness turns into causal stillness, because causal stillness is the bigger I than the subtle I.

[01:25:00]

This is the small I [writes "I" under the gross field]. This is already a bigger I [writes "I" under the subtle field], and this is an even bigger I [writes "I" under causal field]. And "I" not in the sense of "ego", "I" in the sense of the deepest self that is aware of the process. This [larger "I" under causal field] is aware of this and this [subtle and gross], or this hosts the subtle and the physical, and this [the "I" at the subtle level] cannot see there [causal], but it can witness this [gross]. So one of the practices how we do that is, as I said, contemplative meditative practices that allow us to sink into stillness states.



Drawing 6

Homework

And another process to do that is that I ask myself as I'm sitting here right now, what is the deepest place witnessing this moment? What is the deepest place in me that is aware of this moment? If I can witness my physical body, so there's a function at least that is able to witness the physical body, so that the physical body is in that function. Whatever the bigger part is, it's aware of my body. Whatever the bigger part is that is aware of my emotions, of my thoughts, of this room, of my subtle perception, and so on.

What does the deepest part include? I include my body, then transcend into a bigger perspective. I'm not just my body. I'm not just my thinking. My thinking happens in me, but the perspective, the deeper awareness is bigger than that, and then I actually—space, and then, okay, what is aware of space? What is the consciousness that is aware that I feel spacious? Then spaciousness cannot be my deepest perspective. There's something deeper than that, and then again, and then again.

In one way the saint Ramana Maharshi also, in a way, practiced this technique with, okay, what is the deepest I? What is the I, what is the I that is deeper than the I, and what is the deeper, until we—the good way—could transcend all the perspectives into kind of a non-dual state experience. That's one practice. It's an interesting practice to do, to say, "Okay, what is aware of the deepest place that I at the moment call myself?" Then I just contemplate or witness the deepest aspect. Maybe, then there is a deeper aspect that witnesses that aspect. Like this, I can deepen my... I inquire consciousness itself, consciousness itself.

[01:30:00]

That's definitely one practice and then, in order to give also still a little time for questions and answers, we will see how the light meditation that we did today, like the central channel up, is also another practice how we connect to the light. Many people that have had near-death experiences describe also kind of a channel into the light, an experience of being immersed in light. The central channel is also an exit gate, so there's an exit gate through our subtle bodies here, but there's a central exit gate. Next time we will talk more about that central exit gate, and how, for example, the light meditation and the meditation to open the channel can, in the death process, be an anchor to connect to higher consciousness as well, and transcend that process.

Yeah, but maybe let's stop here for a moment, and one more, maybe, note on what we said last time at the end, that of course one of the practices in order to see how I relate to death is to witness it.

Of course, I do this whenever I feel stable enough to do it; when I am right now anyway overwhelmed by my life, it's better maybe not to do it. But if I feel, yeah, I want to explore, so as we said, last time, for example, if I visit graveyards, or if I visit areas in life that are connected to death in society, and then I give myself time to sit, and to explore. How do I feel? Is there a part in me that feels triggered or feels uncomfortable in those places? Then I see, huh, the uncomfortable part is a resonance already that I meet in me where I withdraw, most probably, or where I shut down or want to kind of dissociate from uncomfortable feelings. What are uncomfortable feelings? Feelings, obviously, with a history, because I don't feel uncomfortable today in a graveyard. I feel uncomfortable today with an overshadowing past. What's uncomfortable is not the place where I am today. It's the place that I meet in myself when I'm here today. That's interesting. That's an interesting practice, because I can meet the past.

The tapestry that I put on the graveyard is what I feel uncomfortable with, not the situation there. Situation is a place and space in time, but I obviously, I have a connection in my past that gets activated. That I can learn to work with—presencing, I can, if you do that experiment, and you do it in, maybe, your triad partners, you can exchange or with other people that you have a closer connection, and to keep talking to move that energy, not to just keep it for yourself, but also through dialoguing, to move the energy and explore it, or write about it, as we said last time, so that you learn more and more about this subtle landscape—because that's the subtle landscape... what is uncomfortable when I go to these places. It's not that the place is uncomfortable. It's that something in me gets uncomfortable, first of all, and so there I meet already the imprints in my subtle landscape that, through presencing and consciousness, I can clear and become more present.

That's just to keep on experimenting, but as I said, do it when you feel that you are in an appropriate place in yourself, that you are not too disturbed, or too traumatized, or working on trauma at the moment that's anyway already fragile, and it's maybe better not to do it. But if you feel that it's something that you can give yourself to, so it's definitely an interesting experiment.

Q&A: 'Being with': Accompanying Others in the Process of Death

Host: *I'm going to combine a few questions. There are a lot of interesting questions, and one question, I think, that's coming up for quite a number of people is the question of how to accompany somebody who is in the process of dying. Somebody wrote in that her mother is in the process of dying, and how best can she be with her and accompany her. And there were other questions that, I think, relate to the question about the exit gate, and is there a way of helping somebody in that, or what happens when a child dies? I think the relationship around being with somebody, and these questions about the exit gate, if you can talk more about that.*

[01:35:00]

Thomas: Let's start with accompanying somebody. That's anyway a bigger topic that we'll come back to throughout the course, but of course every one of us is, as I said before, every one of us is responsible by life—in a way, we all come here with a contract with consciousness or the Divine, and so we are responsible for living a life that allows that dimension to take its place through us, so that a life full of conscious awareness is something that we can care for. Maybe, we also need to change our life, our current life, in order to make that happen, but I believe many people here, we changed our life, in a way, to fit in certain practices and certain things, and that's why we don't do other things. There is a kind of a realignment. We let go of some things, and new things come, and life is upgrading itself. Life is centering itself more. Aspects that were connected to more shadow material in our life, shadow relations, situations, circumstances, slowly drop away if I do integration work.

Sometimes it's also a painful process, but stuff that is not, doesn't fit to the core of my life will need to go, and more stuff will come that fits to it. That's kind of the detox inside and outside—and that creates clarity, that creates kind of a more conscious space inside myself, and also how my life looks like. If my life shows something completely different, then something doesn't work. So that's one thing.

Why I'm saying this is, there is a part where we can be with people in the death process—with our love, our compassion, with our clarity, also with our spiritual capacities, meaning subtle capacities, when we can perceive more information than just what we see this is all possible, and still there's something that every soul, every one of us is responsible for that I cannot necessarily do for the other person. If I live my life in a certain alignment and in a certain quality and practice, that just determines how my life flows, at least part of it's going to be.

There is always to know, it's not possible to wish that person into the direction that I think is the right direction, so being with is really *being with*—not my version of it is the one that I think is also good for that person. That's why being with is always finding a way or relation to the person that's really there, in that process. That's an important part that I need to... Being with somebody really means that I give you and your energy and your intelligence a place, and I find a relation to you. I'm not, "I want you to be in a way that is comfortable for me, or fits to my ideas." That's an important part, because accompanying somebody means also that I see, okay, where do I put my perspective onto you, or where I really feel your life's flow, and I can really be with—like two rivers, two water streams. That's, I think, a very important part that I clarify what do I understand when I hear the words 'being with', and how do I try to put something on you that is not you, so that I say, "Yeah, the humility of really honoring your life path."

[01:40:00]

Of course, that the spiritual practice of prayer, contemplation, space, also that I host the uncomfortable feelings that might come up in me, fears that come up in me, grief, also the parts of me where I don't want to confront myself with death. That's why we look so much into fear of death, because that's the part that I don't want to look at, so that's the part that I cannot see, also. If I am more a friend and kind of a partner of my fear, and I can host my fear, then I can also be much more fully with a person in the death process, because I am not—I don't need to manage my fear and trying to be there, but I can be relaxed with death, because I relaxed into it in myself. That's a whole other quality of being with. Otherwise I need to manage all the time my inner process of avoidance, while I am with that other person. In order to do that, I might try and put some ideas onto the person, but that's not who that person is.

The person, I can feel the person, the human being in his or her process when my energy is open. That's *being with* so I can, in the integration or trauma work with people, only when I feel the other person I can be really in contact, in relation, and so being with somebody that is in a death process means that I have a relation. And if I don't have that relation in myself, I cannot have that relation with the person beside me, because the parts that I deny in myself are the parts that I will deny in that person. Every denial needs a compensation, because I don't have a direct relation, so I need to build a relation—through an idea, a concept, a pressure, a retracting, a resistance—all kinds of symptoms that I put on top of somebody.

But the more I can host it in myself, that's wisdom. Wisdom is: if I can host life in myself, I can host it in you, and that's where the immediacy of love, intimacy, compassion, real transmission of presence—and the pacing, because the death process has a rhythm. It has a pace.

It's not the rhythm that I think it should have. It's the rhythm that is there, and the only way to find out what is there is the relation. Only in relation I find your rhythm. I don't push you. I don't hold you. I allow your rhythm and I find the relation—moment to moment to moment. And that's a beautiful process, but it's also a good reflection back onto myself, because I will feel all the stress fields in me, and the pressure, and all the parts I need to manage on my own homework.

That's why people that did that homework can be amazing facilitators, and people that are not can have a lot of knowledge, but they cannot facilitate, really, those processes. Because we are not all super clear, we will take the process of being with as a mutual learning and developmental process—for the person that's dying and for me. Then the second step is, of course, that all my authentic emotions, everything that comes up in me when I am with somebody, especially when I am with somebody that is close to me, that is part of my closer circle,

then there's a natural emotional flow, and that's definitely something that is part of the process, that's part of the beauty of the process.

Emotions are like the relational color of life. Emotion is connection, so when it seems like connection, somebody's leaving or somebody's dying, naturally emotions come up because we are connected, we are bonded, we are ... It's part of the fabric of life, and emotions are kind of the building blocks of that fabric of life. That's how we bond. That's how we connect, and so then the next step is my own willingness to be in that emotional experience and to more and more fully embrace that emotional experience with all that it means. It doesn't mean that once somebody is spiritual, we don't have any emotions, we are not connected. We are just detached. We are just cool and present. No. It is kind of that the humanity of us has even *more* space to be there.

I can check in myself and ask, when are the moments when I feel disconnected or numb—disconnected or numb doesn't mean transpersonal, or transcendent. It's different, two different things, and so I can be deeply engaged and warm, and in that process, and at the same time I can hold a bigger space. I can follow, of course, if my capacities allow it, I can follow the subtle energy process that's happening and be attuned to that, be attuned to the soul of the person, be attuned to the leaving process of that person, and support that—and we will talk more about it—through my own spiritual capacities.

Of course, then—that's also another topic of our course still—is what is the community, what is the community of practice, and what is the power of the community of practice or a culture of death that is infused by spirit, light, and consciousness, and by open humanity, it's infused. What can the culture do in order to support somebody in the leaving process? That's possible, as long as we respect that everybody has his or her life journey.

We are not chomping on that life journey and trying to get it where we want. We will support it—and still it's life, and energy, and their life journey.

Q&A: Embracing a Dilemma as an Opportunity for Growth

Participant: Hi, Thomas.

Thomas: Hey. Good to see you.

Participant: Hi. Yeah. Good to see you, too. My question doesn't relate so directly to the immediacy of death, but it does relate a lot to completions. I'm in quite an intensive crisis in the last while, both with my... one of my children, my youngest child, my children generally, in a way, and my mother. A context for me is that I'm... one of my life themes has been about getting visible, and one of my life themes has been about companioning, and it's very clear to me where it originates. There's an original relationship with my mother.

My mother's in a rest home, and I visit regularly. What shows up for me when I visit is the way she comes to life, so I know she's not entirely happy to be in a rest home as opposed to living with one of her children. I grapple with a kind of an inner conflict between following the path of my work in the world and caring for her. I just wondered whether you could help me with some perspective on that.

[01:50:00]

It's an ongoing dialogue that I have and am exploring about whether my path is more to continue and really grow the work in the world or whether it's to actually look after her in the last years. It's actually an unknown, of course, time factor in there, and yeah. A word that came up just after the meditation was 'sacrifice', and I think there's a theme in there which has been her life, and that now arrives with me, so yeah, if you could, if there's any ways that you can help me get perspective here.

Thomas: Yeah. I think I wouldn't look—at this stage, I wouldn't look at the solution, I would look at the process because you said sometimes there is a conflict between these two sides, and I wonder about the conflict. I think, within that conflict, there won't be any satisfying solution. If you cannot go out of this conflict, and look, okay, what can we do that's right, I suggest more to look what is that conflict. Why are those two voices in a conflict? Because either your intuition or your inner flow is to take care of your mom, or maybe taking care of your mom and your life's work would flow together in a different way, or everything would stay the same—but seems like that there is, in the middle, a junction, and that junction is not fully clear. There's a tension. Also, when you speak, and I feel you, I feel that there is a tension in the junction, so it's kind of fixated.

I'd go there and find out what is, why is that the conflict? Why is that not becoming a river and movement that's going to get clear to you from the inside? Otherwise, you will end up thinking, "What should I do that is right?" And that's obviously not the right thing because there is no "should do right". I think, from your energy, what's the emergence within your energy that gives you a feeling, "Ah, this is my way in dealing with the situation." Doesn't matter how it's going to look like, but that clarification didn't happen yet.

So, the first step that I would do is I wouldn't look at the outcome. I would look at the process and I would find out, what are the conflicting forces in you—and of course, in your own developmental process that is not fully matured or mature yet. One aspect of you deals with this situation from a younger place, when I listen to you, and that's not the conflict. This decision, it doesn't come fully out of your mature woman self that sits here today.

I think that younger place needs to be surfaced. What's creating that stagnation, in a way, that it comes up as a mental question? Often, I think, when we... once find ourselves in, okay, what's the right thing to do—means that we don't feel fully what's the right thing to do. I'd go there, and so maybe you can just tell me—here is just a limited time to go into the process—but you can, maybe, describe to me what are... When I ask you, "What are the conflicting forces," and you look inside yourself, what's the resonance inside?

[01:55:00]

Participant: The conflicting forces are the urge to move into life, just to live, to live into life, and the need to look after her. They're in conflict. That's, yeah. They are in conflict. One seems to just cut straight across the other, and I do see that as a childhood experience. Yeah.

Thomas: Yeah. The other part, the other sentence that stayed with me is that, at least I heard you say that "My journey is to become more visible." So my sense is that the part that is on the way to be visible will naturally have a resistance to step back, in a way. That is how it's going to appear to that part of you if you let go of part of your world work, which I don't even know that would be needed. That's another either/or at the moment. But I think that's the trace, that there is something still in fully coming out with your energy into the world that also is part, now, of that conflict. And I think real, sustainable support for you would be to get that part more into the front, to let that part grow up so that, from there, there is a freedom to decide.

From that part, any decision might be held in your kind of presence and comfort. You will feel that it is the right thing to do, but I don't see you being in that place right now. I see the first thing is that you'll need some support to look at this conflict more and see the power, because the power that wants to be visible is still on the way to be visible, so there you are developing into that. That energy doesn't have the freedom yet to hold such a decision. It's too young. It will naturally feel restricted. It will naturally feel overpowered by a choice to, I don't know, take care of your mom in a different way. And I don't know if that's the decision you would come to. I'm not saying that. I'm just saying that energy cannot feel it yet. And then you will need to go to the place, what's the right thing and what should I do here, but I don't think that that's a sustainable support to go to that question.

How do you feel now, when we speak?

Participant: Yup. I feel like a clarity of path to investigating, and that's really helpful. That's what I want. That's what I was seeking. Thank you.

Thomas: Yeah, because I also think that that situation in your life, it looks like now it's challenging, I don't know, decision or not, but actually it's for the sake of your own development. The fact you don't know is a walking friction in you that will add to your coming out. This is part of the evolutionary fuel for you, so I think if you really give yourself to the question, you will grow personally, and that question one day will disappear. One day you will know. You will wake up and, "Oh, yeah. Right. That's what I want to do here." But it helped you to develop something that anyway needs to grow. It's a good situation.

Participant: Yeah, it is. Very good. Thank you. Helpful.

Thomas: I think that's Gerald Hüther, a famous brain scientist in Germany, says that he loves dilemmas because dilemmas are not crises. Crises are very fundamental, and dilemmas are always growth opportunities because they put us in a place where we don't know, but it's not so fundamental that we are in an existential crisis, but it troubles us enough that we have to develop. I like this description, and I see this as a dilemma, but as something that is a fuel for that energy that's growing out into the world. That will disappear, that either/or.

[02:00:00]

Participant: Cool. That will bet when I eventually arrive there, will be a relief, too. Yeah. I look forward to the growth. Thank you.

Thomas: Great. Thank you.