

Walking Forever: Mystical Principles 4

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[00:00:00]

Thomas: Hello, everybody. So, after a longer summer break, we are back and we'll deepen our journey into the experience of death and dying, and also the culture.

Recap of the Previous Sessions

We have still many aspects to cover—but I think, in order to summarize a little bit, we talked about different levels of energy that I will come back to, we talked about identification with me as a gross self, me in a physical body, in a physical world; then, through our spiritual practice, that we open up more and more to the subtle dimension of life, that we have glimpses or maybe we are being thrown into, or maybe in meditation experiences we have sudden openings into causal states, stillness states, very deep emptiness states; and eventually, there is non-dual consciousness.

We also talked about how our experience of our life and how the history of our life that I want to come back to also stores a lot of fears—individual fears, collective fears. Last time, we looked at two things: at the blueprint—as you remember, we made a journey, a meditative journey through this blueprint, let's say our birth blueprint—what are actually the energies that come together in us, saying that a human being is the lovemaking of the future, which is the light, and the past, which is the karma. Every one of us takes on a certain mixture of that light, which, in one dimension, is our soul, in a higher dimension is the divine light that shines through us—that's the conscious aspect, that's the resource, that's the intelligence, that's the life flow, the purpose. And there is this part of the past that we take on that is unprocessed, unintegrated, and is partly unconscious—or *is* unconscious material, and of course the structures of consciousness that life evolved. So we are a collection, a composition, an orchestra composed out of those forces.

Last time we ended at a very interesting junction where we said, “How can our spiritual practice be precise enough not to be a bypass of fear of death but be a resource in looking at the fear of death, be a resource in grounding ourselves more and more through the fears of death?”

Maybe, we said, we're going to find out that there is no fear of death. Maybe many of the fears that we have are connected to other layers of our self. We said that we're going to continue the discussion, the research, the exploration of what actually composes the uncanny, the fearful, sometimes the deeply threatening feeling that I have when I think of my own death, when I witness death around me, or I witnessed death around me in the past, during the time of my development, during the time of, maybe, in families and closer friends when deaths occur that we experience this as a traumatizing event. So there might be many different layers stored in us—either it's one or it's even a superimposition of multiple layers. When I look at death, actually I look through the past, the storage of the past, and I see a three- or four-dimensional hologram of fear.

[00:05:00]

Then we create a culture out of death where it's a given almost that most of the people are afraid of dying or of death—but maybe we will find out, through a deeper exploration, that either most of the fears or maybe all of the fears are actually not connected to death. They are connected to other layers in ourselves. In a way, if spirituality is not a concept—a concept of reincarnation, a concept of other forces, a concept of something that helps us to neglect or not look at the fears that we have, or even tell ourselves that we don't have to be afraid but actually underneath we are—but that it's a grounding force, it's a grounding force that, either on our own or, if that's too strong, with other practice partners or with therapists or trauma therapists, we learn to integrate the fears because we might find out that whatever are the fears that surface are actually fears that we have in our life and that we might experience as a limitation or a block or a stagnation in our life anyway.

So that prepares us not only to relax more and more into the moment of death as a trust into the intelligence of life—because sometimes there are sentences that go around that say, “Okay, trust in life and trust the intelligence of life and trust the flow of life,” but where is all the trust when it's about death? So am I trusting the river of life? Am I trusting that the core intelligence, the intelligence of life that seems to have sustained itself through hundreds of thousands of years to end up here with us?

None of us would be here if it wasn't for hundreds of thousands of years of life to make it until today. Something has sustained itself. Something has moved through the ages and is alive right now, asking itself or him or herself the question about death—but somehow, we're here.

[00:10:00]

Becoming Conscious of the Layers of Fear that Overshadow Death

So I think we're going today to continue the exploration. I said last time we will have a look what other layers of fears are potentially in the cocktail or the mix when we look at death. I think, a very interesting exercise can also be—and of course, everything that I say is for an amount of fear or being afraid of death when it's something that I can still host in myself and handle in myself; of course, if it throws me or if it brings up so much fear that I feel I cannot handle this in myself, then it's of course important to go to a professional, to go to a therapist, to go to a trauma specialist and really find somebody that can be with you in the process of integration so we don't have to do that alone—for many people it's a spiritual practice question that we can do within ourselves. I think, one very interesting exercise can be that we write a short story—maybe half a page, maybe a page—we write a short story: when you think about death or dying and you notice the feelings that come up in you and you write all the things that come to your mind, all the stuff that comes up inside and you write it down.

So you write, in a way, as long as it gets—maybe it's going to be a bestselling book at the end—but even if not, the exercise will be very helpful because the text, I believe, if you write the text, it's going to tell us a lot about our life. So one suggestion, as a homework, if it's not too overwhelming for you, that you sit down and you take some time and you say, "Okay, when I think of dying or death right now, what's coming up in me? What do I feel?" Then write what I feel, but maybe there's also stuff, "Oh, I'm afraid that, whatever, this and that, that that's not going to happen in my life," or "I'm afraid to be alone. I'm afraid to not be loved. I'm afraid to end up in the deepest darkness of life," or whatsoever, without censorship. Everything that comes up is important and has a voice, and shouldn't be neglected, so that we see, okay, we are walking through the cocktail of our own inner world.

As we know, there are often multiple voices and qualities that surface in us. So it's not only one thing, it's most probably more things. So I think it's going to be interesting to write whatever, however long it is, and then to see if you distill four to six sentences, when you read it again, and then you mark four to six sentences that seem very important to you, that you think are the most powerful sentences in what you have written, and then contemplate those sentences and see how those sentences relate to your life and to your current experience and to the composition of your life.

So I think that can be an interesting exercise. Do it when you have time for it, when you feel that you're available for it—not in between two things that stress you out, anyway—do it on the weekend or when there's more time to really settle in. Maybe also if afterwards you can—or you do it in a triad together and then you call each other and you can exchange about the exercise or about the sentences that come up.

So the reason why I'm saying that is because I believe—I will make a drawing now—let's say, life is a flow. Life is a wave. Everything that has been created is, in one way, also a wave, and there's energy moving. Let's say, death is a transition in this wave. So, because of the fact that we are living—at least for most of our life, and if we do... a spiritual practice most probably can speed up that process—we are living in the effects of karma. We said, karma is a past that is unintegrated, and therefore it has a destiny. So it doesn't give us a free emergence. It's bound to certain dynamics.

[00:15:00]

That's why the future looks like a future, but actually it's the past, the repetition of the past. That's what creates a lot of our experience in time-space that is repetitive, that is non-emergent. Life tries to integrate the past in order to detox itself. It's a self-healing mechanism, so to speak.

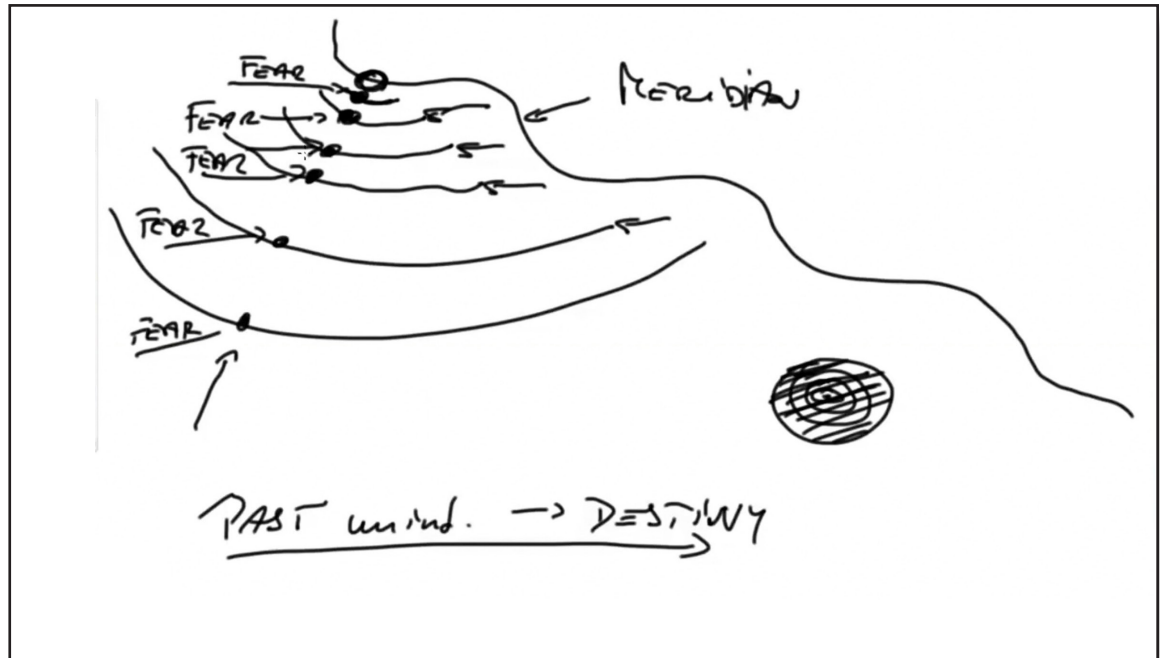
So when we said last time, for example, that in our base—for many of us, our attachment process in our base doesn't feel fully secure. So we said there might be layers of fear in our base. And then we said there might be a layer, so there might be a fear here, there might be a fear here [*draws dots over curved lines at the top left*]. That means that I have been exposed to death throughout my life and maybe some of those incidences I experienced as traumatizing, as overwhelming, as very difficult. So that means that it left a scar. So that scar is also charged with fear. The attachment process is charged with fear.

Then there are other layers of life, more collective layers, where the history, much bigger circles of history in our inner makeup that we don't even have to be aware of—often, we are not—have layers of atrocities that happened throughout life that have stored collective trauma or fear inside. So basically, when we live, we live in a whole mixture of energy fields that compose our experience. It's like a guitar: sometimes one string and then another string is being played, and another string, and another string. So when we say we look at death—and here's death [*writes "D" at the top left*—so we look at it from here [*draws an upward arrow below all the layers of fear*] and we might look through conscious, half conscious, and unconscious layers of fear, and they're all sitting like circles on the event itself. So they overshadow the transition. It's kind of a membrane.

I'm very interested if—and I think that's something that we can research together and find out together—if there's a real fear of death or if the separation from the core, from the essence, also the meridian of life, if the flow, the inner flow of the intelligence of creation or emergence or the inner drive, the inner creative drive, that life gives birth to itself again and again and again, that in that transition that we are really talking about the fear of the transition or if we talk about superimpositions of these possibilities, so that I'm afraid of being left alone, that I'm afraid of being eternally eradicated, that I'm, whatever, that there are fears coming up, fears of suffering.

So that's something that I would love to explore more. I think that, for example, the exercise, the writing exercise, and then the distillation of certain sentences that we can take out and contemplate, that sentences that resonate the most—out of whichever reason. So if I take the text and I just write everything that comes to my mind, without it needing to make a lot of sense, and then I mark some of the sentences that have a resonance when I read it again. I take the four or six strongest ones and then I contemplate them.

[00:20:00]



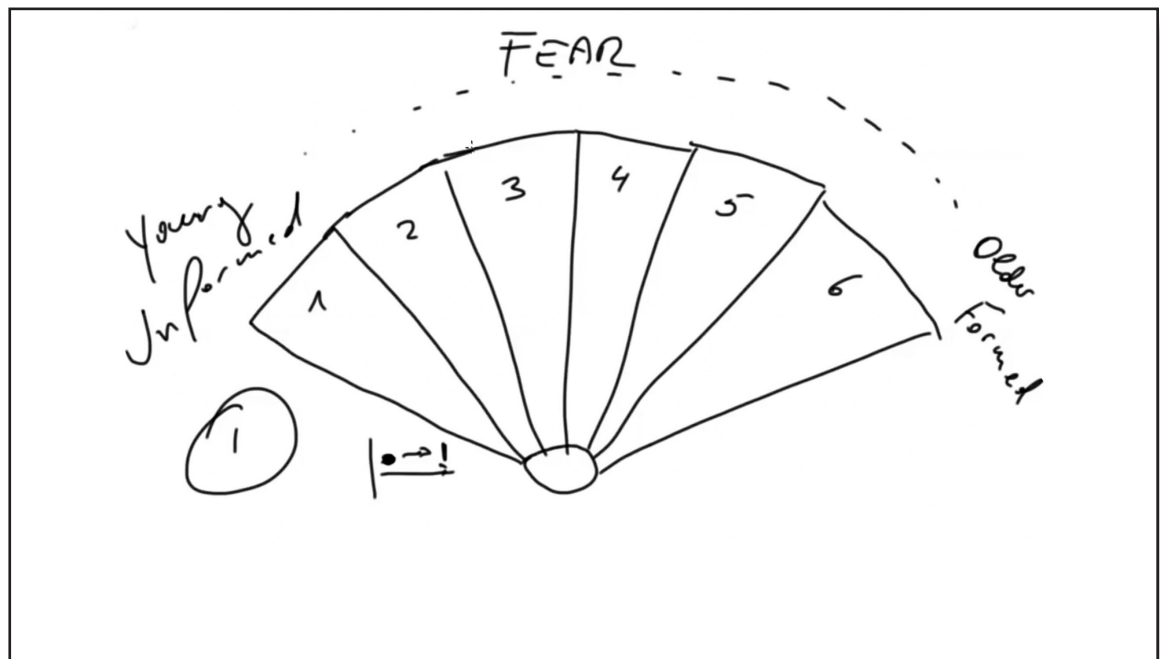
Drawing 1a

“Fear Theater”—the Vibrational Palette of Fear in the Body, Emotions, Mind

So that’s one way to look at it. The other way that we’re going to find out, we said last time, that fear has vibrational states, that there’s not only fear. We said fear is basically an unfairly judged friend because often fear has this reputation of being very problematic and being a block to our life and the hindrance of everything that we ever wanted and many things. Fear has shades. If this is the fan of fear [*draws a fan and writes “Fear” at the top*], that’s the spectrum of fear, and there is different colors, tones of the same color, like when you go to an interior designer and there are different shades, different ages, different levels—from very unformed to very formed, from very young to older—there’s a whole range of fears.

I think, in the work with emotions, I believe it's very important that the emotions don't have just one character, that it's important, if I'm afraid and I feel that I'm kind of... If this is me [*draws a vertical line to the left of the fan*], I'm wrapped in fear [*draws a circle around the line*]*—or that the fear is a very concrete emotion that is connected to a very concrete event in my life* [*draws another vertical line, a dot next to it to represent fear, and an arrow pointing to a line representing an event*], that's different. Here [*a line surrounded by a circle*] I have the feeling there's no location, I'm flooded by that fear and I cannot even say what I am afraid of. Here [*a line with an arrow pointing to an "event"*], I know exactly what I'm afraid of. These are different parts of the spectrum.

So that's why I think, in the work with fear, it's very important that I say, "Okay, what are my resources when I work with fear?" My resources are my body, as we said already. My resources are my inner connectedness. My resource can be the relation to somebody that I trust. My resource—if I feel overwhelmed by my fears, then, from a certain level of intensity, it doesn't make sense to try to handle it or deal with it on my own and to dig into it and be brave, because then I need an external partner, like a therapist or a professional, to be with me and help me to guide me into my own resourcing and my own work with my fear.



Drawing 2

Often, that's not that existential, and we have enough base already. We have enough ground in ourselves so that I can reflect the emotion back into my body. I have my body as a resource. I bring back the fear into my body and I locate it in my body: where in my body do I feel the fear? Do I feel it in my throat? Do I feel it in my chest? Do I feel it in my legs? Do I feel it in my belly? Where is it located? Can I say where it's located?

Then, in the emotional body, we can say what's the age of the fear, where is it, the age of the fear. What emotion—it is fear. And how old does it feel to me? Do I feel very young when I feel this feeling? Do I feel older?

To see that fear often comes, within my mind, as very creative thought cinema. My thoughts are very creative to find great reasons what I'm afraid of. So fear, the energy of fear looks for a partner in the mind, a scary thought that fits to the energy, and together they appear in the "fear theater". So this is the fear theater [*writes "fear theater" next to the mental block*].

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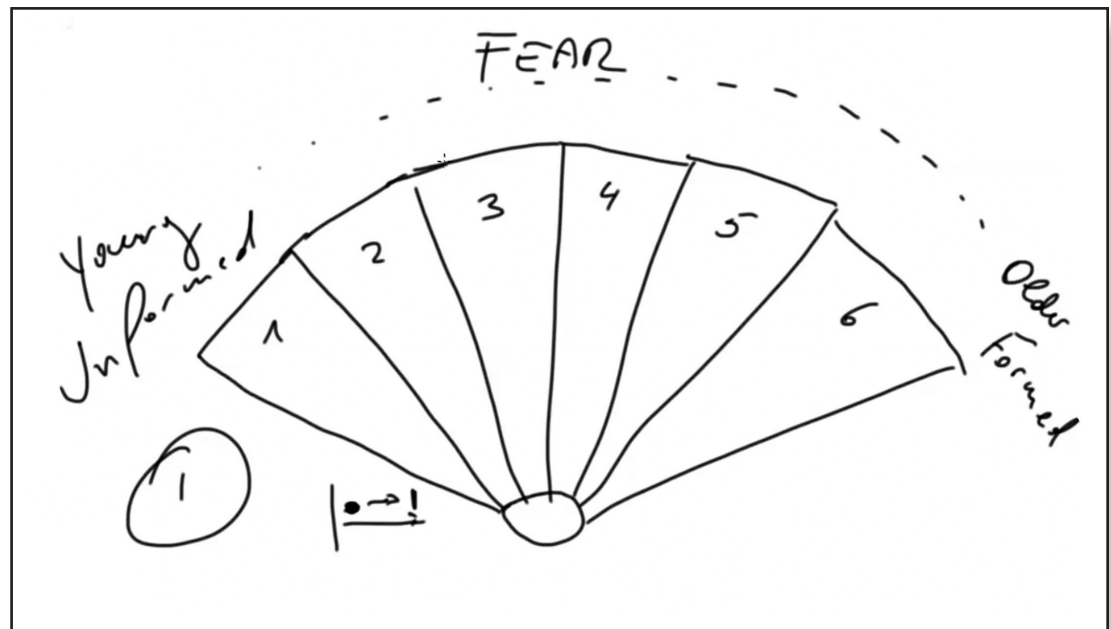
Here are dancing all kinds of scenarios what I am now afraid of. So if that's true or not, we don't necessarily know, if I'm really afraid of what I'm thinking I'm afraid of. Most of the time, the fear catches the most appropriate thought that's available and presents it to our conscious awareness. When we go deeper, we again look, "Okay, can I dismantle the thought from the fear?" I'm afraid of death or dying. Okay. Then I say, "Okay, when I tune in and I let go of the thoughts..." First, I use the thought as a trigger to look, "Okay. What happens in me when I think of death and dying?" Then I start feeling an energy in me.

Then, if I'm afraid, then I look, "What's the age? What's the fear? How does the fear feel? Where is the energy? What's the vibrational state? Can I ground the feeling in my body and also in presence?" Another resource that we have here is presence, inner space. Inner space is a very important presence that I will come back to because I think it's a very important gateway, inner presence.



Drawing 3a

So, we said, in my body I locate it: where. In my emotional body, I feel the fear, and the fear has an age—just remember the fan [revisits Drawing 2]—very unformed, very young, prenatal, natal. I grow up, it's getting very formed, very more concrete.



Drawing 2

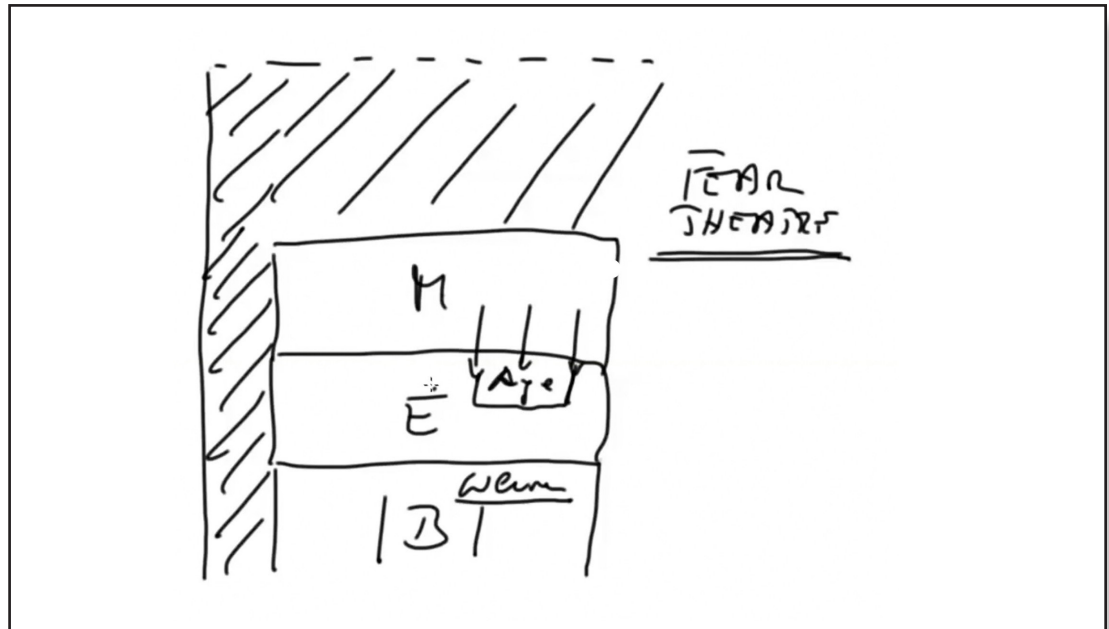
Then it has a mental component but, to be aware of, often my mind is part of a theater, that I think, “Oh, I’m afraid of this in my life. I’m afraid of making a new step. I’m afraid of changing something in my life. I’m afraid...” Actually, when I see, when I go back, I’m not afraid of the change. The change triggers a fear in me that is much younger than my current experience.

So that’s what I meant with the theater, that often the energy looks for a thought form, looks for a thought that is connected now to my fear. It really looks very real, that that’s what I’m afraid of, but often we see: some other fears play into my experience. So basically, the past tries to release itself.

So once we know that, we say, “Okay. Great”. We have the resource of the body. We have the resource of precision. We have the resource of dismantling thoughts and emotions, so that I’m not hanging out in my, “Oh, it’s uncomfortable to think of death.” What does it mean “it’s uncomfortable”? “It’s uncomfortable” means it triggers in me a feeling that I don’t want to feel right now, and that’s why I call it uncomfortable, but uncomfortable is not a feeling. It’s an interpretation.

Deepening Our Awareness, Expanding Inner Space

That’s why it’s important to have that awareness around mental activity, emotional activity, physical activity—and presence. Presence means that I still have the capacity to witness, to be a witness of my current experience. Sometimes the witnessing quality drowns in the intensity of the experience, so then the experience takes over, then I’m somehow caught in my experience, and I think many of us know that when it happens, that we feel, again, more space, inner space, that embraces the experience. That’s a different state.



Drawing 3a

So that's why I think it's very interesting, when we come back here [*revisits Drawing 1*], that the fears are not always what they tell us to be. I think it's a great cultural experiment to find out if the fear of death that can be many things is a given that we accepted, or if it's a byproduct of many other processes that we are anyway living in, and that's a perfect projection surface for them to appear.

[00:30:00]

That's, I think, a research question because every pre-meditated version of death is not it. It's an assumption of my mind to assume how it's going to be, but it's not born out of presence. Usually, it's born out of a forward projection of the past. That's very important to know because everything I think about how it's going to be is a forward projection, the pre-meditated form of it. It's not the emergence in itself.

So when spiritual awakening or awakening—and awakening means and more present awareness transcending our birth blueprint and our current experience, so that we are resting in more and more depth; and depth is the dimension of space and the deepening of space, the more space, the more light can flow through us because we have more inner availability, so the depth dimension of life is a sense of *hereness*, a sense of *being here*.

But space-time always tells us that there's a *before* and an *after*. So the karma condition, the karmic condition, tells us constantly that there's a before and an after. Usually, that before and after is energetic past that projects itself into the future here [*underlines "Past unintegrated -> Destiny"*]. The real future is space and emergence. Emergence comes out of depth, out of stillness, where the intelligence of life gives birth to itself moment to moment to moment, again.

It's different than a linear forward projection of *what was, will be again*. That's different. Usually, I believe, in our culture, those two, there's a mix—because it's tomorrow, it's the future. In the mystical understanding, no. The past can be tomorrow, again, quoted into the future, but it's the past. The emergence is a future that I don't know. Emergence is a future that is fresh, being born out of the ground of being, and it's fresh. That's a different kind of future.

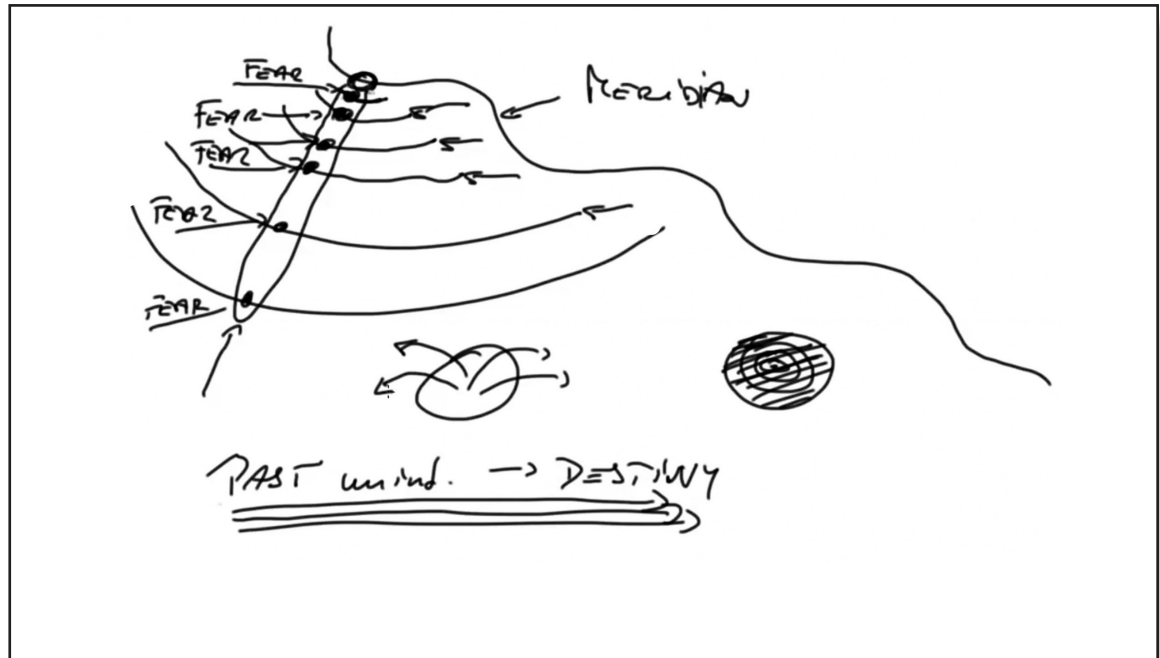
Those things seem like theoretical philosophy but I think, in our experience, that's a very important aspect because, in the past and in the fear, I'm usually bound, as I said, to the past. So the fear doesn't allow me to see death. It allows me to see the past that is in front of the gate, not the gate itself—if there is one at all.

So the fear obstructs my vision and doesn't allow me to really see death. It allows me to see my own history. So that's important in the work with it, because if we said that we are interested in a spirituality that doesn't bypass fear—or all kinds of feelings that come with death—but grounds ourselves in it; by grounding ourselves in it, we are grounding ourselves also in our life. They're inherently interwoven.

So the process of working with the fear of death is actually a process of grounding myself in life, and I'm going to release energy that is anyway stagnant in my life, through that process. That's very interesting because, I think, that's very promising because it's part of a deep spiritual practice and it's part of releasing parts of my karmic birth blueprint, as we said it last time.

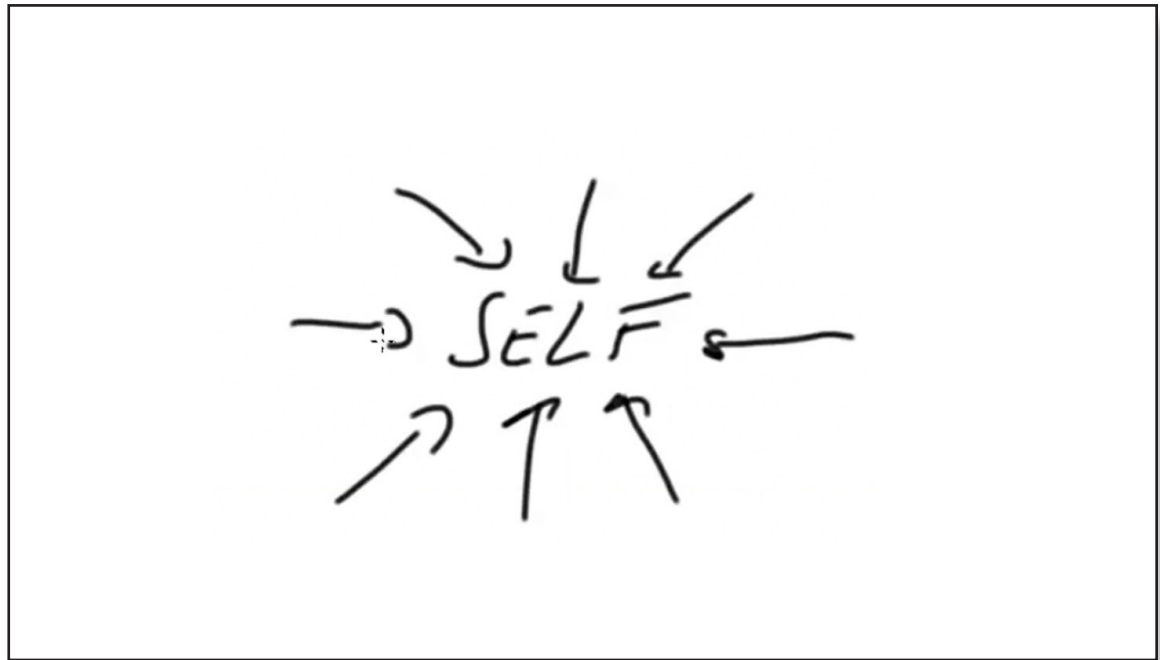
[00:35:00]

So it helps me to rewrite, in a way, my own birth blueprint because my birth blueprint contained the information that is my life today. That's why I think it's a very powerful practice and it's also a practice that, I believe, like in deep spiritual traditions, that's anyway happening already, that's nothing new, but it's something where we reconnect to the original creativity of the universe, and there's a lot of transcendence that comes with it. That's what we're going to look at after the meditation.



Drawing 1b

I believe that when my Self, everything that I connect to who I am, my subject, the subject, myself, so how I see myself—after the meditation, we will have a look—because my fears of death and letting go of my Self, if I imagine I let go of my Self, I will see what I'm holding on to or what is the unresolved energy that still tries to resolve itself through my life. I think that's an equally strong process. So we are going to come back to that.



Drawing 4a

First of all, because in both explorations, the attachment to myself and the work with the fear, both of them, of course, need me to have a certain dimension of inner space—because inner space gives me the freedom to explore, but also explore while already resting in a deeper sense of presence than just my physical, emotional, mental activities. That's an amazing resource. That's why we do, every course session, also a guided meditation—in order to deepen the sense of a bigger spacious Self, and spacious Self, as we know already, drops later into the deeper sense of emptiness and then, eventually, into absorption into a non-dual state.

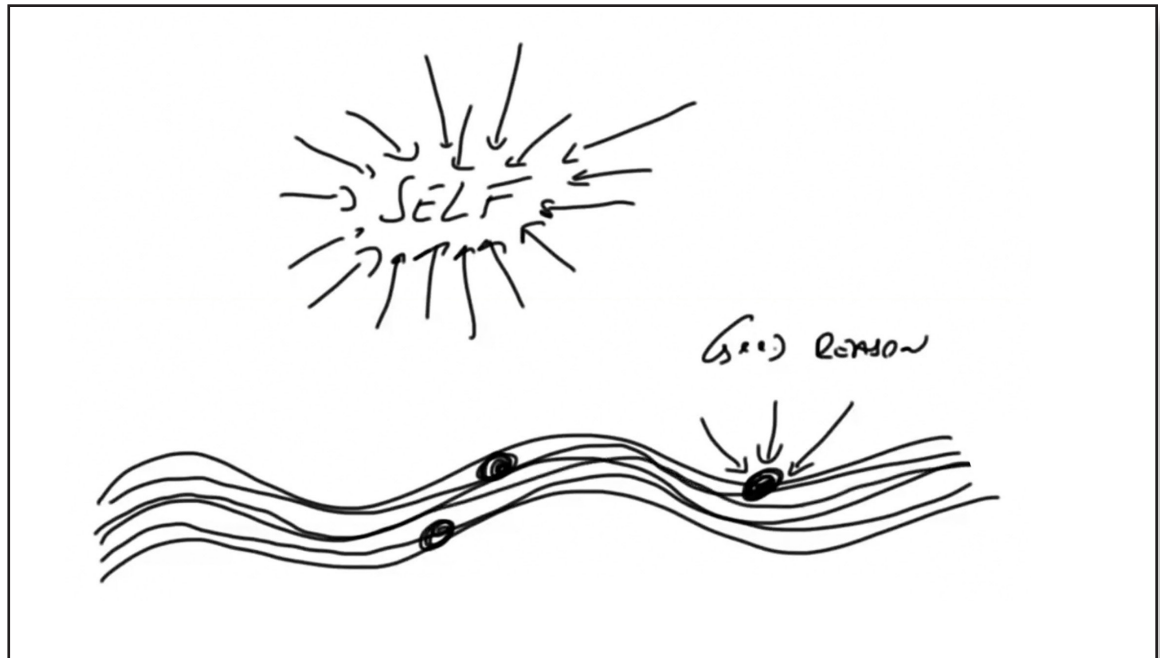


Drawing 3b

Once there is a sense of expansion, and I practice it and I practice it, I develop more and more witnessing awareness. That's great if I don't use it as a bypass to integrate fears, but that's also great because I insert space, spaciousness, transpersonal space into my sense of self. My sense of self usually is composed out of internal and external perceptions, physical, emotional, mental, and subtle perceptions inside/outside. I insert space so that I can see more and more where I'm holding on to myself, so where I'm not in the river of life, because when we say *wu wei wu* [sic] in the Tao Te Ching, when we call it *wu wei wu* [sic], the art of non-action, is being exactly in the flow of the riverbed, in the flow of the river of life.

[00:40:00]

There's nonresistance. Where I'm holding on to myself, I try to hold the river. I hold the river here, I hold the river here, I hold the river here [*draws dots over the waves of the "river"*]. So that's where in my life I'm also holding energy because I don't allow the experience to flow through. I hold it. We said already in the course, if there's a holding, it always has a good reason. There's always a good reason in our development why we started to do that. So that's not the failure, that's an invitation to get to know myself better and eventually to release the holding and to bathe in the intelligence of my soul's journey.



Drawing 4b

Okay. So in order not to make the theory too dense, let's do together, again, an inner journey, and then we come back to this and to the exploration.

Begin Meditation

Let's take a time and take a couple of breaths, again. Okay. If I drop into my sitting every time I exhale, I drop into the sitting and I feel the weight of my body sitting. I feel the simplicity of sitting. I feel the wave of my exhale taking me deeper into the sitting. I can feel my body, sense my body.

I can let the wave of my exhale ripple out as far as it wants to ripple out, as deep as it wants to take me. Then again, then I get a sense—is my body at all a place where I like to be? Is my body an instrument that I appreciate, that I can feel through, that I like to explore, I like to journey in?

And to also notice what's the quality of your nervous system; as you relax into your body, do you feel very activated or stressed? Do you feel relaxed? Do you feel, when you sit and you drop in, that your body goes into an inner state of recharging, regenerating, inner expansion? That your body is getting warmer or expanded?

[00:45:00]

It feels like the body takes a bath, a warm bath in the pool of presence. The nervous system really likes the presence and notices the invitation to regenerate because it's not only more relaxed, it gets a sense of interconnectedness with life, to that all of life is the power outlet that regenerates life. The interconnectedness is the source of energy.

And that the individual has a meaning in the whole, and the meaning of whole is with all the individuals. So when we relax and we enter deeper space, the echo of interconnectedness is getting stronger, and that's also energizing the individual battery.

Then, of course, when you recognize inner space, you can let your awareness, again, rest with the spaciousness. There is a depth dimension, the dimension of depth and there's spaciousness and stillness, the sense of expansion, presence, and one more timeless quality.

[00:50:00]

Also to notice that there is a deeper and deeper relaxation, most probably, in the nervous system that's listening to the space with the inner movement slow down. And if something is highly activated from before, there is a deeper holding, deeper awareness that embraces that activation. Let's keep listening to the timeless quality for a few moments and to the sense of 'I'm here, I'm here'.

Then we can also practice to see, okay, if presence is a resource in my life, if my body is maybe a resource in my life, if the relation with certain people is a resource in my life, maybe spirit or the light is a resource in my life, you look, okay, what are the resources in my life that give me power, energy, where I can recharge in order to meet fears or deeper aspects, disowned aspects? What nourishes me? What feels like safe ground? Some people, it's a walk in the nature. For some other people, it's intimacy, their partner, or closeness to some good friends or therapists or practice partners.

What are your resources? The memory of certain people in your life that you experienced as very beneficial or a community that you're a part of? Then we can make the experiment that I already promised last time to see if there's something that you're afraid of in your current life, that is not too overwhelming so that you get flooded by fears—and if you feel that there's something too overwhelming, then just stay with the meditative stillness.

[00:55:00]

And if you feel that there are fears that are easier to contain, is there currently something in my life that I'm afraid of, that comes up through a decision, a life situation, chronic fears that are with me already for longer time?

If I think of that and I see if I can feel my body well. I see where do I feel that fear in my body, is there a certain location? Then to see if that fear can be felt, like the location and the fear at the same time, and held in the presence. There's presence witnessing as the body has the fear.

Then maybe that fear has an age. How old is that fear? Very young, four years old, seven years old, 12 years old? You go through a spectrum, and if you're not sure, you could play with it a bit. Feel yourself. Is it younger? Is it older?

As I said, do it with fears that are... that you are able to contain. If you know about fears that overwhelmed you already in the past, it's better to do it with a professional support, not alone.

Then if you can detect more the age, so then to adjust the feeling awareness to that age—so I feel myself, for example, that the fear is four years old, I adjust my feeling awareness to four years. I feel it in that area in my body and I can presence it in that area and stay with it.

I can resource it in the experience of my body still, I still feel grounded with it.

[01:00:00]

And to keep gently breathing. You'll constantly see that the body, that the area in the body, there is a relaxation into that area in the body, and the precision with the quality of fear. Often when we hold fear in presence and we presence it, often after one, two, three minutes there is a kind of a relaxation or heating up or an expansion in that area of the body, or at least one level of deepening.

So that here's the reference and the experience to see, "Okay. Not every fear that I feel in myself is coming from the same place." And it's not that they are different. There's a range of qualities of the same feeling, but with different tones of the same color. Then we can come back, again, to one of the resources that I asked you before. What are resources? People in your life that are close. Your body. Nature. Dear people, community members. They are resources in your life. Spirit. Presence.

Then, once more, to feel if you still feel your body well, your inner landscape. You let yourself relax into the body again, into the sitting. To see if, in the inner space at the end of the meditation, if there is anything that wants to emerge, any information that wants to emerge.

Maybe, also sometimes to see how certain fears that we hold in our life that we connect to a specific situation—and we really bring it back into the deeper building blocks of that experience, we see that a situation triggered a fear, but not necessarily the fear is about that situation. So that we learn to ground ourselves more and more.

As I said, if that's not so easy, then it's good to look for support, somebody that can be an external resource, another nervous system that can help you to feel yourself deeper in that aspect and is an external guide for the inner integration. That's a way how to release layers of energy and transform them into deeper ground in ourselves.

[01:05:00]

Then take a couple of breaths, take a couple of deeper breaths and feel your body, maybe also give a gentle massage to your body and also come back to your current age and current perspective, and slowly open your eyes again.

End of Meditation

Summary of Today's Session

Well, so, what we explored now, in a way, that is connected, maybe, to a certain part of our experience, is how often we attach, maybe, fears that are stored in the archeology of our being to external situations and then we feel that it's about that situation, but actually it's that situation plays the string of the guitar that holds that fear in storage—so we can more and more presence ourselves. And, as I said during the mediation, if that's not easy because it's more overwhelming or it's very scary, so then we need external support to do it. So there's no sense in trying to force oneself to contemplate or meditate on it when it's overwhelming, because it means that the base is not strong enough to hold the fear, so we need to support the base in order to be able to, at all, transform the fear. Otherwise, it's exhausting the system and it doesn't bring real transformation. So that's why we are embedded in a social network, to have support.

I think, very important is, in the exploration of death and dying, is that we learn to have—for many people, there is a way in their self-exploration, because the fears are not that existential, that we can explore on our own and find a way how to work with our own energy to more and more release, through the presencing and body awareness, emotional awareness, presencing, that helps us sometimes to get out of those loops of thoughts and fears and thoughts and fears and thoughts and fears, and I can see, “Ah! I can ground that loop in my body.”

It’s like I’m not hypnotized by the flowers, but I can bring it back into the roots and ground that fear, because sometimes we might find ourselves in those loops of fearful thoughts that trigger feeling, that fearful thought triggers a feeling, and we can let go of the thinking and more concentrate on the energy that fuels the thinking. Then to see, “Okay. What is my fear really about?” Then it gives me a more grounded experience and it helps me to really tune in with the situation, and/or I need a conversation or an exchange to ground it with somebody else so that an external nervous system can help me to do the process with me, if it’s hard for me.

That’s, I think, a very important tool, if we explore also the fear of death and dying, because, on the one hand, it’s an existential topic. On the other hand, we might meet levels of energy that we can clarify and clarify and clarify in ourselves in order to crystallize more presence. We said, because if we release in our systems layers of fears, so the past energy that is unresolved resolves itself more and more and becomes peace.

[01:10:00]

The only thing that we really need to look at when we do this process is that we learn to discern when it’s really space and when I feel dissociated, when I cannot say what I feel. So to learn to discern those two states: one is, “I cannot tell you what I feel, I don’t feel anything.” The other one is a connected sense of presence and space, that I get the feeling I’m connected, I feel my body, and I can even notice, at least at the beginning, I can notice, still, the emotional qualities and space, so there is a connectedness to space—and in the dissociation, I feel cut off or numb, or I cannot tell what I feel, or I don’t feel my body. So these are important distinctions.

Another exploration, of course, if we look at the fear of death, is also what is the sense, the sense of self, or what are the parts of myself that I'm afraid of losing. I think, that's also a very important exploration, as I said before, because that myself, if myself is composed out of the sensations of my body, my emotions, my thoughts and my external perceptions, so at the beginning this might be like a solid self. When we infuse more space through our spiritual practice, we become more spacious inside, there's more depth dimension and there's more dimension of witnessing.

So that, when I learn to witness myself through the question of, "Okay. What am I afraid of when I die?" I will also feel the parts in me that I'm holding on to or that I feel are holding in. So it's an awareness process, also, of the contractions of life, because they will show up. So, in both ways, what am I afraid to lose when I die? What are the parts of me that I'm holding onto and what are the fears that come up in the exploration of the fears—are both ways to clarify my life, also, my experience of my life.

So, in order to today also give enough time for questions, when we take this now, what do we take away from today's session? The first part is that we see that presencing and witnessing awareness is a very important tool in the transcendence process of myself. The second thing that we can take away is that we see, okay, fears in my life in general, but specifically also when I look at my fear of death, are a collection of energies that might be developmental energies, might be collective trauma energies—because I believe that, as we said already last time, that the atrocities that we inflicted upon each other over generations as humanity, they are still reverberating in ourselves, and that many of the violent atrocities might sit in us as a reverberations of fear, of death. So, in grounding myself deeper, I slowly drop through those layers in order to presence my whole life composition more and more.

Homework

So that means that a spiritual practice is essential, it gives me the resource of space and presencing, which means usually a regular contemplation practice, a meditation or a meditation practice—and also a moment-to-moment meditation practice, so to do things that I do mindfully and to do things that I do with awareness and also often change habitual ways of doing things deliberately in order to free up life energy—which also makes us more present. If I brush, even if that sounds very simple, if I brush my teeth instead of the right hand with the left hand or vice-versa, it makes me more present because it's a non-habitual way of doing the same thing.

[01:15:00]

If I insert—sometimes; I don't need to do this compulsively—but if I insert this kind of refreshing moments into my day, first of all, it makes me more present. Secondly, it frees up habitual etheric energy that is bound in habitual patterns and it creates new fresh situations. So that's energizing and livening.

Then we said, let's write a story. If I write about the fears of dying or of death, what am I actually afraid of? I write a story and then I distill—if the story is half a page or a page, whatever comes to you—and then you distill the four sentences, let's say, up to six sentences and you distill them and then you take them out, like a copy/paste, and then you contemplate just why are those sentences the most important sentences for you. I think that's also an interesting practice, and see how those sentences relate to the composition of your life. When your whole life is a composition and everything that happens in your life is there for a reason like it's part of the composition of your life and your current life's setup, how do the sentences relate to that setup? That's, I think, a very interesting practice as well.

So as we deepen our exploration into the fear of death and, of course, also the reverberations that death often is connected to suffering, and the process of death. I will speak next time a little bit more about... because there are many questions coming in about death being connected to suffering and pain and, maybe, disease, so we will talk about this more next time and we will also talk about the projection of suffering onto death that is actually an effect of the karma that we created as humanity, and we still carry with us and we project it onto that moment—so what's the difference between the two.

Q&A: Integrating Our Experience of Death to Bring Energy into Life

Participant 1: Hi, Thomas.

Thomas: Hey, good to see you.

Participant 1: Hi. I haven't seen you in a while. Good to see you. So my heart is beating fast because I raised my hand and I'm going to speak with you but, other than that, I'm feeling quite calm, actually. So my question is really around the experience that I've been having just over this course and the last month, and then today, and hoping that it allows for more teaching around the subject—which you already always do so beautiful, anyway.

So, in this meditation that we just did, I went into my body and I got—the left ovary area is where I went. I experienced something which I had experienced a number of times, which is... it was about three years old, I felt into that energy. What it does is it goes into the past, like before I entered my body, and it's like there's a gap between my life now and before I even incarnated.

So over the last month, I've been doing the meditation that you offered in the last class pretty consistently, every day, about the blueprint, really wanting to notice that moment, and I would just keep going back to that three-year-old time, and then I would go to a place before I incarnated, like I just couldn't touch that place.

[01:20:00]

Then, a couple of weeks ago, in a diad with one of my mates, it just opened up, just something about the connection with her, it really opened, and I felt this connection to before I incarnated and that I didn't want to come, like I wasn't ready. So there's all these energies connecting to pre-incarnation, but somehow in that time with her, something opened up and then, in my further meditations over the next days after that, I did tune into the—more the birth time.

Actually, there was joy there. I had moments of feeling of being wanted and it was joyful there. So the question is really around what is... I mean, it's a personal question, really, about my own process, there is that element of it, but it's also around what's happening with that. What is this pull to the past of pre-incarnation and not exactly being ready or wanting to be here? When I tune into that, I feel warmth, I feel loved, I feel like, maybe, my soul essence is in this incarnated place, and I'd love for it to be here.

I also want to say, just as far as death, I mentioned this to you before, but my parents died in a car accident, I had cancer, and I've had experiences in meeting death. I'm more at peace with death, really, than life, in a way, like those veils of death and the fear of death—I've had experiences with it where it's kind of okay. Dying, perhaps, is a problem, but death itself—I think it's okay. So I'll stop there for now.

Thomas: Multiple things that come to me while I listen to you. One is, as you said, if in the inner process work we meet, like you said multiple times, you tried to tune in, and then it wasn't possible or you switched, and then it wasn't possible, and suddenly it opened. So also the moments when we do inner work, and it seems like one step doesn't work, that there's a beauty in the acceptance of it not working. That if it's not working, *something* is working.

Participant 1: I'm becoming more at peace with that. I love that about your work, that you're different. That's very soft for me. I enjoy that.

Thomas: So that's one thing. I want just to highlight that as a process—not just for you but, from what you said, that sometimes we try to and we want to go here, but actually it doesn't go there, and that there's a beauty in that seeming resistance or whatever that block is, that there's an intelligence in those things. That's why, also, when people say, "Oh, for me, it's hard to remember something from other lives," so before—if it doesn't come naturally, it has a good reason. Also in the whole other life experiences that come in or not come in—because for some people, it seems to be very easy. For some people, it feels like I'm not aware of anything before or after.

So I'm taking this just from your sharing for all of us that we see, okay, if that's easy, it's great. If it's not easy, it's also great, because then we honor the fact that it has to be that way in this moment—because sometimes people put in a pressure on their process, "Oh, something is not working," instead of honoring what *is* working that it seems to be not working.

[01:25:00]

The other thing is—so when you said that 'I wasn't ready', what comes up in me when I listen to that is that maybe there is that kind of perception or experience which, in my understanding, doesn't necessarily mean that life wasn't ready. So there's that feeling—and that's also a great transition, also, to when we talk about what they talk in the Tibetan Book of Living and Dying or in other traditions when we speak about the time after death and the whole planes that the energy-

Participant 1: Bardo.

Thomas: Yeah, that travel through the bardo. So if we see that there are all kinds of perceptions, maybe also when we do meditations, that come up, but that we stay as sober, as clean as possible in interpreting it. I don't know if that means that you weren't ready to come, but often when energies incarnate, they coat themselves in all kinds of karmic fabrics that they take on when the energy comes into the physical body.

So if we see, "Ah! There was obviously a certain interference or there was a certain energy that felt that way," but that doesn't necessarily say anything about you being ready or not being ready to come here as a soul or as an incarnation. So I would let go of that interpretation and see that, okay, that's the feeling that arises in me, and that feeling is part of the fabric of that astral coloring.

What it means—I'm not so sure about the interpretation—but the feeling, maybe, is there, and that by staying with the feeling, it clears that feeling by staying present with it and it allows your presence to transcend it and to make you even more present. So you transcended parts of that astral fabric, and it turns into presence. So that's, I think, important.

Then you said another thing, with the death, you said that your parents died in a car accident, that's what you said.

Participant 1: My parents died in a car accident together, and about five days after that, after the shock of the event, I basically asked the universe, "Okay, where are you guys?" I had a whole experience of them, their essence coming to me in a light experience, and it was beautiful, actually. So when I say the veils are thinner, I just had an experience that gave me a lot of warmth and comprehension around that. Some people said I was in shock and I was making things up, but it was very, very real to me. I mean, I could tell you more of the story, but it...

Thomas: Maybe, sometimes those things go hand-in-hand. We can be in shock and we can also have certain experiences where it's not necessarily that we are making them up, but that there was a certain quality of shock—I would leave this possibility open, that it was also true.

Participant 1: Ten years later, in my own experience with cancer myself, I had to ask myself the question, "Okay. If I don't make it, how do I feel about that?" I just had this sense of space and expansion into my own essence," and it's like, "Oh, there's something that some aspect of me will be okay." So those two together have been touch points of my direct experience with a death situation, and they've both been positive and warm and expansive.

Thomas: Is there any question left that you feel that you wanted to ask?

Participant 1: Well, it's more around the bypass and then the fear of life. It's not so much fear of death. It's actually, "Okay. So what's keeping me from living and fully incarnating?" It loops back to that not readiness of—my situations are more around embodiment and being in the world. I mean, I'm just in the process with that.

[01:30:00]

Thomas: Right. So the question is?

Participant 1: The question is... You know, what comes to me, the essence—in a sense, the question is: what is the question? What is the question that... I mean, I don't mean to be loopy about that, but that's been an ongoing thing. What is the question that gets me more here? I mean, I'm in a process. I'm okay with where I am in the process.

Thomas: So, at least what is my experience in listening, I asked this question out of a reason, because sometimes, when we need to get clear about what is the question that we have, so I heard a little bit that the question is about how can you bring your whole energy into life. So that's what I heard. By refining, "Okay, what does this question really mean?" we can see how we... because we need to tune in deeper in order to clarify our questions.

My sense is that when... That's my sense, maybe, to look at with somebody, when I listen to you. My sense is when you, for example, speak about the car accident of your parents or even about your own physical illness that I would immediately look at the residue of those two situations, for example. So my sense is that that there was a shock. When I listen to you, I felt a quality of shock when I listened to you, which doesn't disregard the experiences that you had, so this might be equally true, but my sense is there was an impact in your system that is not yet digested. So that's definitely, for me, still resonant in your system.

So I think in looking at that and working on that deeper with somebody, my sense is this is one way, that's the way that I would choose now, by what I heard from you, to go deeper into life and say, "Let's have a look how that shock and that experience is still living in your body, for example, and how it's still trying to process itself."

I think that would be, for me, a way to go deeper into you in life, and I think that's one archeological layer, but I would start with it and then see what that sits on, but I think that would be for me to path into your life.

Participant 1: Yes. As soon as you said that, I just felt sadness in myself. Thank you, Thomas.

Thomas: Thank you so much.

Q&A: Working with Childhood Trauma that Manifested in the Body

Participant 2: Hi, Thomas.

Thomas: Hello.

Participant 2: My question is about the tremor that started to appear in me. I was in my 30s. I think, 33. It's a time where I decided to end up the relationship with my husband. I think, the tremors showed up a little bit when I was in the process of this divorce. I still have the tremor, and the tremor will show up—now, it's been 20ish years—and the tremor will show up more when I'm nervous, I have something to do where I feel more nervous, and I've been working a lot with meditation, yoga, or some kind of alternative medicine. I didn't want to go into the medicine, what they were offering in terms of chemical medication or injection of Botox. I just didn't want to do that. So I'm looking for guidance in terms of where should I be working on it from—when I was in the 30s, or should I look when I was younger or?

[01:35:00]

Thomas: Yes, I think that in your case, I don't think that meditation is the right tool to look at it, also not yoga. You can do this, this is anyway great for your life in general, but that's not a tool, I think it's not a tool that I would choose to look at the tremor, because my sense is immediately, when I see you speaking about it, immediately it pulls me into you when you were almost, I don't know, when you were very young, a year old, very, very young.

Then my sense is that the breakup in your relation with your husband triggered a very early process in you that is trying to resolve itself. So I think, in order to work on it, I would immediately, if I had now more time for and, maybe, a series of sessions with you, I would immediately go to that earlier place and look at what got triggered or set off that was very disturbing at that time. It had nothing to do with you as a 30-something year old woman, but it triggered a much earlier place.

Also, when I look at you now, I can totally feel, with the activation that it triggered in that early place, my sense is that, in the moment, that's being seen and held. That's why I think it's not—meditation is something that you do with yourself, but the fast track to the resolution, I believe, is that you feel held by somebody else. Because of it being so early, it's something that you cannot give to yourself. You can sit many hours in meditation and, my sense, it's not going to resolve, because what I feel immediately is what's needed is a very early holding, so that a very existential scared place, existentially scared place is held in a safe place, that everything is going to be safe, everything's going to be good. I think, that's where I would go.

For that, it needs somebody with you, that the energy of that person can radiate that holding that is actually an early attachment or bonding energy, that you can feel safe. I think, then, slowly, slowly, I believe, the nervous system would relax back and digest, like that the breakup just triggered a much deeper layer.

In my sense, that's why it's going to be hard for you, because the consciousness, the conscious awareness that you have of that age is limited—because it's so early. Like, most of the people hardly remember when they were one. So it's hard for us to go there even in ourselves. That's why I suggest you have a skilled person with you and you take some sessions where you can look: what was the stress of that breakup, which most probably was a strong stress moment in your life, what that set off in a much deeper part of you, so what it pushed or pressed on.

[01:40:00]

I would go there because, for me, this feels like a very young energy that tries to speak, but it doesn't have a voice yet to speak—other than the body. It voices something in the body that doesn't have a voice yet to speak. That's why it comes out through the body, but it's a very young place that, through an appropriate holding, I think, can be heard. In that age, the body communication is very important. When the body of a young child and the body of the mother or the father connect through physical contact and they melt, like there's a warmth and an exchange, then both nervous systems can relax into safety, that life is going to be safe, life is safe. That quality, I think, is important.

So tell me, when I talk about it, what's happening in you?

Participant 2: I felt moved. I feel moved. When you spoke of a very young age, I felt emotionally touched. I'm trying to breathe through it. I'm breathing through it, being with it, and it reminds me: I've been told—I don't remember that, I was too young—but I've been told that I almost died in my crib, and my parents rushed me to the hospital. When we arrived there, I was okay, I was breathing, but I was really pale—I don't know if I was blue or pale or what—but I just remembered the story of that. I don't know how old I was. My parents passed away and I cannot ask them, but I remembered the story of them. In my imagination, I was very young because I was in a crib, but I was the fourth one of five children. My mother was, I can imagine, she was very busy with children, one after the other—we were close.

And there's the story of my parents. They were having, often, arguments, and the household was very moody. This is my interpretation and my imagination, but yes, when you referred to this place of safe, this is something, I can see that this is something that is often triggered in me where I don't feel safe.

Thomas: Right. I'm pretty sure, if you're going to look at it, I think, just right now, it also created some intimacy here, between us. You felt the emotional vulnerability that comes. I think, that's the right direction to go into. I'm sure, if you find somebody in your environment that, because I hear that you're anyway very much on the path of your own inner exploration, if you find somebody that is attuned to you and can help you to go to that early place and, maybe, skilled also in some trauma work, you'll see: I think that this can be resolved. That energy can be integrated. I'm pretty sure. I don't think ... Yeah, I'm pretty sure that you can integrate that. That's why I think what we started now, if that would be able to continue more, see if, slowly, slowly, your nervous system will get, again, impulses of safety and security, and maybe also that experience that you said, as you said, I think that's also connected to it in your early childhood, that you can't remember.

That's why it's also hard for you on your own to go there, because it's hard to grasp because it's not easy to reach. With somebody else that can mirror you and has a good sense of those early levels—I would find somebody like that.

Participant 2: My challenge is to find the right person.

Thomas: Yeah, but I'm sure if you really want to, there will be a way. If you set that intention inside, "Okay. My path of awakening needs that now, and I'll find the right person," you'll see, it's going to come to you.

Participant 2: Yeah, absolutely. I believe that, too.

Thomas: Very good.

Participant 2: Thank you so much.

Thomas: Thank you.

Q&A: Trusting the Divine If We Are Not Conscious in the Moment of Death

- Host: Thomas, this question comes from participant 3, and I really want to honor her by reading the whole question, even though I know we're close to time. This is what she wrote. "After the grace of a non-dual realm has opened up to me while walking a Buddhist path and having integrated most of my traumas after working on this for the last two decades, I am looking back on my life with gratitude. The love for all beings fills me with awe. I'm now in the process of dying because of cancer. I am at peace with going home, so to speak, but I am still attached to the fear of leaving my body confused, because of the prospective metastatic growth in frontal brain region. I'm clinging to the desire to exit through the top of my head into the light consciously."*
- Her question to you is, "What happens when passing without awareness? Do I need to surrender into allowing life and death to unfold on its own terms?" She also wrote, Thomas, just to thank you for the preciousness and precision of your teaching, so I'll share that as well.*
- Thomas:** That's very touching. First of all, there's a difference between awareness and the part of us that tries to stay in control and calls it awareness. So what I'm saying by that is, we might have the feeling, "Oh, in my death process, I need to do the right thing," and that already creates a pressure inside to get it right. So that's already a tension.
- When we look, even if—because there are more questions that come in, so how is it with dementia and how is it when I'm not able to be in full clarity in my death process out of health reasons or so on—I think that what we explore here, and that's why I'm very happy for the question, is the deepest aspect of the human journey is that we come to a place where we trust life, that life has an intelligence on its own that is bigger than what I can make happen.
- So I'll put myself into service of the greater life. I will do anything that is possible for me to be the most open, the most loving, the most compassionate, clear, present vessel I can—and ultimately, I bow down. The reason why I say this is, once a prayer came to me in the Himalaya retreat that I will say now because I think it's a great metaphor for our spiritual journey, and the prayer is like that:

*In the stillness of my heart, I am
In the silence of my heart, I hear Thy name
In the beauty of the world, I see Your face
I'm grateful for what has been shown to me
And I'm grateful for what stays hidden, because this is Thy will
And that's why I'm here
Now and forever, Amen.*

[01:50:00]

There are many things that I can relate now to in this prayer, but I want to refer to the part that says, "...and I'm grateful for what I have seen or what has been shown to me, and I'm equally grateful for what stays hidden, because this is thy will, and that's why I'm here." So, in the ultimate spiritual practice, it's that if God's my first priority, the highest practice is to bow down. What it means is that whatever I can do out of my practice, the highest practice is to bow down.

That also means if I live my life in a life of service, in a life of giving, in a life of compassion, in a life of looking at my shadows, in a life of doing whatever I can contribute to walk my path, the highest practice is to bow down in front of that which is greater than I am. Interestingly enough, in the meditation that we had today we said, when we relax, we are being recharged and we regenerate our body. When we relax, we also get a sense, in the expansion into that spaciousness, we get a sense of everything being interconnected, and that the intelligence of everything is the charger for our own individual battery.

So therefore, whatever we can do in life is adding to our vibrational state, is adding to the consciousness that we radiate—as long as we are in life. Even if for some people, through bodily disabilities or illness, in the moment of death and dying we are not in the full clarity of our minds and how we process our life, the highest practice is the grace. I think, that's super important, because otherwise I'm grateful for what I see and I am grateful for what stays hidden means that my ego doesn't take on the controller seat of life. If this is the way it is, then this is the way it is.

There is a lot of love and humility that there's a dimension of life that I can just bow down to and receive. With other words, if we go through the process of death and dying, the consciousness that is bigger than my body is a consciousness that is there anyway. Even if it looks like some people, in their physical dimension, are not able to perform certain functions anymore, that doesn't mean that the consciousness is lost—that is bigger than the body. That's very important. So that there can be peace and there is, in some situations, there's just the bowing and saying, "Okay. That's the way it is." I cannot hold or grasp or do it.

That's very important, and that's why I'm happy that you're bringing up this question because I think, when we practice certain things, that we always know that the surrender to the highest intelligence is the highest practice. So we can practice all our life, and I'm very much advocating a deep spiritual practice and devoting not adding a practice to your life, but *adding your life to a practice*—so that's different.

[01:55:00]

I'm for professional mysticism, but the most professional mysticism is that which bows down in us to the dimension of the Divine, of God, of the ultimate presence, or whichever name we want to give, and that there's always something higher than me. If I keep that hierarchy, that hierarchy is very important because it shows me the outskirts of my ego structure that want to take on the spiritual path as their new achievement. So, if that hierarchy is clear, then my spiritual journey will not become an achievement but is the melting and the surrendering into that which is greater than I am.