



Meditate & Mediate

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William: Well, hello everyone. It's a privilege to be with you again as we encircle the globe from all over and to reflect on where we are in the ark of this journey together, this collective journey, this inquiry into how best to marry the inner and the outer so that we can become truly empowered third siders, global social witnesses, Shambhala warriors in the conflicts that we engage in, that we face, that we help others with every day, from the ones immediately around us—in our families, with our friends, with our communities—to the ones that extend out to the entire globe like the one happening right now focused on the Korean Peninsula that has been a theme through the course.

Recap of the Previous Sessions

As you recall, we began... if there was one keyword that's been a theme for this entire course, it's the word that Thomas likes to use, of 'space' and the ability to host situations inside of ourselves, the spaciousness of our nervous systems, which takes the practical form of listening, our ability to listen, to tune in ourselves, to what's going on, to tune into those around us and to tune into a larger world.

A metaphor that I, as you know, I like to use, which is this ability to go to the balcony, to that place of calm, of perspective, of self-control, of centeredness that allows us that spacious view that we can bring to the conflicts around us. We talked a little bit about the practices that allow us to do that—whether it's taking a time-out, meditation, allowing time to digest our experience, that kind of "I/me" aspect—but also the "we" aspect of spaciousness, of the ability to go to the balcony, which is an expanded capacity to relate to others, to be present.

Then Thomas, if you recall, led us into a deep guided meditation around what composes conflict, what are the elements of conflict, what are the ingredients of a conflict situation, what's the source of conflict in us, to really reflect on that, and a couple of... many themes came up for us but there was a real sense, I think, throughout, of not-enoughness, of the core of conflict having to do with scarcity, that there's not enough to meet my needs and the needs of others or that sense of lack combined with a sense of separation, of being separated one from the other. That kind of combination, those twins of scarcity and separation somehow encoding the experience of conflict.

Then we also turned to: what are the resources that we can use to deal with the scarcity, to deal with the separation? What are our resources? People talked about things like listening or hosting.

If you look at that tree there, for example, in the screen there, what's the root of conflict around fear and distrust, disconnection? What's the one lesson, what's the quality that came up for us that allows us to host conflict—whether it's love or space or awareness or trust.

[00:05:00]

Question 1: What Is Your Feeling About What Is True for You?

What Thomas and I would like to do right now is, for a moment—one of the things that was powerful was to have you put in the question and answer box just one word for each one of those, as you recall, we're going to turn to that in a moment—just a baseline right now, in this particular moment, right now as we're all sitting together here, tuning in, we'd like to ask you: is there one word that sums up your feeling, right now, in this moment, today, in the world? What's true for you? Just as a baseline to understand where you are right now. I don't know, whatever has happened to you right now, whatever's happening, but if you wouldn't mind putting in the question and answer box, one word that sums up your feeling, your experience, what's true for you right now. We can use that as a baseline. What's true in your nervous system so that we can understand globally what we're feeling?

I'm reading: *transparency, hope, connection, overwhelm, gratitude, fear, responsibility, joy, courage, generosity, centered, insecurity, sadness, room, worry, shift from distrust to trust, irritation, tired, gratitude, loneliness, creative, fear, self-awareness, quiet, oneness, ache, scarcity, movement, anxiety, bliss, joy, surrender, anticipation, frustration, chaos, integrity, open, liberation, excitement, loneliness, unknowns, openness, presence.* It keeps on going. *Hope for relatedness, stress, listening.* That's where we are... *tense...* it's very helpful.

Alone, isolation, so there are themes around isolation, loneliness, that's one theme, as well as joy and connection. There's tension, there's stress. There's trust. There is moving from distrust. There is yearning. That's just a good point where we're all feeling and tuning our own nervous system because that's what we're going to talk about in a moment and Thomas is going to lead is in the discussion of what's... how do we connect our individual nervous systems to our global nervous systems that we can be most effect as Shambhala Warriors in this world?

Hosting Our Experience of Opposites, Understanding Hope

Now that we have that baseline, to go back to just summing up the session last time, when I ask you for... when we asked you for one word that sums up, for you, what the root of conflict is, what the root of the tree is. We created a kind of a word cloud, and the larger the word, the more that word came up. As you can see, and just maybe you can use this moment, maybe, Thomas, you want to say a word about using this moment to feel in into this word cloud. Thomas, do you want to say a word?

Thomas: Yes. First of all, hello everybody. If you take your whole body, look with your whole body—and then, of course, you're looking with your eyes, you're looking with your heart, with your body—and let the quality of this page just generate a sensation or feeling in your body. What is the quality that that page, all the words together as one cloud, express. You just stay with it for a moment. That's what all of you wrote last time as the basis of conflict. Just feel the quality. There's a body sensation that goes with it. There's an emotional quality that goes with it, maybe. There's a mental quality that goes with it.

As you remember, we talked about something that sounds very tiny that I believe is incredibly important. That's the connection between the inside of a human being and the outside of a human being. Or, with other words, the capacity of the brain and the nervous system to merge interior or modulate interior information and exterior information, perception, onto our screen. That's also interesting.

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There is physical body, emotion, mind, inside/outside either connected or disconnected, or reduced. Then I'm also interested, what's your feeling of how much energy does this cloud have? What happens to the energy or abundance of life in this cloud? Right.

Then to see that, too, many of these words connect to areas on the planet, situations that are happening right now on the planet, within families, within intimate relationships, within organizations, between countries, between religious understandings. And to connect—many of these words run, most probably, many situations, right now as we are sitting here.

Okay, maybe we can change. William, do you want to add something?

William: Yes. Just for me, the experience of looking at that word cloud or experiencing that word cloud and experiencing the conflicts around... yeah, brings up a profound sense of lack, of “there’s not enough”, there’s... And if we’re separated—separation was the big thing there—somehow, because we’re separated, there isn’t enough. Those two are linked, of separation and scarcity, that feeling in the world, that heaviness in the chest, in the gut. I’m wondering what the next word cloud will bring, which is what you all came up with as the words that summed up the quality of what’s the response to that. How do we host conflict? What’s the fruit of the tree?

[00:15:00]

Thomas: Right. Then again, to do the same thing. To start with, I listen with whole body. I look with my whole body. I have a physical, emotional, mental experience. The connection between my inner world and outer world and the sense of, as William said before, there was a lack—what is it here?

Again, to also connect this, the qualities that are represented here are running certain relationships and directions, moments in corporations, moments on the planet. Even if words are labels, of course, that define but also restrict a moment, and still: what is, what do we take, what does this teach us? What do these two clouds teach us?

Do you want to add anything, William?

William: Yeah, just my first take on that was—the first word cloud is that problem, the second word cloud is the solution, the healing of that lack, of that scarcity, of that separation. The first is the wound, and this is the healing. It’s true. At the same time, I’m also feeling like our work in this course is going on a journey of sitting with the separation, the scarcity, and moving in this direction of compassion and connection, presence and listening. There’s also a sense in which there is a tendency I’m noticing to say, “Okay. That first word cloud, that’s the problem.” There’s almost like there’s something wrong with it—and this is what’s right. Then that passed—and I realized that both exist simultaneously—I don’t know, I remembered a saying from Lao Tzu that goes, “What’s a bad man but a good man’s work? What’s a good man but a bad man’s teacher?”

In other words, there’s something beyond bad and good. There’s nothing bad about—I mean, we experience it that way, about separation and so on. It’s just there’s a way in which these two dance with each other. They both exist at the same time. It’s not just that one is the problem and one is the solution, but there’s a beauty in both, or there’s something deeper there than just making one the problem and one the solution.

Thomas: Right. At the same time, the labeling of “we’re trying to get rid of one side” is definitely not really helpful. In time, it also shows us, in a way, a representation of the resourced nervous system and the non-resourced nervous system.

William: That’s it.

Thomas: It shows us what are the parts in me where I feel that I can feel myself, rest in those parts of myself, and feel a lot of energy running through me, feel creative, feel I have something to contribute, I feel that I can contribute and co-create change and transformation. They are parts—and, most probably, in everybody right now, we can just have a check in and say, okay, which parts of my body are alive, energized, easily accessible? Which parts of my body can I feel right now? What would I say is resourced in my body? Where would I say, wow, if I can, these parts of my body are very much alive in my conscious awareness? Maybe, there are parts of my body that are less alive, less accessible, and less feelable. Maybe, some parts of my nervous system are more abundant. I can feel them stronger. There are more sensations. There is more flow. Other parts of my body might feel a little bit empty, less energized.

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What makes the difference? What’s the difference in communication? What’s the difference in the intra-body communication that, in my awareness, some parts of my body feel more alive and energized? What happens to the communication there? Is that important? What’s the meaning of it? Then parts of my body that feel less energized, what’s the meaning of that, if there is a meaning at all?

Maybe, before we continue with the nervous system, maybe, William, in your experience in some of the more challenging situations that you experience in your mediation, how much was your body and your resourced parts of the body, was this of any meaning for your process in those situations, in those mediations? If so, how? If you want to share a little bit how your body is a resource for you.

William: Yeah. What I've come to realize... I mean, that first word cloud, it really sums up the situations in which I work—the separation, the fear, the anxiety, the scarcity. It's a beautiful way in which all of your words have come together to create a picture. My own experience of my work is to see if I can—with my body, with my mind, with whatever can be an instrument, a little bit like a receiver—to tune into spaciousness, to tune into the things in the second word cloud, to tune into those qualities of connection and spaciousness and then, from that space, to listen to, to welcome even, the separation, the fear, the anxiety; instead of, as you were just mentioning, sort of labeling that as the problem. Just to sit with it, to welcome that.

Then, through that, to hold open the possibility, to listen, as you say, Thomas, to the whisper of the future, to hold open the possibility of hope. Hope not as something, not as some idealized condition in the future but hope as a kind of state of spirit in the moment of, that there is possibility. It's really a possibility. It's to really hold open the possibility for the people that I'm dealing with in a conflict situation.

Let me just take Korea right now, since that's been my main preoccupation that I've lived with, slept with, day and night, of just feeling this conflict and almost the unthinkability that our world might descend into a war so catastrophic that no part of the earth would be left untouched by it.

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To sit with that and to realize that that's a real possibility, it's almost unthinkable. But I think what I try to do in my work is to... It's easy to go, to look that reality in the face and then go into fear, go into hyper, hyperactivation of my nervous system, it's too easy to go where I sense most of us right now are, and I do too, which is to go into hypo, which is kind of numbness, paralysis, that can't happen, just go on with my life. But for me, what I try to do is to tune in to see if I can go into that zone of tolerance in between the hyper and the hypo, that of optimal... using my body to take in emotions of fear and anger and frustration and separation and all of those things, to take those in.

Then serve as an instrument to help the people around me to also start to regulate their nervous systems so that they're not so hyper and they're not so hypo, but we can... And I think that's the challenge, really, for us as social witnesses, as third sides, whether it's in our immediate conflicts around us or whether it's in the larger world, is how do we help others regulate, come from hyper into the zone or hypo into the zone and really stay in that zone of spaciousness, which is that embrace of the third side, within which, then, the basic elements of the conflict—the fact that people want different things, they have different interests, and so on—within that creative space, then, there's a possibility for transformation. There's a possibility for win-win-win solutions that really meet the interests of all sides and of the whole, of the family, of the work organization, of the community or, in the case of North Korea, of humanity.

Thomas: This brings me to two beautiful things. That non-labeling doesn't mean that I cannot detect a resourced or a non-resourced nervous system, it's pretty important to notice that. But non-labeling means that I'm willing, from my resourced part, to host an experience in myself and not reject it—that's a very important thing that you said.

Then I heard you say something else, that hope is not hoping for an idealistic scenario in the future but that hope is trusting the emergence and creativity and innovation within the given moment, so that the real future really emerges now. The real future is not tomorrow. The real future emerges in here, right now. I think that's an important distinction, I believe, that we are not imagining another version of the same thing but we are actually resourced in the moment, and that's what has a future because it allows for emergence. It allows for an idea to come through that is new and that has a kind of a shifting quality in the moment.

I think that's definitely one part that I want to explore with you today. The other part is, also, when we talked about nervous systems at the beginning of the course, we talked about how important it is to really take, every time we meet somebody in a deeper meeting, that we take a moment to let the nervous systems, the two trains, as we say, to synchronize so that we find each other's speed of trains. Then, once we are more coherent and synchronized, it's much easier to do what you said, William, before. It means that I can tune in with somebody who is hyperactivated and, because I host this experience in myself, I can help with down-regulation of a hyperactivation of somebody that is excited, afraid, that kind of hyperactivated.

Or if I'm willing to experience numbness and I can host numbness, the transference of numbness in myself, then it also sends a different spin back into hypoactivated or numbed area, disassociated area that we meet. I believe the training is to learn that our nervous system is literally that amazing, amazing biocomputer tool that we can train to use in a very, very skillful way, which has amazing outcome—especially in negotiations, but in general—on well-being, on health, on trauma integration, and many other things.

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That's very beautiful, and that when we say that there is one nervous system—but this superimposition of all our nervous systems, in a way, all our nervous systems together create like a global nervous system, I believe. When we take all of us together, there are... many of the qualities that we saw in the sound clouds [*sic*] are super impositions also in the social body. If you see humanity as a more collective body, I think that's also a very interesting exploration.

Generating a Non-Linear Outcome of Now

But maybe we come for a moment back to the first one. I would love to hear you speak a little bit to when there is hope in the moment, when this moment has an open future, which means it has a new possibility that it can generate that is, maybe, even a non-linear outcome of now.

Maybe, let's have a look in your experience and then maybe I can talk a little bit. What is the quality of inspiration? What is the quality of intuition? What's the quality of suddenly knowing or feeling something that is beyond, whatever, our personal knowing that is an amazing game changer sometimes, in certain situations. Because sometimes I heard you say on the course, "And then it came to me to say..." I would love to hear a little more about this because it seems like a sentence on the side but actually I believe it points out a very important quality that you express, in a way, in your work.

William: Yeah. It's true. I think may have mentioned a couple of stories that encapsulated that for me early on already, but one was my first meeting, I think I might have mentioned it, with, many years ago, with President Hugo Chavez. I was going to have perhaps a 10-minute meeting. I didn't know how long we were going to go on for. I'd been working in that country for a year at the point, and here was my big chance. And in 10 minutes... I went for a walk in the forest, maybe a few days before this meeting. I was trying to think what's the most intelligent thing I can say? What's the thing I can say that would have the highest likelihood shifting his mind? Because this one individual at that moment, just like now we have with Korea, we have these two individuals of President Trump and Chairman Kim who are in those minds that they have the capacity now, and they've had this capacity, to plunge the world into a terrible war or not.

With him, he really had that capacity, whether Venezuela was going to be plunged into a civil war or not. I was trying to think of what I can say to him. *Then it came to me*—that's the thing—*it came to me*, "There's nothing you can say." That, actually, that the best thing I could do going into that meeting is to give up the thought of influencing him. Give up the thought of coming up with the brightest, most intelligent, and most... wisest advice I could give him and actually not give him any advice at all until at least he asked for it.

That maybe the best contribution I could make is just to sit there, in that palace, in that room, with nothing to say. Nothing, really. With no agenda. With nothing I need to get across in those 10 minutes. And just to come in, in a mode of listening. Listening, feeling into that moment. Letting my body relax in that moment, with all the hypertension, because we, I think I mentioned, we came into the palace and there were crowds outside. They were pounding the cars. The gates were going in.

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There were all these people rushing around the palace that was all in a hyper, hyper, hyper state. I could just go in there, wait my turn. Go in there, have my few minutes and just sit with him, just be a witness for a moment. Sit with him and tune my system. Using your words, Thomas, tune my nervous system with his, even to the point where... I remember—my Spanish is not very good; and he had a translator who was sitting right next to him. When he started to speak, and she was speaking, and I was hearing both, I asked, I just motioned and just asked her if she wouldn't translate because it didn't matter whether I was capturing everything he was saying. What mattered was whether, looking in his eyes, we were close to each other, chair to chair—it wasn't a table, it was a living room like situation—just to feel this guy and then to watch, as I listened to him, to watch that 10 minutes, because there's a long line of people waiting outside, stretched out as he started to tell me the story of his life and how he got into politics, and his life, and how he came to that particular moment. I would say, a full hour went by. A full hour went by, and then he turned to me and said, "So, Ury, what should I do?" Then that was the moment. But just to go in there and just sacrifice anything I needed to say and just listen to him was the key, to just tune in to that moment.

And then, at that moment, to tune into, "Okay, what came to me in that moment is the appropriate thing to say to him when he asked that question." Then that meeting went on for, I believe, over two hours, maybe, perhaps two hours and half. By the end of it, we were into a process of how he could build confidence with the opposition, a process that could lead to a gradual calming of some of the tensions that were threatening to plunge the country into civil war. It was just that beginning that turned out to be the key. The beginning of tossing away anything to say and just coming with a listening, open mind, open heart to tune into that situation.

Thomas: That's beautiful. That's beautiful.

I want to highlight, again, a few things that I heard. First of all, it's—of course, we talked about this here on the course—is the not knowing. Then there is another quality that I believe precise attunement can give us—which means the capacity to really use, to look through the whole body, to use our whole nervous system, to really create a coherence between two people talking, or a group of people talking.

Then, I believe, one of the consequences of that art—because I believe that’s an art, that’s excellence, I believe—is that we notice the difference between like an open energy field and open receptive moment and the moment that might seem open but is actually closed. That the word, in the mystical traditions, the word is creation. When we speak, we create something.

When we speak to each other and we find places of vulnerability or places of open receptivity, even if it’s in a crisis, that the crisis creates an openness to listen, but I believe that quality to notice... When there is an open access, that words can really be heard; and that I notice when I speak and I create actually a pressure when I speak, because I’m not fully attuned to the open window; or if there is an open window at all, because when there is no open window, the words actually stop, they don’t have any creative power. And when a window is open, there is receptivity. I believe, the better we are attuned, the more we feel that quality of openness.

Then there’s a next element that I think is very powerful. That’s also, I believe, what we want to explore, maybe this time and next time, is: what is the part of us that receives information that is beyond our capacity to know? As you said, you might... you thought about going in and what’s the best thing to do, and then there was the intuition to say, “Okay. I’m not saying anything. I’m just there.” But I’m sure, after that something came and there was a moment of information, a flow of information. I believe that that’s a very high quality to develop that part that we surprise ourselves more and more often when we speak. Which means what we say is emergent, not repetitive.

That quality of emergence, I believe, is one aspect of seeing the quality of somebody’s spiritual progress. That there is more and more fresh water coming into the river. Fresh water that is newborn, that is creative, that is inspired, that is full of insights—so all the higher qualities of the spiritual practice that make our life an update of itself.

As far as I understand mediation, a good mediation always brings an update of the current situation so that whatever is the situation that seems stuck gets an update. That’s a potential growth movement.

First of all, I would love to hear, William, how do you relate to that or how is that part of your experience or not part of your experience, this updating quality, that things stay in motion, that our lives keep developing?

William: It speaks very, very deeply to me, what you're saying, because mediation, what does it mean? What does it mean to mediate? It comes from the Latin, the middle. It means to sit in the middle of it all. Really, to sit quietly in the middle of it all. In order to truly sit in the middle of all that tension, all that conflict, all those things in that word cloud—with the separation, the anxiety, the fear, the anger, the frustration, the hatred, the jealousy, all of those emotions—it means to sit in the middle of it.

In order to sit in the middle of it, really, like I was sitting in that palace with Chavez, or another story was coming to mind of, at beginning of the Abraham Path, the initial meeting there in Bethlehem, in Palestine, with gunshots going on outside for reasons we didn't know, and sort of sitting there, a group of Westerners or people from around the world with our Palestinian hosts, and having this idea just to sit in the middle of that tension—that's what it means to mediate, to sit in the middle.

What we're learning in this course is that to truly *mediate*, to sit in the middle of conflict, we need to *meditate*, which is to sit in the middle of ourselves, in the middle, watching our own thoughts, our own emotions, our own sensations, our own perceptions. By sitting in the middle, right there, right in the middle, in the center, then, as you're saying, Thomas, that's when messages can come seemingly from above. It's almost like one of those satellite things, that you just tune to the right frequency and then the message comes in.

But it's that ability to sit in the middle of all that tension, that struggle, that conflict because it's like in the eye of the hurricane, it's very silent. It's a silent space. That's what you find is, in the middle of it all, there is a silent space. What makes the wheel go around is there is this little space in the middle of the center of the wheel—to find that place emotionally, spiritually, mentally, and physically, to find that space of silence and to sit there and then to tune in to what new messages come up that can update the situation, that can reveal the full possibilities of that situation, which is so stuck. Because all of those conflict situations we're involved in, one of their characteristics is that they are negative repetitions, like Korea right now.

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It becomes a negative repetition of the Korean war, of all the different conflicts, and we just play the same old roles again and again and again. We just get stuck in the rut. The question is—a mediator who is meditating at the same time is, you're sitting in the center there, holding open the possibility of something new emerging, that fresh water emerging, that aliveness emerging, that uncertainty emerging.

Right now, again, to take this moment of Korea. We just experienced a moment like that where it seemed very stuck, the situation, right? It seemed like it was just getting worse and worse, more insults and more insults and more military threats, and with experts getting very worried that we're getting perilously close, one miscalculation or two away from the brink of a catastrophic war. As we saw, our friends in Hawaii had that experience of panic for a half an hour. We are in that moment. And then, comes the fresh water of the Olympics. A little bit of, wow, the world puts positive attention on this little peninsula, this part of ourselves, shows up, celebrates. Things start to move. The numbness starts to fall out. The anger, the fear starts to subside a little bit. And in that window, possibilities emerge, a North-South dialogue.

Now, a surprise on Friday of, wow, imagine that there could be a meeting at the top, a meeting between these leaders. Maybe, there is a possibility. That's what we're looking for. And of course it feels risky, it feels dangerous to some, but it's a possibility of something new. Some new patterns, some new possibility emerging, out of which could come a possibility of peace. And that's, as mediators, that's what we're holding open, is that possibility for peace, for the peaceful transformation of deep-abiding, deep-rooted differences.

Thomas: Beautiful. First of all, that's very beautiful. Also to see that there is a certain development is also beautiful. To recognize that, like we recognize shifts, and as the nervous system learns, we also recognize the learning within that shift. When we integrate trauma, we see, "Okay. There's an integration, there is a liberation of energies. Something grounds itself more. Something creates a new possibility."

When we see healings happen, or when trauma integrates itself, you see a relaxation in the nervous system—which means usually a person gets more ground, more earth, more substance, more stability in life, less fear, more vitality—and then there is one impulse that continues, that the developmental energy that was trapped can continue its development. Regressive aspects of ourselves can grow up and continue the journey upwards into possibility so that the person, the person's life opens up new possibilities. We can suddenly meet new people, new situations come into our life, we respond to different environments in a different way, and so on.

When we look at healing, there is the stagnation or kind of a trauma field, holding and hyperregulation in the interior. Through appropriate relation, we create a download of the trauma, hyperregulation into the intersubjective space, into the relation, so from hyperregulation we go into co-regulation, and the co-regulation allows a deeper digestion or metabolism of the original experience until it can ground itself and liberate itself into development.

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In a way, if that's true for an individual, how does that look like on our planet? That when there is a trauma field in the collective body, in the social body, and we learn through collective tools to—and maybe there was an opportunity, through the Olympics, to focus a lot of the third side energy, even if it was kind of through seeming different reason, but there was a lot of energy coming—so that we can potentially create more ground for a deeper conversation and maybe we can create a new possibility that wasn't open before.

One quality, we said, is presence in not knowing. One quality is attunement because it means that we are not just talking about everything. In the Bible, when the voice of the Divine appears, everybody feels, “The voice spoke to me.” It's not just that it talks more general and universal truth. As it appears, it's very specific. I think that's an important understanding, that the most universal is crystallized in the most personal. The most personal is a fragment of or is a part of the whole.

It also means that, I believe, we as—and I believe here are many on the line that are interested in some kind of individual groups, social collective work that we are already doing—I believe, the more specific, the more attuned, the more present with each other we can be, the transformation accelerates. That's the highest that we can provide.

Question 2: What Is Your Current Subjective Truth About the Conflict in Korea?

If that's okay for you, William, I would love to ask one question and to do another round. As we said last time, we published the word clouds. We will do it again. We did already one round. Maybe, we do another round, now that I want you... Is that okay for you, William, if we do another?

William: Sure, of course. In fact, I was even thinking just to follow up on what you just said and then to turn to that would be beautiful.

Thomas: Yeah.

William: There's a way in which everything we're talking about, the reality we're talking about, it's a fractal, right? I've sensed that from the beginning, like wrestling with Korea. We think of Korea, "Okay, that's big. That's macro." But no, Korea is right here. It's the inner Korea inside of us. There's a civil war in that little peninsula, that's a civil war inside of us. There's a way in which every one of us is tuning in. I'm wondering, just before we go to your question, if we could two questions here. I want to ask, just to do a little experiment, because you're talking about there's a global nervous system, right? Now what does that mean, a global nervous system? I like to ask you all, this will literally take a minute, but to go back to the Q&A box.

Look inside of yourself for a moment and ask yourself, what is your current, your current individual—what's inside of you, what's your subjective truth, what's your experience right now—how do you feel this conflict over Korea? How does it feel to you? What's the feeling inside of you? If you had one word, one word in the Q&A box, what's your feeling at this precise moment?

I'm seeing *melting, hopeful, clarity, surrender, ancient, optimism, unknown, abandonment, numb, potential, blind, wondering, possibility, resignation, protecting, hope, again hope, ownership. Hope* comes up a lot. *Scary, apprehension, brotherhood, profound possibility, cautious, timely, compassion, uncertainty, balance, easing, tricky, curious. Curious* comes up a number of times. *Hopeful* again, *raw edges, greater good, hope, more open, responsibility, doubt, trustful, distracted, empathy, curious* again, *anxiety, exploration, hope, surprising. Hope* comes up, *hopeful, so longing, gratitude for mystery, confusion, unknown, mirror, compassion, newness.* That's beautiful, really beautiful.

[00:55:00]

One thing I'll just, again, this is an example of how the macro is the micro, the micro is the macro here. Thomas, you're talking about a global nervous system. I believe we just did a little one-minute experiment into how our individual systems constitute this global nervous system. Because before, when I asked that question of you, I remember, a few sessions ago, and I know you asked this question of your students at different times, but the one word that came up most for people when they went inside themselves and asked their experience of North Korea, was *numbness*, right? It was *numb, numbness*. They didn't feel anything. Now, just with this little experiment here with us all together as this collective third side, for a moment, if we did a word cloud there, I'm sure the word *hope, curious*, they would be quite large there.

There's our melting, there is kind of... there's a shift. This is a way in which we can use this technology that we're using right now, being on Zoom, and each person going in and looking at their own inner experience. I'm not asking them to reflect, I didn't ask you to reflect what you thought about what the world thought about it but just what it felt like, you, in the inner sanctum of your heart, what were you feeling at that moment? Then you can see: the deeper we go inside, the more universal it becomes. We got a picture of what... The global nervous system is beginning to open up around Korea, possibilities beginning to emerge. That is the work of the third side, of the conscious third side, is what we're engaged in. That's an experiment. Over to you, Thomas.

Thomas: Yeah, it's beautiful because that's, again, the same thing. If you think of the social body as a body and we think of all the collective traumatization as clouds of interference in the communication networks. When we see, let's say, a traumatized nervous system, most probably the areas in the body where the trauma gets stored, they have less wireless reception. When I come with my mobile phone and I sit such an area, I call it bad reception. But what if parts of my body live very often in the zone of bad reception? How would information flow there? How would we get informed? How would we collaborate?

The same thing is, I believe, in the global matrix, in the global social body, that there are areas that are more traumatized, areas that are less traumatized, and that has a very significant impact on the wireless reception and the capacity to collaborate and the capacity to exchange information and unleash collective intelligence.

As you said, if we pull together the resources, if we know how to resource the global nervous system and use those resources and focus them onto compassionate holding and hosting of situations, then I think more—maybe, more correct if we would say that the conflict between United States and Korea, or maybe all the parties that are involved, that are, maybe, also behind the scenes—that we hold that situation, but we hold it in a resourced third side. I think that's an amazing thing that you described before. What is global resourcing? How do we work, now that we know that energy, like alive electricity and energy and vitality, is a major resource in working with trauma? That's a major resource to work with more collective traumatizations or traumatized areas. That's an amazing art or skill to learn, and given the technology helps us a lot at the moment to get those more resourced networks that we have synced up together, on a global level. Then the nervous system and the global immune system actually can work as one. I think that's very hopeful.

William, do you want to add something to what we have said right now?

William: No. Actually, I think you were going to lead us into a question, another question, around quality.

[01:00:00]

Question 3: What Was the Quality of a Moment Where You Felt Seen?

Thomas: Right. Maybe, let's take a moment. Because I believe one important quality that I often hear during the calls but also, of course, also in life in general, is that when we see each other deeply—and I believe that goes way beyond kind of a narcissistic or egocentric need to be seen—when we see each other beyond our personalities, when we see each other more in the core of our being... And I would love for us to take a moment and if you can remember a situation when, through another human being, you felt deeply seen. Or maybe you have, we all have, maybe, moments in our life where we met somebody, somebody was in our life and we felt really deeply seen. You recall that moment.

What's the quality of a moment where you felt seen, let's say, in the depth of your soul? When you felt, whatever the moment provided for you, it was beyond the regular interaction. You could feel the echoes in the chambers of your soul, or beyond.

Let's sit with this for a moment. When I remember a moment that I felt deeply seen, what's the quality? Well, how did I feel? To see, there is a component in your body, in your emotions, your mind, your presence, the relation between the inside and the outside.

If you want, again, to type a word, what word describes the moment—a word; let's say, most probably, a word is not enough—but if you put it into a word that comes up in you. Again, let's put it into the Q&A.

Relief, expansion, joy, harmony, holy, relaxation, oneness, joy, love, relief, beauty, illumination, home, touching, touch, love, holiness, relief, fullness, innocence, unity, connection, tenderness, relief, alive, naked, love, held in vulnerability. You touch my heart. Timeless, known, warm, wholeness, spaciousness, love, pure, expansion, melting. Freedom. Peace.

[01:05:00]

Then we take a moment and see, okay, in that relational space between you and that person or that circumstance, if you look at the... so you gave, as I said, a description of your subjective experience. When you look at the whole situation, the whole relational space, and you look at the composition, what components, what composition came together or, with other words, what happened in the orchestra that such a moment emerged in your life?

Because we go through many moments, and maybe you wouldn't call every moment, "Oh, I felt deeply seen." There's something specific. What's the composition? All the musicians that play together for such a moment to emerge. Maybe, those moments are more rare but it seems that we all know it somehow, to certain extent. What happens in these moments? What is, for you, the composition?

The composition has a horizontal dimension, that's the relational space in the moment that we can see. I believe that composition, that orchestra has a vertical dimension that comes from the past, into the present, and includes the future. Where the love making of the future with the past becomes more obvious.

When you look at the horizontal and the vertical musicians that came together to create a moment of awe or a moment of deep intimacy, a moment of deep seeing, a moment of revelation, a moment of grace, a moment of blessing, a moment of love, inclusion, connection, wisdom, insight, understanding, heartfelt embrace, light, sacred moment.

As inner scientists, meditators, contemplators, mystics, of course we're also interested in the composition, in the practice of moments of seeing and what is the nature of that specific seeing that touches not only us as persons but it touches us in our souls, in our spirit. There's a much deeper echo in our being. Like certain interactions have a certain echo, a depth, and certain interactions we feel the reverberations go very deep. It goes into deep time, space time, deep space-time.

[01:10:00]

Question 4: How Can We Prepare for More Essential Moments in Our Life?

Also, when you look, what was the effect of that meeting, that moment, that interaction, that situation of deep seeing? How did it affect your life? How did it affect you as a human being?

In other words, most probably we call those moments essential. What's the nature of an essential moment? Why is an essential moment different than other moments?

Maybe, my last question, what is it that we can take from what we contemplated right now? What we can take from the insights, the composition of all the musicians into our practice so that our work in the world becomes more and more essential?

What can we learn just from this short contemplative journey? What are practices or what makes us more essential? That more and more moments of our life become essential moments. Is there anything we can do? Is an essential moment just grace? Is an essential moment something we can prepare ourselves for? What makes our work essential?

Well, I will come back to it again. Let's see, William, is there anything you love to add?

William: Yeah. Well very deep. Thank you. I'm grateful. Grateful to all of you, actually, for all the... yeah, just the way we're learning to play with each other. There are almost 300 people right now on this call. Each one is offering your essence there, through a word, and the word that points to the essence.

Let Go in Order to Let Flow

For me, Thomas, to your last question, which is a very deep contemplation of what, if anything, can we do, given that these are moments of grace, what can we do to prepare? What could I do to tune my instrument so I can hear the music, I can play the music?

[01:15:00]

Maybe, the biggest lesson I think I've learned in all these years of negotiation, mediation, is that the biggest obstacle to that flow, to that flow of abundance that I can bring to a conflict situation, whether I'm involved or whether, as usual, I'm a third party: the biggest obstacle is myself. It's right here. The biggest obstacle in a difficult situation is not the person on the other side of the table, it's the person right here, on this side of the table. It's the person I look at in the mirror in the morning and it's my own natural tendency to react.

And the biggest preparation I could do is, as I was just describing, before that first meeting with President Chavez, is to let go. It really is to let go. It's scary to let go because in situations like those situations, the situations we are all called upon, in conflict, there's tension, there's constriction, and so there's a natural human tendency to want to control because the stakes are so high. The hardest thing to do in that situation is to let go—or to *consciously* let go; it's not about unconscious letting it all go—it's consciously, mindfully, slowly letting go. Let go in order to let flow, really. Then, in that moment, in those moments of emptiness, in that space that gets created by letting go, then there's a trust that, in the right moment, at the right time, something will emerge: some words will emerge, some new possibility will emerge.

It's really emptying the glass so that the glass can be filled anew in ways that we can't possibly expect. But it requires, in some ways, leaving aside everything that I've already learned. Leaving aside all the patterned behaviors, all the words, and so on, to just let it all go and then see what's going to emerge in that moment. That, for me, is the key. It's my key, what I've learned. If I'm the biggest obstacle, if I'm what gets in the way of my own instrument, then the best thing I can do at that particular point, having prepared everything—letting go doesn't mean not preparing and learning and doing all the things—but at that particular moment, to show up and be present. I have to throw aside all of the notes, throw aside everything and get out of my own way, really, to allow, to listen to what's wanting to emerge in that moment.

Thomas: I think we should soon transition to the Q&A section of this call. I think we started, also, a transition from the collective dimension, which we will still look at a little bit more, but we are transitioning, also, here, throughout the course, to the transpersonal part of our exploration, which I think is a huge factor in everything that we are talking about.

We will publish, again, the three word clouds for contemplation, that we produced together today. I think that's a very lovely little way to experience ourselves as a whole team or group here, on the call, and check in with, whatever, how William called it, a more global aspect of our nervous systems.

[01:20:00]

At least I want to continue next time to look a bit more at what are essential moments, what's the nature of essence. What makes us essential and what are the practices that we can practice to prepare ourselves for more essence. Then we look at deep seeing—and maybe they're anyway, most probably, very similar.

What can I do in my life to provide that which is so healing, so revealing, so sacred, so intimate. Which means seeing another human being beyond the obvious surface representation but that we learn to sharpen our eyes and hearts, and bodies, and spirit to learn to be deeply in tune and to speak to the parts that really matter, to speak to the parts in our soul that really matter.

When William said that the Shambhala Warriors are equipped with insight and compassion, I think the quality of deep seeing of the Shambhala Warrior is a combination of deep, deep compassion and love for life and love of humanity, and the deep insight for revelation of the future in the current moment.

Q&A: “Please Share Any Experiences Where Thomas or William Used Space to Engage a Party that Did Not Want to Engage.”

William: First of all, I would say that that, at least for me, in my experience, that is often the case. So much so that, after co-authoring *Getting to Yes*, that was, maybe, the question I got most, was, “How do you negotiate with people who don't want to negotiate? How do you cooperate with people who don't want to cooperate?” I think it's a question we all sit with because when the other person does want to, now that's a lot easier, of course. It's like the primal thing—they want to find a way. And then, yes, you have difficulties and everything like that, but you can get through them. But what if they don't want to? At least that's their initial stance.

For me, I wrote my second book in that series on that question which is, it was called *Getting Past No*. It wasn't by getting yes but getting past no, that no of not even wanting to engage in the first place. For me, what I learned from it goes back to the balcony, that the first thing I need to do when I encounter that is not to try to treat that person but to treat myself, because there was an initial reaction inside me. When I meet someone who doesn't want to engage—there might be a reaction of fear or frustration or rejection, shutting down; in other words, their shutting down triggers, in me, me shutting down—the first thing I needed to do was to go to the balcony, to really understand and listen to myself and those feelings, to clear that so that I can open up even as they shut down, that I can find inside myself the ability to respect them even as they don't respect me. That I can find in myself the ability or the capacity to give even if they're just, they're not giving. Because if the whole patterning of conflict is, it's like we get into a dance. They attack—we attack back. They shut down, dig in their positions—we dig into our positions. And there's a kind of way in which we pattern.

[01:25:00]

For me, the whole secret in negotiation, the greatest power that we have is the power to change the game because there's almost like a pull. When they do something, we do the same thing to defend ourselves against their very behavior, and then I'm playing the same game that they're playing. The question is, how can I change the game? The only way I can change the game is to go back to what Thomas was saying, is to find... go to the balcony. Find that spaciousness inside myself so that there is the possibility of actually doing something different. It's the possibility of turning what often becomes a face to face confrontation, where each side digs into their positions, and we turn that, we change the game, we almost move the focus, because that's one of the greatest powers that we have in negotiation is the power to move the spotlight for a moment, from positions onto interests.

I ask myself, from that balcony, then, I listen to that person. I listen and I ask myself the question, why? Why is it that they don't want to engage? What's really going on there? What's motivating that person?

The key for me is to go to the balcony and, from a balcony perspective of non-reactivity, of creating space, to then listen deeply, and then begin to inquire with that person and be curious and say, "Well, that's curious. You don't want to engage."

Instead of trying to compel the person to engage or to persuade the person to engage, to let go of any attachment to trying to change their mind, realizing that only they can change their own mind. The only way to listen to that is to listen and be curious. Why is it that you don't want to engage? What is it?

If they don't want to give an answer, I can often find the answers in myself. If I put myself in their shoes and say, well, I wouldn't want to engage if I were in their shoes either—because they see me or they see the situation as threatening, they see that situation... For me, that's the key, is to go to the balcony, listen, try to understand what is it, why is it they don't want to engage, and then address that rather than address the issue.

Thomas: Yeah. I don't have so much to say to this because everything that you said I agree with. Maybe, just another phrasing of the same thing, is that we need to be aware, moment to moment to moment, how we step into the movie of somebody else, how we become the actors and the actresses in the movie of another person. There's always an energetic transference of an inner state, and if I'm not aware of the offering, unconsciously I become part of the offering. That's how we create patterns. And everything that you said, William, is a way how to disentangle the patterns and how to be generous when there is no generosity, how to be trustful when there seems to be distrust. I think that's actually the way how our nervous system really hosts that which we want to reject and that actually sends an impulse back that is different. I believe that's deeply effective.

Q&A: Using Technology for Being an Effective Third-Sider from Afar

Participant 1: My question is around being the third-sider. You talked, in earlier sessions, about this tradition of sitting around the fire, listening, being part of a village, I think. William, you said this is part of the tradition that we've had for a long time. I'm thinking now, in this situation now, with North Korea and so on, we've had the opportunity to be third-siders that are kind of present, with the Olympics, because the spotlight has very obviously been on the conflict, so that the conflict parties have felt that we're there. But I'm thinking about... can we be third-siders and play a role even if the conflict parties don't know that we're holding the third side?

[01:30:00]

That's my question because I'm thinking there are many, many situations in the world where we're far away, for one thing, but also even if we're not so far away, it might be... I find, just in my own city, where there're conflicts, it might be... it might feel too dangerous to even intervene or be close. Yeah, that's my question.

William: What beautiful question. You're right. The third side is our most ancient heritage, our most ancient human heritage, going back hundreds of thousands, maybe millions of years, to the origins of humanity of sitting around the campfire, the whole community, listening, as I witnessed, hiding the poison arrows out in the desert, hiding the weapons of war and then listening, talking, and dancing, and calling in the wisdom of the Gods. That power of the community to serve as a crucible, within which conflicts get transformed, that's the power of the third side. The third side is us. Each one of us is a third side, or even...

And I would say, to your question, is: yes, it's definitely possible for us to be third-siders even if the parties themselves don't realize it. In fact, I would affirm that in fact that's what we've been doing here on this call and on these calls, is we've been a collective third side for, say, the situation in Korea even though the parties have no idea that were sitting around our circle here. But we're holding, we're witnessing, we're listening, we're holding space, we're holding the possibility of hope—and at least at an energetic level, that affects things, and also in a very practical way.

Myself, I'm taking sustenance from all of us. I'm headed, actually, to Washington in two hours. I'm taking the energy of this call into direct conversations with some of the parties, directly. Also, that same process has been going on in North Korea and South Korea. Yes, the parties may not be aware of it, but it's a collective conscious phenomenon that's taking place. I do feel that, even though the parties probably did not *feel* it—in the sense of *make the rational connection*—the Olympics energetically play the role of melting, of thawing out the collective numbness that humanity has, that all of us have, around Korea. Then emotions can begin to flow.

I could feel it. I could see it even in the reactions of the parties. I believe—I have no way of knowing this for sure—but I believe that this new dialogue, these new possibilities are emerging because there is a third side phenomenon here that, in some sense, the third side, the community, the world community, by putting its focus, it's positive focus on this peninsula, of attention and admiration, and awe, and beauty of all that was unfolding during the Olympics and is unfolding right now during Paralympics, that creates an atmosphere that's conducive to people saying, "Well, maybe there is another way out of this situation."

I do believe very strongly that it is possible to be a third-sider from afar—with your thoughts, your prayers, your emotions, your meditations. If all of us can learn, and these are the new technologies that Thomas and I are here to encourage us to explore, is where the new technologies allow us to do that remotely. It's remote, that remote third-sider practice. I think, in this world today, we need more and more and more of that. We need to use the new technologies to create the global, the virtual campfires that will allow conflicts, small and large, to be transformed—because that's another thing I would say is, again, Korea is not some far off place. It's right here. Just when I asked you what you felt, it's right there. It's part of all of us.

[01:35:00]

I'm just giving it as an example but, in the end, there's no sense of small and large. It's all one thing. We are one body of humanity sitting with a question of how we deal with these stuck conflicts that are trauma-based. How we move them? They happen to manifest in the relationship between a couple or between a parent and a child or, in the larger sense, in averting a nuclear conflagration—but it's all the same thing. It's all the same thing. That's the challenge that we face. That's the opportunity that we have right now.

This, what we're doing right now, is a laboratory. It's an experiment in allowing our hearts to all come together and manifest new possibilities for humanity and for ourselves, in our own individual lives.

Q&A: The Marriage of Horizontal and Vertical Attunement

Participant 2: Thank you both, William and Thomas, for taking us through these questions. It really touched me. At one time, William has said, “As I tune my instrument.” For me, tuning my instrument is a bit of a vertical attunement, if you like, sensing how am I connected to the larger whole. To what extent when I do that, then, it leads me or it creates conditions for horizontal attunement, attuning with others where they are? I am just curious about this alchemical process, if you like, that happens within one individual but also, just echoing what you just said William, it can also happen within a group. That’s what I’m curious about. Thank you so much.

William: Such a good question, Alain. Such a good question. Yeah. I think this is really one of the key questions that we’ve been sitting with in this course, and you just crystallized it beautifully, because we’re talking about inner and outer but another way of metaphorically doing it is the vertical with the horizontal. I noticed this, as an anthropologist, let’s say, as I mentioned us sitting around the campfire with these groups of San bushmen, this is just an example, there was the horizontal level of the whole community gathering together around the campfire, sitting around the campfire. Then, every night—and these sessions would go on for day after day—but every night, I think I had mentioned this, they would sit around the campfire, in the Kalahari Desert under the stars—you can imagine the firmament—they would call in the wisdom of the gods. They would do this trance dancing, too, and then fall down and have dreams. They were integrating the horizontal third side of the community with the vertical third side of the larger whole. My question is, how do we do that? How can we do that right now?

I feel this is what we’re doing in this course, we’re learning to practice how do we activate horizontally the third side and integrate that with, integrating the higher voice of Source. Then I would say there’s almost a third dimension in there—I don’t know if it’s a third dimension—of technology, of how do we use technology as were doing it right now?

My hope is that right now this little experiment we’re doing will blossom, and there will be other experiments like this, many others that will create this field. How do we use the technology to activate the horizontal as we use the inner science technology to activate the vertical? Then, how do marry those two?

I think, maybe, Thomas actually will have greater, deeper insight into that marriage of the vertical and the horizontal, but that's the key challenge with the third side. It's not just a question of gathering the community together because if you just gather the community together and they're not attuned to be Shambhala Warriors, the community can often make things worse, as we know, because if we haven't done our own inner work then how can we constitute a real third side? If we haven't emptied our own vessels, if we haven't listened to ourselves, how can we possibly listen to others?

[01:40:00]

The question is, how do we create that horizontal space of the community together with the vertical space of opening it up to the higher voices that come through?

Thomas: Yes, maybe a few sentences from my side. I believe that we definitely need very good and functional practices to develop the vertical, whatever, connection. I think we have thousands of years of empiric research of many, many people that spent their whole life doing that and coming up with amazing maps and amazing levels, the level descriptions of consciousness.

There is a whole science, in the contemplative practices, that can teach us a lot. We can learn a lot. We can learn a lot about the nature of how energy unfolds. Because the vertical development is, in a way—like in the mystical understanding, there are two different worlds. There's the world of God and then there is the world of the human being. The world of the human being means that I bow down in front of that which I will never be able to understand, just through a grace I can. Which means there is no way that my separate mind will grasp the nature of the Divine, but through surrender and devotion and bowing, I can receive the blessing that teaches me.

The world of energy—so once, out of nothing, something has been born—the laws of energy and how energy manifests through us and through life and through the universe, moment to moment to moment, that's something we can master. The vertical dimension is how to train our nervous system to be like the instrument, and as clear and available and open and spacious as possible, to learn and be willing to be an ongoing eternal student of life. Saying all of this means that I learn about the mystical laws of how energy unfolds and manifest as matter, as a world that we see, that we live in everyday, and I believe behind this, there is a hidden language of creation that we can learn about.

But then there is another way, like when we say the cross is the horizontal and vertical meeting in our hearts. In order to train the relational dimension, we need to start from the other side—which means, first of all, that we all have been born into a fragmented world. We just know the world as it is because we have been born into it. For us, many aspects of the world seem to be kind of normal. We might say, “That’s the way the world is.” But I believe that the nature of fragmentation and the nature of separation and emotional fragmentation and physical fragmentation and disembodiment are all good reasons why the relational capacity that we can develop as we grow up as children and teenagers and become mature, the relational capacity is actually something that should be there already. If it’s not, then it was hurt.

The practice of the vertical dimension, of how energy unfolds and the involutory and evolutionary drive of humanity, is something that I can train through the contemplative sciences. And the horizontal, I need to ask the question, why isn’t it there anyway? Because that’s something, these are structures of consciousness that we already learned, we practiced for hundreds of thousands of years. Basically, it should be there. How to educate and grow, and be a parent, and grow up, and all of this—we do it; since hundreds of thousands of years, we are doing it. By now, we should already know how to do it. If it’s not working, then the question is, what happened that I’m naturally horizontally connected?

[01:45:00]

I think that’s where the contemplative science needs the integration work, needs the healing work, needs the shadow work, needs psychotherapy, needs trauma work, needs attachment understanding—where inner and outer science really meet. I believe, if we can practice this together, then it’s actually very powerful because the light that comes in through the vertical practice comes in, but all the disassociated areas that are unhooked and are not anymore part of the electricity network might explode, in a way, and come back into our conscious awareness as kind of shockwave, through spiritual practice.

Or the light can’t touch them because they are separate bubbles in our, whatever, in the complexity of who we are. For this we need restoration work. That’s the work, I believe, how we as human beings develop humility and develop a deeper understanding how we need to take care of the wounds, our wounds, the wounds of our ancestors and of our collectives, in order to become truly whole again because that’s usually what prevents the horizontal availability.

That's, again, we're coming back that our spiritual practice is to reveal the love-making of the future with the past. And the present moment and this cross that you are talking about are basically the outcome. If you use the best of the contemplative sciences and the best of the integrative sciences or therapeutic practices, so I think that's a good mix for now.

William: As I listen to the question, Alain, then I listen to you, Thomas, it just came to me. Just the message, the vertical message, of course, is the message of unity. That's what's being called upon us, right? It's unity, and that's what we see. In the vertical dimension we see it so clearly, that there is no separation. That separation is an illusion. Then we come into the horizontal dimension, and it's all fragmentation, it's all separation, so much conflict, and there is this kind of dissonance between what we observed and what we learned in our vertical practice and the horizontal world that we come into. That's where I think mediation, as we're understanding it, is a sacred practice of actually aligning, doing the very hard work of bringing out the unity that's beyond what immediately appears as conflict, stagnation, everything. There's an underlying unity there. Mediation is a sacred practice of revealing the underlying unity that we know it's true through the vertical practice.