



Walking Forever: Mystical Principles 4

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Thomas: Welcome, everybody. Yeah, I think we are, in a way, taking a lovely journey together, through the mystical principles, applied specifically on certain topics, but we are going to be on a journey together. I think, the courses that we did so far, all the “Mystical Principles” courses, and also our other courses, are basically kind of sangha events, also. They are teachings, like today, but there is a lot of very rich and interesting conversation going on in between the students, in the mentoring groups. Really, to use the practices that I’m going to offer, those questions that I’m going to ask you to contemplate, and the whole sangha as a resource, as a we-space to explore whatever we are going to explore throughout the course.

The second thing that Amy mentioned is that we are a practice community. Mystical teachings are not about knowledge. They *are* about knowledge, *but* they are about applied, active, energetically active knowledge that, most probably, is only going to make sense through the practice. The seeds of the teaching can then really flower inside and show us spaces, dimensions of our own consciousness—or of consciousness as such— that are often beyond our reach. Through the practice, we together develop an instrument to see. If you remember, or if you have already looked at some of the material that we suggested to look at for this course, if this is your first “Mystical Principles” course—it’s that the mystical principles, or the core teachings also say that we are de-identifying, through the spiritual practice, ourselves with ourselves.

So we actually become, in a way, a stranger within ourselves, but not a disassociated stranger—like a stranger, “I feel strange,” or as a stranger because I’m traumatized or disassociated, and that’s why I don’t *feel* connected—there’s another way of practicing becoming a stranger in one’s self, which means that I examine, I look, I contemplate, I listen to life within my experience around myself. There’s a witnessing quality, like there’s a growing space.

As Amy already mentioned, I want to bring in some of the key principles today—for people who have been on the course before, and for everybody who joins in now—that I’ll bring in some of the key principles that I think I will refer back again and again throughout the course because those are, first of all, first timeless wisdom principles, but those are principles that we will need in order to really deepen our mystical understanding of aging, death, dying, the higher law, the sacredness of life, and karma, the reincarnation process. All of it, I think, also needs some knowledge, knowledge as a base for practice, kind of a map or kind of a landscape, so to speak.

In every course session here we will have, like now, at the beginning a bit of a theoretical exploration, and then we will always also have some practical journeying. So, we will go on guided meditations together.

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Then we will, maybe, continue with the theory. Then we will have some time for questions and answers in every course session, so that we also get some time together to explore your specific questions. Of course, you can write them to us. The ones that we cannot engage with throughout the course sessions, I will read and I will bring into—either I will explicitly relate to it, or I will bring many of the questions, and the underlying questions into the teaching process, so they will kind of inform, also, the teaching sessions.

Core Principles: Space, Energy, and Structure

One of the core principles that we work with is the correlation between space, energy, and structure. As we are sitting here right now, we are structure. We are a structured body, condensed liquid of life, thousands, and thousands, and thousands of years of human evolution, or the evolution of life, sitting here in all of us around the world, as we heard, and sharing a global world space. I mean, the fact that my neurons and your neurons, my body and your body, and the technology in between us enables us to have this conversation, or this teaching session right now, is amazing. But if you told somebody even a 100 years ago that we were going to have this livestream session with video transmission, and we can see each other and talk with each other on video—maybe it was some science fiction writer, and he maybe would understand us, but basically people would look at you and say, “A bit strange.” So now we are sitting here, so the fact that we are sitting here means that there was space, contemplative space, space to receive the new.

In the meditation, when we sit together and we recognize that there's an inner expansion, there's suddenly more inner spaciousness, my brain goes into a different brain wave capacity, the contours of my body start loosening up, so my sense of self becomes more spacious—all of it, and also just the fact that I can listen; in the listening, there is spaciousness. When I listen to you as you speak, or you listen to me as I speak, the deepest part in me that listens is space. So the dimension of space, stillness, presence, emptiness, as we go along with the meditation practice, this is a very important aspect of the spiritual realization. So, space is deepening, and it starts with mindfulness when we develop inner spaciousness, then we develop what we call in our courses magnetic presence, like a deep, deep presence, or even the expansion of space, in a way, changes into a deep, deep is-ness here that is timeless, ever-present. Then, maybe, it reaches even an absorption into emptiness itself.

Those are four levels of stillness that are part of our meditative journey, and some people pop in and out of those states, some people gradually deepen their contemplation, meditation, and prayer practice until they establish a sense of space. Space, as we said, equals also our capacity to witness. As space, I can witness my body's sensations that I'm having right now, I can witness my emotional flavors, I can witness my mental activity, I can witness the room that I'm sitting in, the camera that I'm looking at—so I have the capacity to witness. And witnessing is, again, listening. I listen, but I actively listen. I listen with awareness. It's kind of an open space of listening.

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So that's the basis, the very simple basis of meditation. Meditation is listening with awareness—moment, to moment, to moment, to moment. We call this course “Walking Forever”. At the beginning of the course, I will say that walking forever has nothing to do with time. This sentence that I said right now is something that we're going to explore, because what does it mean ‘walking forever’? Seems, oh, I am walking for a long time, maybe. I'm walking forever. Walking forever, in the mystical sense, has nothing to do with time. It has something to do with our priority. It has something to do with the intensity of consciousness.

Space gives us a dimension of realization that more and more takes us into the timeless dimension of life—whereas energy is movement. Energy is the movement of the universe, the cosmos unfolding. It's—when you look into the universe, basically, everything's moving. Everything that we look at is moving inside of us: when I look at the thought, usually thoughts are moving. They might come back again, and again, and again, but they're moving. When I feel emotions, they're moving. When I look at my body, it's moving, it's changing, I have different perceptions. And when I look at the world, the world is moving.

Nowadays, the world is moving very fast, and it creates lots of tensions in the global sphere—if we are not staying within the movement, there's a tension. The faster the world develops, the stronger we feel the tension if we actually stay entangled in our old habits and in the past. That's why the world seems more and more polarized—because, on the one hand, energy is moving faster, the very technology that connects us right now moves very fast, and is going to move even faster, and the human nervous system, the human body, the habits in our psychology, in our biology, they either move accordingly, or we kind of create tension.

So, energy and structure are very important. They are very important for our development, but they are also very important as an interplay. So that my body is, for example, a home for my experience, but in the death process that home—or the aging process—there's a change in that home. That's why I want to build, throughout the course, the basic—what I call the applied mystical knowledge, so that we have thousands and thousands of years of mystics exploring life through the mystical experiment, so to speak, and it created what I call kind of an inner science.

We can come back to the inner science, as long as we know that the inner science—and the descriptions of life, and the contemplative realizations, and the breakthroughs in consciousness, and that people suddenly had access to amazing understanding—that that's all true, and it left reports and knowledge that we can study, but always knowing that what we study is one way to look at it. That's what I would love to bring in right at the beginning. When I make drawings, or when we make charts, or when I bring in principles—to hold those principles as principles of life, and to give them the factor X, that there is always a factor where we don't know.

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Keeping the Circle Open

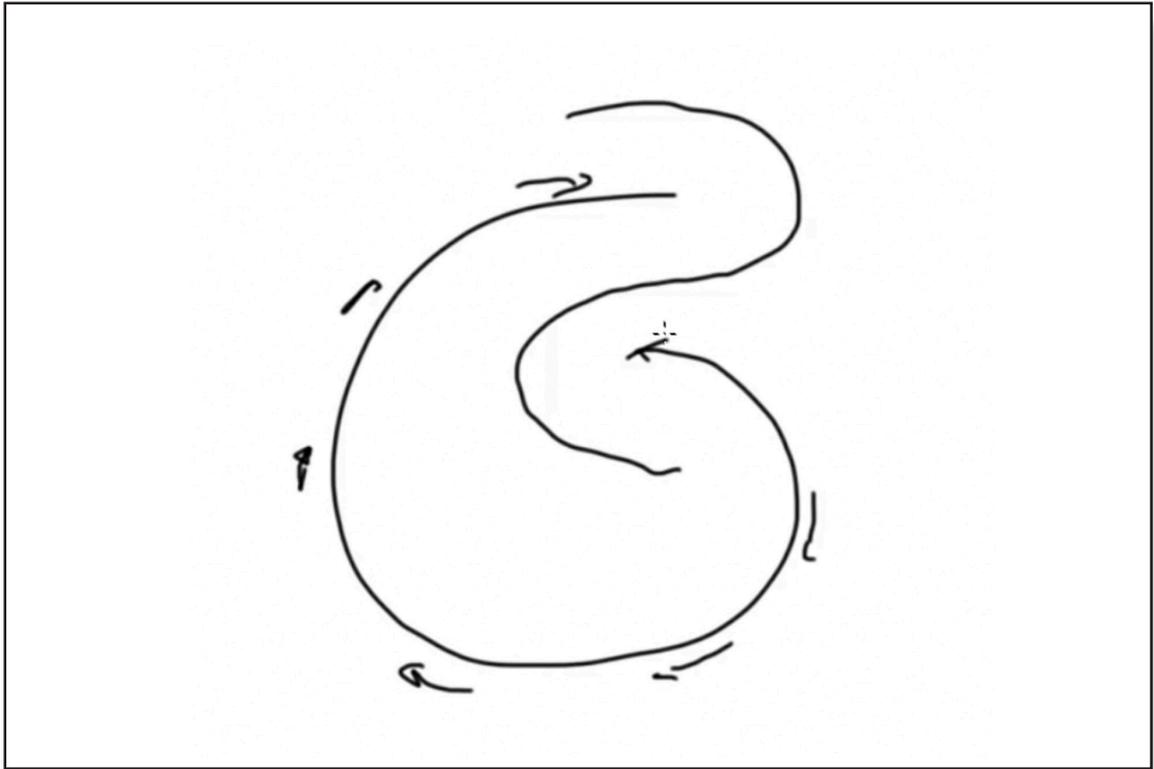
It starts, maybe—I will show you my drawing pad—the basic mystical principle that we started with in course number one is a circle that is open. I made the opening now a bit bigger to see—because when you watch yourself, hopefully, throughout the course, you are breathing—and hopefully I'll also keep breathing throughout this course—so there is an inhale, then there is a break, then there is an exhale, there's a break. Then, hopefully, I'm inhaling again, and there's a break. There's an exhaling and a break, and so on. So the inhaling, the exhaling, like receiving and giving—receiving, the beauty in receiving, the beauty that we need things in life, the beauty that we ask for things in life.

For some people, asking for things and needing things in life is difficult. We might feel inferior, or we might feel ashamed. We might feel afraid to ask for help, to ask for our needs being met in the world. So, if that's something that I've learned to be a beautiful and appreciated experience, so I will have no problem doing it, but for many people, when they were too much in the family system, they got the feeling that it's kind of annoying, so we took that function back. But then the inhale is that the air comes to us. The exhale is that we are giving. So when we receive, we give—we are creative, we participate in the world. We are part of a co-creative architecture in life.

The circle is open because when I inhale, it's silence, when I exhale, there's a silence. I inhale, there's a silence, and I exhale, and there is a silence. So, many spiritual practices actually work with that moment of silence. That's where life is intelligent. That's where the outside of the circle and the inside of the circle are not-two, they are space. There is space within me, within my experience—when I look at the deepest place that's listening and looking, I'm space. And when I look outside, I see things, I feel things, and there is also space.

So, there is a system, when it's open—and that's important for the aging process, what I'm saying now, because we are somewhere, in our evolution, we are somewhere on our journey on this circle. That's our life energy. That's the moment of our birth, and then life wants to move through us. We wake every morning again, and there is a drive of life energy that is chi. There is emotional energy, mental energy, so we are in a movement. At the same time, there is space. So, there is space, energy, and structure.

As I said, my body is a kind of a pipe system for my life energy. It's a pipe system for my emotions, for the hormones, the emotions. It's a pipe system for my mental activity—my brain, the neural network, my nervous system. And my body is animated substance. It's the planet being alive—the water, the carbon, and so on, of the planet, animated.



Drawing 1

We Are the Union of the Past and the Future

In other words, we can say that we are—and that's another of the principles that we are working with a lot—a human being is downward movement and an upward movement. So, there is spirit coming in, and there is the past, substance, moving up—and within that, it's us. So we are actually constantly receiving creativity. Here is the future [*writes "Future" at the top*], and we are coming from the past [*writes "Past" at the bottom*]. We are the lovemaking of both. That's us [*draws a cross with an open center*].

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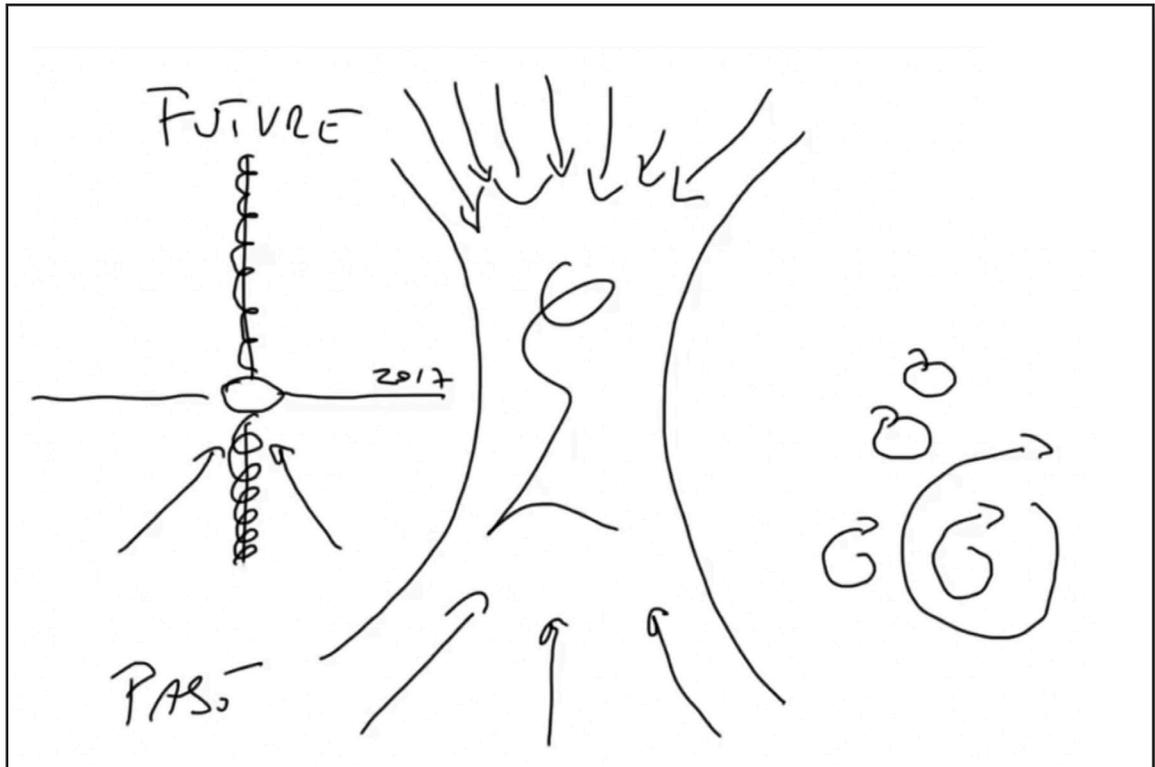
We say the future is not necessarily tomorrow. That's why walking forever doesn't continue tomorrow. It might be, but that's not the main thing. A future is the higher consciousness development that we are part of already. The fact that we are alive means that the future incarnated as a drop of intelligence through us. Every one of us is kind of a mix out of past—we carry the cellular development of life, we carry the emotional development of life, none of us invented anger, or fear, or shame. It was there before us, and it will be there, most probably, after we leave. So, it's embedded in a huge river.

We participate in many functions that are past functions. Structures of consciousness that emerged already—but we are bringing in a potential update. There's kind of a drop of intelligence and light that comes with us. That's how the next generation wants to bring in a new update into the former generation. That's what we call evolution. That's what we call creative flow. That's what we call how life is updating itself. Life is continuously updating its own past into a new, potentially new future. So, either we have repetitive patterns in our life, or we have a new future. It goes onto a higher plane, and the higher plane goes onto a higher plane. The higher plane goes onto a higher plane.

All of it is very interesting for us because that's the basic knowledge, I believe, that the past—we carry the past in us, past tendencies, and there's a conscious past and there is an unconscious past, and then there's a potential future coming. And there's our horizontal 2017, that's our relation to the world. So we are, basically, part of that cross, and in the center is our heart.

Knowing this, that we are actually substance, structure, we are spirit, light, future, innovation, energy, and we are the continuous creative tension, so to speak, between the past and the future. The future wants to move on, and the past has a weight. My body has a weight.

The structure in my life has a weight. If you create a corporation, it has a weight. If you create a project, it has a weight. It's not just an idea—it's alive, it's in the world, it's co-creating the world, it comes with all the dynamics that it comes with—it has a weight. So, once a drop of the future becomes manifest through us, it gets implemented in the body of life. The light gets implemented in the body of life.



Drawing 2

Which means, when we talk about—for example, if you talked some hundreds of years ago with somebody about going to the cinema, people would look at you strange, in the best case. Today it's so built in, most probably, all of us, that going to the movies, seeing a movie is something that we all know. But it's something that has been implemented as the first idea, the first thought, feeling, excitement to create that project at a certain time. For me, it's important that we define in this course—because it's very important for our exploration later—what is the past, what is the karma past, the karmic past, the past that still tries to resolve itself, and what is the future, and how we are kind of lovemaking of the past and the future, not just in the moment of our conception, but throughout our whole life.

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We are coming from somewhere—generations, ancestral lines. We are being created. There's a will that drives us today. And there is a future—we want things, we desire things, we have a deep motivation. We want to contribute to life. So, the future wants to become real through us. With other words, we can say that the realm of the Divine, the realm of God is something that we can only realize through realization—even in the deepest practice, the enlightenment moment is realization that takes place. And then it's not that we are *looking* at our realization—the realization *is*.

So, the Divine is something that's kind of is, in those moments, and it's also the creation process how, from nothing, something arises, so the creative process of the universe, the cosmos. The realm of the human being is the translation of energy. Once there's a creative process, energy gets born. Energy is movement and information, the movement of information. So energy is moving, we receive inspiration. When we are inspired, or when great genius people in the world have been inspired, there was a moment of receiving information, light, intelligence—and then writing the theory of relativity, dealing or composing a masterpiece of music, or establishing an organization in the world that supports hundreds of thousands of people is the manifestation. The manifestation is through work. It's our inner and outer work. So, we receive, and we act. That's why we drew a cross before: because we receive, it lands in us, it mixes in ourselves, often, with our past and then, through receiving and giving, we co-create a world as humanity.

This means that space, and energy, and structure are three of the important principles that are alive right now in all of us, like the deepest away consciousness is sitting here in all of us right now, and there's nothing that separates us from it. What might be is that my whole attention is with the energy and the structure, with movement, the movement inside, outside, with perceptions, and with the structure—me and my body, me and my life, me and my house, me and the studio.

There is timelessness and space, ever-present witnessing, fully present right now, in all of us. There is energy—and energy is not accessible right away to all of us. For energy, we need an instrument. That's why, in front of the Divine and God, we can only bow down and receive the blessing. We can learn a lot about energy and how energy becomes structure—that's the realm of the human being, that's the realm of the mastery of energy, healing. And we will look, throughout this course, at aging—it's an energetic and structural process. We will look at the death process where we exit life, through which energetic or vibrational system we exit life, and how the after-process is designed. We will look at higher ethics and the laws, the organizing principle of life. So, in all the explorations, we will use space, energy, and structure as three familiar friends that are sitting here, composing our experience right now. It might seem a bit theoretical at the beginning, but actually it's very simple: there's witnessing right now in all of us, there's aliveness, life energy, drive, movement in all of us, and there is structure, crystallized structure—the body, connections in the brain and in the body, hormone system, many things in place outside our lives, how we work, how we move through life.

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The mystics are the ones that explore the composition of that life through inner science, through contemplation, through prayer, through meditation, through inner exploration, outer exploration. A kind of empiric research of how the composition of life works, and how we can increase our instrument, like our perception and our awareness of energy, to see and feel and experience a more profound universe, a bigger universe. So, same as energy, like a space, an ever-present witnessing awareness, an ever-present emptiness is here, in all of us, right now. The same way there is a practice to develop our tool to awaken, and to see and feel more reality. That's where a lot of the spiritual and mystical practice comes in.

In order to not have too long chunks of theory, I would love to take you now onto a contemplative journey. We will see that every module, we will design a journey that, of course, fits to the teaching, and that we develop inner capacities to follow the teaching inside. Of course, I am an advocate of practice. I think, a spiritual journey shows itself in how we walk our talk, that really using the time that we have in between the sessions to engage in the practice, so that the course can become alive in us. I will give you every session a new suggestion to practice, then we have the weeks in between to do the practice, to explore, also maybe to send us questions. I'm happy to review them, and give some new suggestions, through the course sessions.

Begin Meditation

Well, so let's sit back and absorb a bit what we've heard. Some of it is not so new, some of it is foundational inner knowledge, but some of it might be new for you.

So, let's take time to sit and let the awareness drop into the body. As I said before, it starts simply through breathing. I can enjoy the simplicity of sitting and breathing. I can feel my body, dropping into my body as I turn my awareness inside.

I enjoy the inhaling. Break. And the exhaling. A short break. And the inhaling. Break. And the exhaling. A short break. Just keep sitting—inhaling, break, and exhaling, and the break—for a few more moments, seeing how the breath takes you deeper into your body awareness.

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Sitting, and also how the breaks in between the in- and the exhale are open space. They are moments of stillness, space.

And as you rest in the body and you refine your perception of the body, so more and more subtle flows and movements, perceptions, and a very rich field with information, more tense parts of the body, more open parts of the body, flow sensations.

When you feel your body, you're already listening to your body. There's a quality of listening in the attunement.

And then there's, of course, my emotional landscape. There's another level of listening to myself—it's my emotional status right now, and my life right now.

[00:40:00]

When I tune in with my emotional landscape, do I have immediate access to it? Do I feel disconnected from it?

Then also a mental landscape I can visit. I can experience the thought activity: many thoughts, little thoughts, no thoughts. I can also feel the openness of my mind, the tension in my mind. Sometimes the mind is more cloudy and circling in repetitive patterns. Sometimes the mind is very open, like crystal clear water. In my contemplation, I can even sense how, in my mind, I grasp thoughts or thinking, I wrap myself around the thought and think it, or the mind is very open and still, maybe thoughts are passing through.

Then, of course, there's perception of the environment, the room that I sit in, the temperature, noises, sounds, the atmosphere, all my external channels of perception.

So, everything we described is movement, perception, energy, also structure. At the same time, I'm listening to all of them. I'm witnessing my mind's activity, my body's activity, and so on. At the same time, there's listening, space, presence.

Let us let our awareness rest with the listening in the spaciousness for some time. The nature of listening is open space. In the listening, there's a stillness, space. For some moments, to still keep awareness just with the listening itself, awareness, stillness, to listen into the listening, get a taste of inner space.

Then, if you want to, as the last step, to get a sense of where you come from—like lines of the past, lines of life, through your ancestors, lead up to this moment in time. This moment in time is based upon many, many life experiences, where life learned everything that it donates to this moment. All the functions, capacities, thousands of years of life finding out, and the conscious aspect of it, then the unconscious aspect of it. Karma, carry-on baggage from the past that is still unresolved. The trauma of the past that is still unresolved. So the whole composition, plus a future that is shining into the offering of the past.

[00:50:00]

The future is calling us. It's sitting here with us all the time, higher versions of ourselves in life, in society, higher potentials. If the future is a higher potential of the now, the offering of the past and the calling of the future are meeting in our hearts. The capacity of the past and becoming are two forces that design our life. Part of us that wants to stay as we are, as it is, that creates habits and structures, and the part of us that continuously wants to become, to refresh, to move, to create, to invent, to find a new future—and the timelessness that embraces both.

Then, slowly, let's take a deeper breath, a couple of deeper breaths to feel the body, the feet on the ground. Then, slowly, come back.

End of Meditation

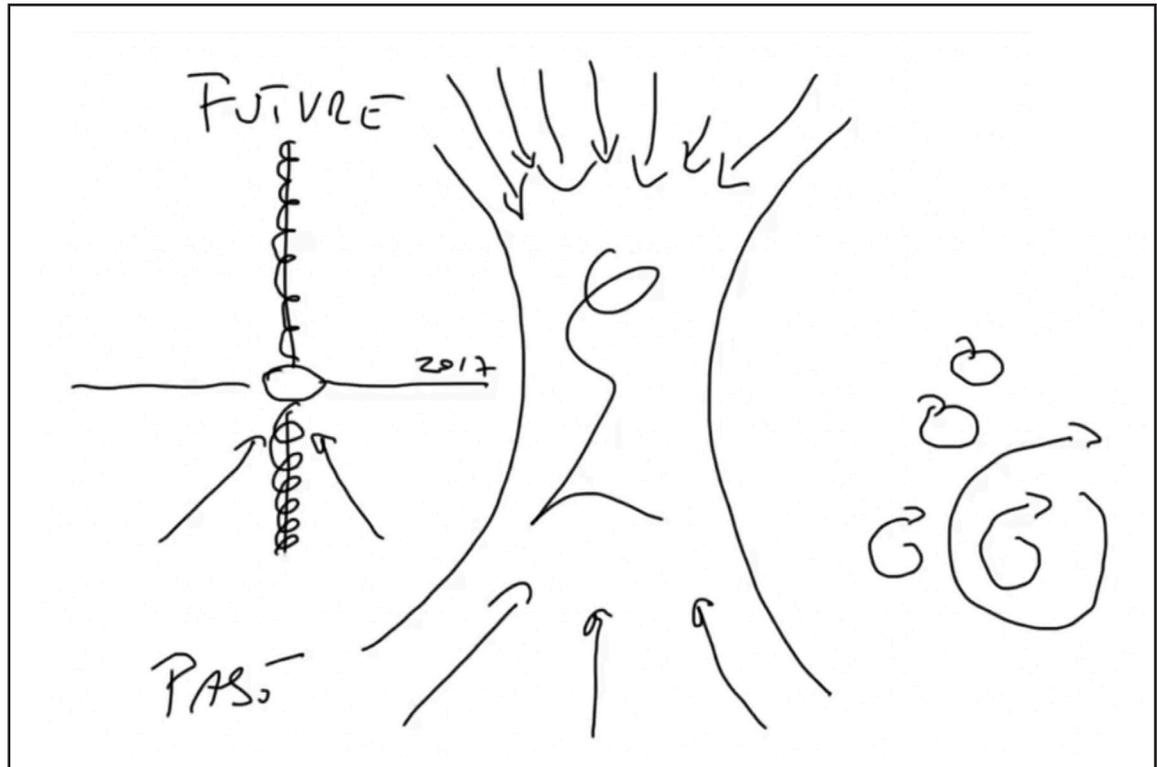
Well, so this was our journey into a deeper experience of what we talked about at the beginning. Like three aspects that, most probably, most of the spiritual practitioners will go through throughout their journey. So, we deepen the capacity to listen, space. We refine our capacity to feel, and to listen to something. So, space is open. It listens, and it just listens. Energy and feeling is more specific—I listen to my body, I listen to my emotions, I listen to you, to her, to him, to the world, to the universe. Then, as we said, structure, things become manifest.

[00:55:00]

Incarnation: The Mixing of Light and Karma

We heard, also, at the end of the meditation that there is this evolutionary tension in us of the part that continuously is curious, continuously wants to develop. Eros wants to go forward. Eros says, “Wow, where is the oxygen? Where is the fire? Where is something happening? How do I find out something new about life that I didn’t find out so far?” There’s this drive, the will of life to move. I think it’s very important for us to have time to listen to that will of life that’s moving. That movement is not bound to *our* life.

I will show something else here [*revisits Drawing 2*]. If you say that here you can still see the tree, the roots, and the crown of the tree, and the roots, just a few more details on the basics.



Drawing 2

So, we said that incarnation process—we have this drawing in many of our sessions—that light, spiritual light of a certain quality descends, goes through the karma, the past, structures of consciousness, and shadows of consciousness, and descends more and more. We as human beings are the result of the manifestation of that mix of light and karma.

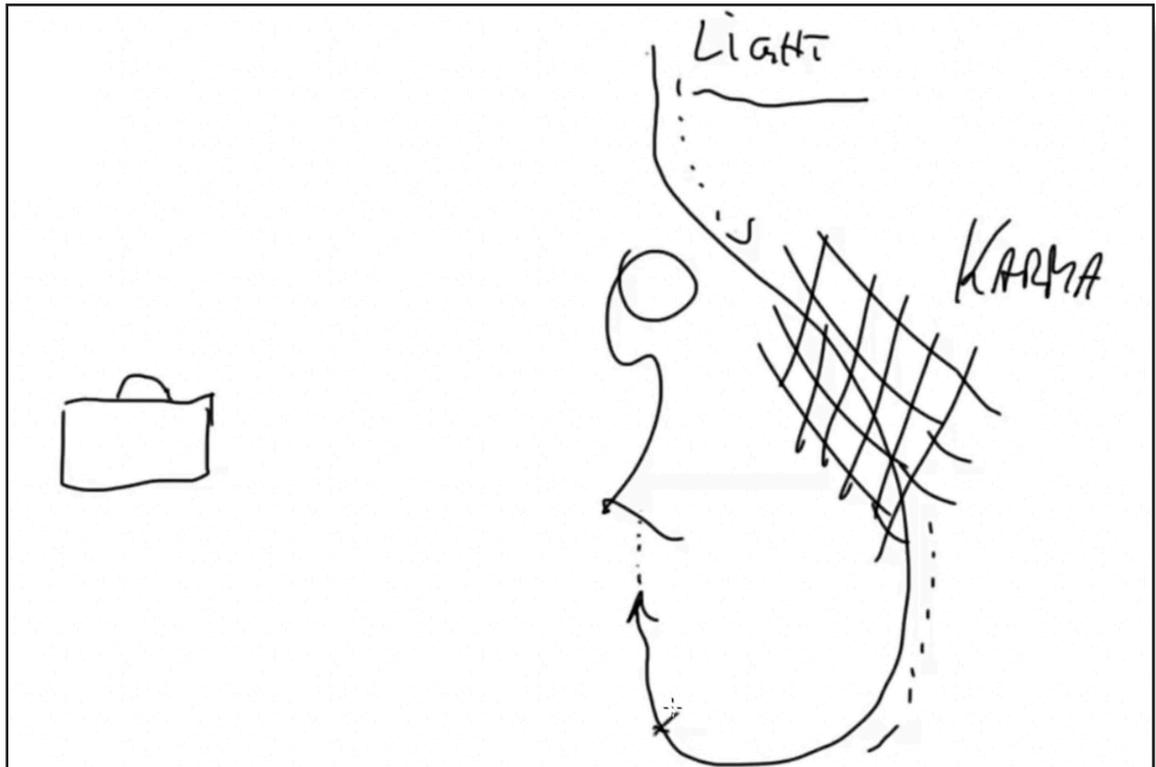
For everybody who is new, a very easy understanding of karma is the carry-on luggage. Everybody who uses planes very often, like myself, we take a carry-on luggage. The carry-on luggage is that you take your stuff with you. The flight attendant says, “Don’t leave your stuff on board. Take it with you. Be mindful of your stuff.” That’s what we do. We are mindful of our stuff. We don’t always know what stuff we carry, but we are mindful of it because it goes with us wherever we go. We know it. We leave one job because of the people we don’t like. We end up in a new job, and there are other people that we don’t like. We go into one relationship, and it’s difficult. We think, “Oh, if I just had another partner.” We go into another relationship, and often it turns out to be similar, at least. So we are mindful of our stuff. We listen to the flight attendant and we take that stuff to the next relation, to the next work, to the next incarnation.

That stuff is, in an easy example we could say, if we have an argument in one conversation, and then both of us sit for half an hour in separate spaces, and we think about the conversation before, and it troubles us, so for a half an hour we are busy with the past. That's karma. If that past is the holocaust or if that past is a genocide, or that past is a heavy past, so it keeps us busy for not only a half an hour, but for generations. So there is, as we see in the world, enough karma to be mindful of, and because we are ecological beings, even if it often doesn't look like it, life needs to take care of its own stuff, of its own carry-on baggage.

Every time a new generation incarnates, we incarnate into the gifts of the past, structures of consciousness that Plato thought about—what he thought about is something that we are carrying within us, if you're interested in it. Actually, what life already developed is a present, a gift, a donation to our life. The holocaust as well, so all the pain and all the atrocities, and all the difficulties that have been created are walking in us as well. That's often what we are busy with in our lives, in our shadow work, in our therapies, in our trauma therapies, in our collective trauma work.

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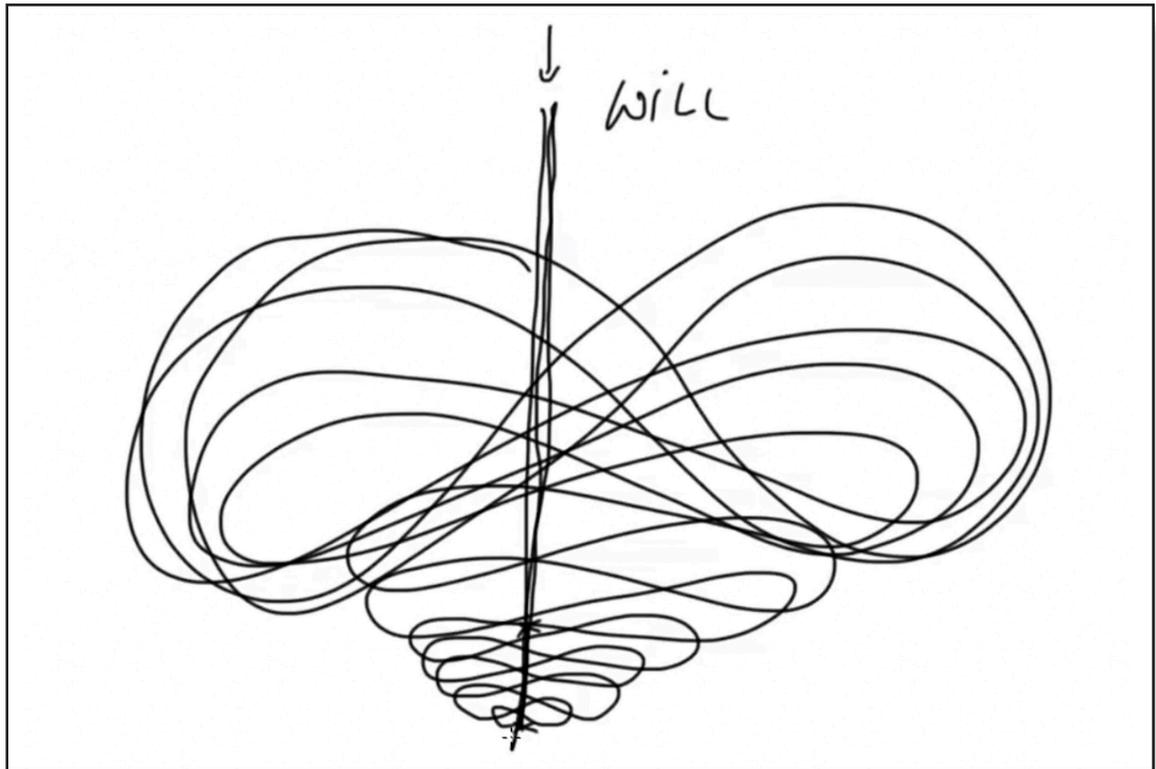
So, we carry the baggage, and because we have to clean up the room at the end of the day, that's what we do. So, in the incarnation process, from the moment of conception—here is our conception [*marks the line at the bottom of the screen*], and here is our birth [*adds a second mark to the line above the upward arrow*]*—from the moment of conception, there is this line* [*draws a vertical line above the arrow*].



Drawing 3a

Then—we can open another chart. Then this line is called our will. So there's the light coming in, the higher will. There's our will, from conception to birth, and life creates substance. The body, and then in our parents, we create substance. We create a structure. In the center of the structure, there is our will, our spine. There is energy running through our spine. That's what we're going to look at and work with a lot.

In the core, as we sit here now, through our spine, there's a lot of energy running through our central nervous system, and the structure in our nervous system, so we have...



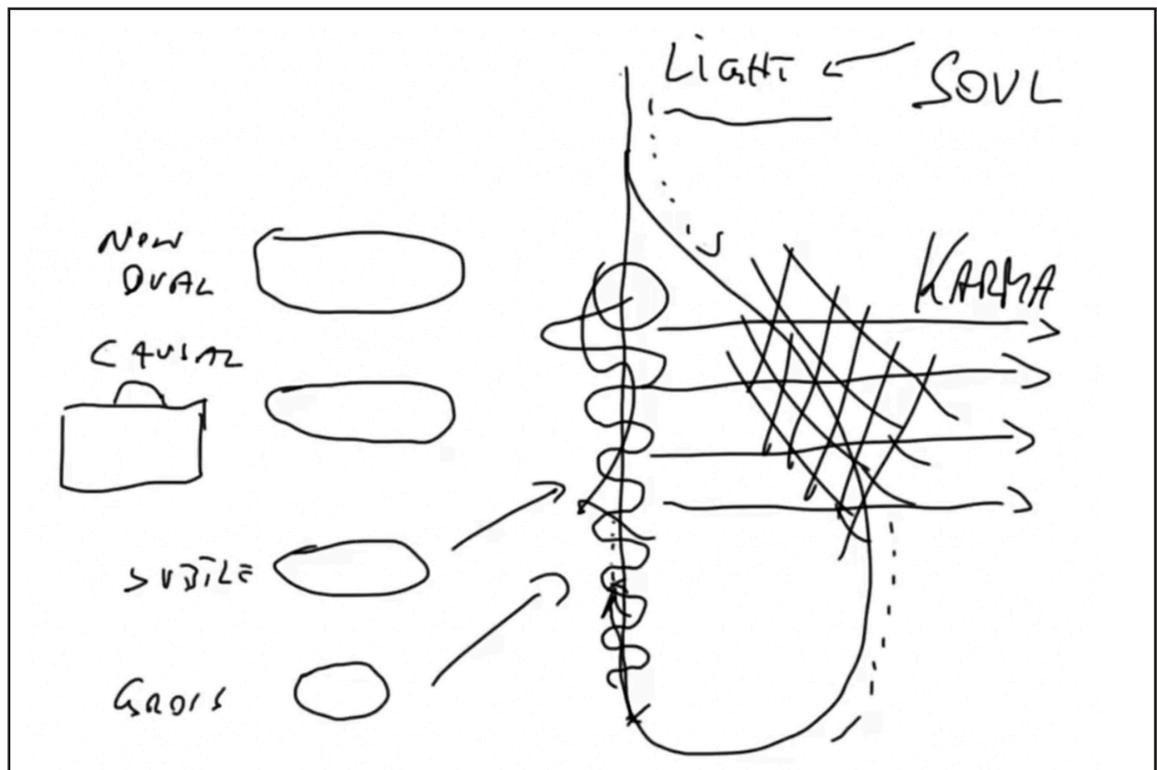
Drawing 4a

I'll come back for a moment to where we were before [*revisits Drawing 3*]. We have light come in. It goes through the past. It mixes itself with the past. There's a lovemaking. Then there's a will, and along the line of this will our life keeps developing, keeps developing, keeps developing. So we have light, spiritual light, higher information, or our soul. Our soul is subtle energy. As you remember, to just say it again, in the spiritual practice we are dealing with four major states, so to speak. This is the gross, the subtle, the causal, and the non-dual.

Which means there is a gross reality to my body, there's a subtle reality to my body, there's a causal awareness and, in the best sense, all of it is not-two. We are going to look a lot, also, at higher layers of consciousness on this course, because they are very important to understand our life process, our death process, how aftertime...not aftertime, but the after-process after death is being designed. Practices that we can learn as we are alive to, in a way, have a conscious experience and impact onto our death process. So that's a practice.

As a human being, it's going to be interesting where will I exit. The exit of life is determined by my center of gravity. That's the composition of life that I'm staying identified with in my life. That's the quality—the physical, emotional, mental, spiritual quality—of awareness that I'm able to develop throughout my life. If I'm practicing in my life a lot of anger and frustration, and envy, and I nourish that part of my energy field a lot, so that's going to be part of my afterlife design as well.

So the exiting is a very interesting aspect. In order to understand the exiting, we need to learn about our subtle energy field, and what it is composed out of, and how we can learn and practice to exit in the highest possible way. In other words, through our realizations in life to, in a way, consciously transition. That's a very exciting practice, I believe, and you will see throughout the course how that's going to influence very strongly the way how we live. It's not just a preparation for what's going to come, it's a preparation for what is. That's truly exciting.



Drawing 3b

[01:05:00]

Meditation Is Not Personal

The second thing that is exciting is that we see that my will—if here is my conception [revisits Drawing 4 and marks the bottom of the vertical line], and the soul, in a way, creates a string here to the conception [draws a curved line from the top to the point of conception], it's this conception, the will that is here [draws a dotted line down from the point of conception] actually existed already before, because there was a sperm and there was an egg that wanted to come together. And before there was the sperm and the egg in the same room, two people wanted to come together.

So life, the will of life is actually an endless river. It's an endless riverbed with a future and a past. The will is just a small part of a much bigger will. That much bigger will we call the meridian, the cosmic meridian. So, the will through our spine is a tiny, tiny boat that travels on a huge cosmic river. Life wants something through many, many lifetimes before us, and many lifetimes to come. Our will is part of the much bigger will of life. That's what makes it really exciting—that the spiritual practice is not about us. It's not about us personally. We'll come back here for a moment.



Drawing 4b

The spiritual practice is actually about transcending us, including and transcending us, and seeing: wow. When we did the meditation before—I said this in some of the previous “Mystical Principles” courses—when we do meditation, it’s actually not really the right wording, because meditation is, and my life is part of it. That’s something else. It’s not that I’m meditating. My life, through the fact that I sit regularly, is participating in something that is forever. It’s not “I’m meditating”—I participate in something that seems to come into my life. The fact that we are interested in meditation and contemplation and prayer is that something transpersonal starts to appear in our life.

That somebody reads a book about meditation, or hears a talk about meditation, or hears it from a friend, or goes to yoga class, and suddenly there is meditation—however it comes into their life—or writes a neuroscience paper on meditation, actually it doesn’t matter, because something way bigger than me, and also my life, is coming. It’s like a wind coming into my life. Somebody left a window open, or the door open, and there is a breeze of meditation. Suddenly I become aware: wow, meditation. Or maybe I read it in the Time Magazine, on the front page I see: wow, mindfulness, what is mindfulness? Then I start to read the article. Then I find out, wow, maybe it makes me a better CEO. Then maybe I start practicing mindfulness. Because why? Because I want to be a better CEO. Maybe I’m not so interested in spirituality, but I am interested in being more successful. However it came into my life, somebody left the door open, because now it’s in my life. It doesn’t matter if I want to be a better CEO. Hopefully, after some time I see: it’s essentially not about improving myself as a CEO, but it’s actually affecting more parts of my life. It affects my health, it affects my relationships, it affects my concentration, it affects my inner spaciousness, it affects my capacity to include, and transcend, and host, and listen.

[01:10:00]

So, besides becoming a better CEO, I started to be on a spiritual path without even knowing that I wanted it. Why? Because somebody left the window open. So the outside, the Time Magazine, and the inside are actually not-two. That information came into my life in order to feel the breeze of the wind of meditation, a timelessness that entered my life. For some, it comes through a deep spiritual drive or yearning. For some it comes through other things, for some it comes through a crisis, but actually something entered. I love to say that meditation is and, through our sitting, we are part of it. We become part of meditation. Then the timeless transpersonal nature of it reveals itself more and more.

Then, maybe, sometimes I don't want to sit, and sometimes I want to sit. Then I argue with myself, my teacher, my sangha, the world why I have to sit, because actually I'm a free being, I don't even have to sit. Then I go through a phase of finding out what's my real motivation. Eventually, sitting becomes part of my nature. I see, wow, actually, as a whole human being, I have physical needs, I have emotional needs, I have mental needs, I have cognitive needs, I have interpersonal needs—and I have spiritual needs. Space, to be a gardener of space in my life—to take care that I have enough inner spaciousness, witnessing capacity, reflective capacity—is a core need that the soul has.

Slowly, I find out that it's actually not about pulling meditation, like having meditation in my life like a nice spiritual accessory in my living room, but it's actually meditation pulled me into meditation. I became the accessory of the living room of meditation. It's not that I have a soul—the soul has me. I'm part of the much bigger reality. This decentralizes my ego structure. It's not that my ego is not there. Of course, it's there. The personality and the drive of the ego is still there, but it has a different priority in the glass. If the glass is bigger, the same amount of water is the same amount of water, but it's much less in the bigger volume.

Being Authentically in One's Time Is the Best Anti-Aging Process

So, me as the main actor in my enlightenment journey is less and less important. My life within the enlightenment journey is less and less important. But the specificity of my life is important. That you are you, I am I, and she is she, and he is he—is important, because we will see when we explore aging, for example, that being authentically in one's time is the best anti-aging process. It sounds a bit paradoxical because often we want to be in another time, or we might want to be in another time, but being synchronized with one's time—the coordinates in time and space—is the most powerful place to be. That's why I'm saying that the basic foundation is that my life is embedded in a much bigger transpersonal process, and the specificity of my life is very important, too.

That's another beautiful spiritual principle because it says that, like in the Bible, when the divine voice appears in the Bible, it's the most universal, and everybody feels spoken to. So it's the most universal, like it is a universal principle. Everybody who hears the voice of the Divine, feels it speaks exactly to me. That's the beauty. That's also beauty. That's how we highlight beauty in the world. Beauty is the shining of the most specific in each and every one of us, in each and every one of us unique energy being recognized—that's beauty: when the uniqueness is being recognized by the universal, and the universal is expressing itself through the uniqueness.

[01:15:00]

The Beauty of Our Uniqueness

Throughout this course, that's also something that we want to explore together: what is the uniqueness of our coordinates in life? Because that's the unique composition, why we are here—especially in this time, in this composition, with our interests, with our life composition, with our ancestors, in the culture that we have been born into. That's also key. That's why when we say, "Not being identified with only," it doesn't mean that it doesn't matter, or that we don't care. That's, I think, a misunderstanding that sometimes happens in spiritual teachings—that de-identifying actually means caring more, not caring less.

It might be, okay, the world is the world, some people say the world's anyway an illusion, and just consciousness matters. Yeah, the consciousness matters, that's true, but the world is also part of consciousness. That means that the more I'm freed up from my own identifications, it doesn't mean I care less about the world. It means that I love the world even more because I see the beauty of the specific. I have even more space to listen to you because I'm not running anywhere else—because we are anyway swimming in the river of our intelligence. When many people are busy to run somewhere else, and they have no time to listen to the people that they talk to, or to listen to life as it happens, or to the situations in their life, that's kind of speedy running; but being synchronized with one's time, being synchronized with the river of life that is anyway moving because our nature is movement, so we are anyway moving—and that's why we have time for each other, for seeing, and that's where essence happens. So the essential is seeing the most specific in its unique place in life. Everybody has a singular place that cannot be replaced by anybody else. It's a unique composition.

I think that's when the composer or the conductor, let's say the conductor, that's like when you stand or sit in front of an orchestra, and you can hear the whole composition, and you can really enjoy the beauty of the violin, and the beauty of the piano, and the beauty of the saxophone. You listen to the uniqueness—they don't need to be all the same, and they don't want to be all the same. The piano and the violin, they don't want to be the same. The beauty is in their difference—they can play together. That's, I think, a deep spiritual principle that, in the transcendence, life can get even more specific. In the awakening of the transpersonal, we can be even more personal. In the transpersonal, we can be even more human. Because we take our place in life, because we transcend life. Because we transcend life, we take our place in life—so the universal enters most specific.

I believe, why I'm saying this is because that's the path to find out who we really are, and that's also the most powerful path to find out how we can let go. If we find out who we really are in this life, we can also find out how we can let go of this life. It's kind of a pendulum. It looks like we are zooming in more, but we are zooming in more to let go more. Also, we are zooming in more to fulfill our life's mission more—because if energy is fulfilled, there is peace. That's why they call the saints 'the ones that leave without a trace'. The ones that fulfill their circle, their *ensō*. When the energy is done, there is peace. So you hear the symphony, you hear the orchestra play, and at the end there is peace. It's done.

[01:20:00]

It's not that in the middle of a piece we stop, and then everyone wants to hear the last parts that we didn't hear. That's when energy doesn't stop. That's when a lot of tension stays, maybe. If the energy is fulfilled, there is peace.

So, these are some important principles because I want to come back in the next sessions. Now we can have some—let's have a little bit of time for questions that are in the field, and that we have some dialogues, maybe—if you have some questions.

Homework

As a practice, until next time, let's look together, as a group—let's also be aware that we are a group, we are over 700 people at the moment, sitting in all around the world—we can also get a feeling of that feel. We will also include this later on in our meditations, that we literally are like a field, a learning field exploring something. That's very powerful because the more we are synchronized, your insights become my insights, and my insights become your insights. We are sharing the field.

So that we do what we took in this meditation today—we explore space, witnessing, energy, structure, and how we can do that: in the guided meditation, or in the whole archive of the “Mystical Principles” there are lots of guided meditations where we can start with the body, include the emotions, the mind, and the perception. Then listen to space itself, to stillness. So, mindfulness means synchronizing myself into sense perception. The mindfulness leads me, most probably, to deeper space, and eventually, later, to learning presence, to deep magnetic presence. Then maybe, later on, into absorption into emptiness. So we have this kind of *dropping in* path, and we start with the sense perception, structure, and energy—into space.

Then we can play, in the contemplation, a bit with these two forces: the part in me that likes to keep life as it is, not to move, not to change, to just keep everything, to stay sitting on the sofa and not to move. Why to move? Why all the practice? Why at all to change something in my life? Why not to stay with the way things are? It's much easier. I know how it is. I know how to do it. Let's keep it.

Then there is this “annoying, nasty” part in me that actually wants to continue all the time. I have ideas, then I'm creative, I want to risk something, I want to be courageous, I want to do new things, I have a drive. The more I feel into this drive, I think: wow. I get excited, because part of is to get excited. Then we want to participate something in life. So, there's this other part, and then the days when I listen more to that part, I'm full of fire. I'm just looking for people that I can do new stuff with. I participate in the innovation of the world. Then, maybe, one day I wake, and I say, “Why? I don't want to sit today. I'm a free person. I can choose not to sit. Why? Why should I sit every day? Why should I put on myself this structure of sitting every day? I can do other things in this time. I am free.”

So then I tell myself that I'm a free person because I'm breaking the habit of sitting. Then the more that we will own that every one of us has this evolutionary voice, and then we also have this part in us that, "Oh, I'm so happy that I don't have to do anything today, and I can just sit and be who I am, with all the stuff that I have, and not look at any trauma, and not look at any shadow, just be me." The more we, in a very human way, own those two forces, the less we complain why governments don't want to change, why the regulations that are in the world that makes it difficult for us to change stuff in the world, and why climate change is not going forward, but sometimes backwards. Why those things are happening is not just because they don't get it, because we often don't want.

[01:25:00]

I think the more that the anti-evolutionary voice in me and the evolutionary voice in me are held and embraced, are present, responsibility starts. That's why the part in me that wants to be innovative, the structure in me that has a gravity—the table in this studio has a gravity, which is also helpful because it stays the table, and my computer can rest on the table, and it has a gravity. Structure has a gravity. We all have a certain gravity—and we all have a certain future.

So, to experiment a bit with the parts in us that want to create habits because we will look at habits also, to some extent, and the part in us that has a weight—in a healthy way, and also, maybe, in a way that kind of obstructs development— and then the future. The love to explore, to grow, to be creative and innovative.

So, space, energy, structure, and gravity—and movement, eros, creativity. So, let's explore those aspects, again, to warm up, and listen to them, and contemplate, and meditate on it. Then we will take it from there in the next course section.

Q&A: Observing the Gaps Between an Inhale and an Exhale

Host: We've got some fantastic questions. A number of them relate to the four levels of awareness that you presented early in the course. I'm going to ask you one of those in a moment. A few of them were very specific about meditation practice. Since you've been speaking about that just now, I thought I would start with one of the meditation related questions. So, Julia asks this. She said that she noticed that she can barely perceive the space following in the inhale, which feels very brief, if there at all, but she is able to perceive the space after the exhale.

She wanted to ask you, do you think this may be significant, as it could relate to her relationship between giving and receiving? She says it feels very challenging to feel that space. She has to make an effort to breathe in order to do it, and wondered if you could give her any suggestions for how to address that in her sitting practice.

Thomas: Yeah, of course. I mean, if we take it now to a shadow work process, then of course that would give us some indication about the inner composition, but for now, to start with, I think it's even more interesting to just sit and say, wow, actually I find out—I find out, I'm not discovering a problem—I find out that those two gaps between an inhale and an exhale, and an exhale and an inhale are not in the same rhythm of movement, and the length: one is much shorter than the other. For today, I gave those—because in those gaps between the parts of the breath there is space. For some people, it's very easy that when I feel I exhale, exhale, exhale, there is open space, and then I inhale again. And in this open space, it's like as if the colors of the room kind of get more and more transparent, and suddenly I'm looking into emptiness. And then the colors of the room come back and become the world. Then I'm looking into emptiness, and then the colors of the room come back. It looks like my life, and there is, again, emptiness. I think, for now, without going into the meaning of, okay, what does this mean about me, like that the inhale is how we can take life in, and the exhale is how we can participate—of course, there a meaning to this, but for the contemplative practice at the moment it's just good to say, "Okay, when the gap is very short, there's a tension."

[01:30:00]

If the gap is open, if I inhale, and then there's a natural pause, and then I exhale, so if there is no tension, it's an open movement. It's kind of open, and a new wave coming. So, it's kind of an open movement. What we can do is, first of all, we become, or you became aware of, okay, there's a tension—but I'm sure that you're not the only one—and then, in the gaps of the breath movements, so then you feel, ah, there's tension. Then, of course, I can relate more and more to the tension, but not because I found a problem—I found a function. That's something that I—especially in the courses that are related with healing and shadow work, and integration in our training programs—I often say, "We are not discovering difficulties or problems, we discover regulations, or regulatory functions that are important for us."

It doesn't mean that they need to stay like that, but we actually discover something intelligent—not something that's not working. So, in the moment, it's that the tension between the two breaths is something intelligent. You say, "Ah, it's something intelligent. So great, what is it?" I turn towards it. It's not that I have to look there in order to find a problem. It's very important. Then I can play a bit with the tension in my contemplation that whenever I come to this transition of my two breath movements, I can feel, oh yeah, I'm tense. Actually, I'm holding part of my breath. I'm not fully breathing here.

So, something is not fully opening up. We can then dive a bit deeper and to see, okay, where actually in my body do I feel the tension, and maybe if there is a tension, there is a holding of some energy. Then I can listen more, and actually what energy did I learn to hold in my system, because it was better to hold it than to fully experience it. Then I can go in the shadow work process deeper. For now, I think for us it's interesting for us to listen more to the contemplative practice, and use the gaps between the breath movements as a contemplative possibility to enter space.

Q&A: The Four Levels of Awareness

Host: So, there was a series of questions, really, about the four levels of awareness. Let me ask the foundational one. Claudia asks, "Could you just say a little more about the four levels of awareness: gross, subtle, causal, and non-dual."

Thomas: Yeah. So, of course, the gross level of reality is [knocks on the table] the substance of life. It's painful to not open the door and leave the room. So that's the gross reality that we all know.

Then the subtle reality is that we feel qualities, but even—why we are saying this, because we will play some with our astral body, but our astral body is where we go when we dream. So, when we dream, in the astral world, for our astral body, the dream world looks very real. Then, in the spiritual practice, there are some practices where we can actually learn to consciously elevate this kind of dream body out of our physical body, and then some people experience traveling through the space where they sleep, or where they rest. They are not actually fully in their body. That's something that we can train. That also shows that there is—the nature of our dream body experiences life in the dream world. But if somebody has a nightmare, usually those nightmares, they look very real at the time when they happen. So, it is very scary, frightening, aggressive, whatever, as we experience it, and then we wake up, and we maybe wake up with a fast heartbeat, or with lots of adrenaline in our system. Then we slowly calm down. Then we see, "Oh, wow, thank God that wasn't real!"

[01:35:00]

For the death process, that's also important, because when we leave our physical body, the next level of identification happens in that astral world. That's what I said before, the design of the afterworld process has a lot to do with the way that we live our life. It's kind of like in the dream body. So, that astral field is like a piano keyboard. It's beautiful because, when I showed you the structures along the will, the line of the will, all those levels are actually keyboard tunes from very physical to very, very subtle. So, part of that subtle nature is our future. That's why, in the mystical principles teachings, I often call the inner voice of the future, a 'whisper'. Why it's a whisper? Because it's less substantial and more subtle.

So, when we meditate and we clear our inner world from the noise—and not to forget that my body is part of the noise, my emotions might be part of the noise, my thoughts, when I think, oh, what I did, and what I didn't do, is part of the noise—when this noise settles, the whisper of the future can be heard. It's whispering because it's more subtle. It's not so loud as a bump in the physical world. That's why, in the mystical practice, presencing is very important—to hear innovation, to hear new insights, to hear inner guidance, to hear where we are going to with our life.

That's the subtle world. The subtle world is like a keyboard. The keyboard needs us to be able to play the piano, which means train subtle attunement. 'Train subtle attunement' starts from very physical subtle experience, up to very angelic, very high, like the light in the meditation—white light, golden light, electric white light—so there all kinds of higher levels of consciousness that appear as light and sound, as inner experience of light and sound, there's also subtle layers. So, from the most dense to the most subtle creative energy, it's subtle world, kind of a whole spectrum.

Then there is a realization of the causal. The causal is kind of what we call also magnetic presence. That's where, in the meditation, my body drops away, I have no body awareness anymore, my emotions drop away, where the activity of my thoughts drop away, where my perception goes to rest, and there is kind of a deep, deep present stillness. Within this present stillness, there's witnessing. So, as long as I'm identified with the subtle, I have already a bigger center of gravity than just being identified with my physical life. When I reach a more coherent causal awareness, so suddenly I have a bigger awareness than my subtle and my physical universe. So, I'm living, I'm existing still in the physical universe, because I'm in the body, I am existing in my subtle universe, because I'm also energy, and I'm waking up right now to the causal universe, or to the causal dimension, which is empty, but pregnant with everything.

I will say much more, there's much more to say, of course, to all those layers. They're much more complex than what I'm saying now. I'm just giving a taste. In that magnetic presence, I am. That's the deep essence of I am-ness. All the meditations on 'I am'. 'I am' meditations on the deepest sense of being here—but I'm not being here as joy, as cognitive thinking—it's being. In the I am-ness, there is deep witnessing.

[01:40:00]

Eventually, when we sit and deepen that causal awareness, we might be absorbed into the Source of creation. So, into where, from nothing, something arises, and have a non-dual satori. The non-dual satori means that the inside and the outside, and the up and the down kind of collapse into each other, and there is no inside and outside and up and down anymore.

But on the way there, there is. Why I'm saying this is because some people say, "Oh, when we do light meditation, do we have to go up?" Yes, we have to go up, because that's the ladder of consciousness. As long as I am identified with me in here, there is a directionality.

Once I reach a certain level of enlightenment or realization, that's not true anymore, also. Before it, it is true. Why? Because I'm identified with it. That's very important. So, in the meditation, guidance, or practice, there are some steps how we can build kind of awakening. So, it goes from the gross to the subtle, from the subtle to the causal, from the causal to the non-dual—always including the possibility that somebody has an “out of the blue” enlightenment experience that doesn't follow that linear development. So, sometimes people sit and develop their subtle inner tracks, or open their subtle inner gates, and suddenly—boom!—they have a non-dual state experience. It might even last for a month, or for longer, or shorter, for five minutes.

That's why I said at the beginning, what I'm saying here is kind of—I'm giving a landscape, or a map of a landscape, and also with including that it's not just a linear development. So, we are going to offer practices here, as we did already in the former “Mystical Principles” classes, that will help us to train kind of deeper embodiments, subtle capacities, all the light meditations that we do to learn about the higher subtle capacities that we have, causal meditations, and eventually, if we sit with it and drop in, so that we kind of—that there is an absorption into non-dual awareness, physically. Then space, energy, and structure are not anymore, they're not separate. They are not-two, so movement and stillness is the same.

So, maybe, for now that's enough. I think, we have much more to say to it. Also, when we learn about the different stages that we go through in de-identifying ourselves with this life and this lifetime, we will definitely come back and deepen this exploration. This was just a taster, kind of a trailer of our journey.

Q&A: Supporting Others in the Process of Dying

Participant: First of all, I'm delighted to be here. I'm not new to Thomas' teachings, but this is the first time that I'm working in a group with you. So I'm very happy, and very deeply moved, too. My question is very simple. I have things going on right now, people that are dying, or that have died suddenly lately. It's recent. What I feel is—the people that are dying are my parents. They're 91, so, I mean, it's no surprise. What I'm struggling with is the following: if they carry with them a lot of resentment, and lot of anger, and a lot of power trips—which they do, all of them, the people that have recently died that are much younger, and they're relatives of mine—I realize that they leave, and I am left with an inheritance of tremendous weight. What do I do with my inheritance is my question.

[01:45:00]

Thomas: Well, that's a good question. That's a very expanded question. Let's see. First of all, not everything that your parents carry within themselves, through their process of departing from this life and this plane, is your inheritance. We need to see, it's not like that everything that our parents don't process, stays now with us. But there are tendencies, of course, in the family system, that do stay with us, and that might even harden or get stronger in us. That's also true. But it's not like that everything, all the resentment that has been there, is now yours, and now you need to deal with it. It's not that simple.

And it's also good like this, because throughout our life, we have a chance to transform and turn around some of our karma that we brought into this life. Usually, for some people that really works out, and they turn their karma into light. That's where people feel, suddenly, this strong transformation, and most of the karma gets turned around, and becomes life purpose. So that's transformed into a deep meaning. That lets us, also, leave this lifetime with very little residue. In the moment of our death, when we get the revelation, when there's a revelation of our life plan, then we see, in a way, how our life energy, or our life's process, we see, in a way, the open map. So, for some people, that's a moment of deep peace, because it feels like, oh, yes, great. For some people it feels like, oh, wow, we get a feeling of all the things that we didn't do in our life, that we wanted to do. It's like the part of the potential that couldn't live itself.

Anyway, I think, to address your question more specifically, death is a shared experience, in my understanding. The same as I believe that shadow is not an individual asset, it's kind of a we-asset. The shadow in a family, the shadow in the system, the shadow that one person can only live, the tendencies of the shadow can only live in an environment that supports it. So, same as the shadow is a shared essence, it's the death process as well. So, if you in your own understanding, and we throughout the course—one reason why I wanted to do this course is also because I want us to explore the possibility of making death and dying a conscious cultural process where we support each other deeply in the process.

So, the awareness that you bring into, also, the death process of your parents, for example, is part of the whole composition. Whatever the light, the conscious awareness, the love, the presence, the being with, everything we bring into this process, has an immediate effect on the beloved ones, or on the people—it doesn't matter who it is, actually—it's like when we participate in it, we share an experience. That's also deeply important because that's deeply transformational as well. Usually, sometimes even in the last moments, a deep vulnerability happens, and the heart opens.

[01:50:00]

There is a moment where a lot of energy also gets released. The shared aspect of the death process is often a moment where a lot of karma gets processed. In the loosening up of the contractions of life, because there's not enough life energy, many beautiful things happen. Many people also share that, I don't know, in the last moments of their parents' life suddenly there was a deep recognition, or there was a deep moment of love, and seeing, and beauty, and that opening could only happen in that moment. Before that they had a much more kind of separate, and kind of a different relation.

There are more aspects. There is the aspect where we have our cultural aspect. So, what kind of culture do we create around the death process, and how a conscious death process is actually an evolutionary necessity. Then there is the kind of deeper intimacy within the family that might open up, but it not always does open up, but it might open up. In the final days or weeks, there's deep intimacy that suddenly starts to be shared. Then I will talk more on the course about what does the death of our parents mean according to our energy, but not everything that our parents carry with them over to the other side is landing on our lap. So that's not ...

I think it's very important to see this. There's also kind of a life responsibility of every soul for its own experience. There is something in the lineage that has a re-effect onto us that I think is also true. That's why a conscious death process is actually an amazing possibility for the spiritual fixation to open up. So I think, different spiritual cultures have different rituals in order to support that process. Let me know if there is something more specific that you are interested in right now, because some of the points that address your question we will open up throughout the course, anyway, deeper.

Participant: Thank you. I'm very happy with your answer. It's more than enough. I'm ready to take in little amounts of everything at a time.

Thomas: Okay, okay.

Participant: Thank you very much. Thank you.

Thomas: So thank you.