

“MY HEART ALWAYS WANTS TO HEAR”

I don't consider myself a dharma teacher. That's way too formal for me and just not my role. And it's not the way I think of myself either. If I ask myself "What is my relationship to dharma?" That is, if I drill down and dig deep as to why dharma is so important to me, what I find is something like a hidden spring of pure dharma, whose flow in me is an unstoppable wish to share dharma with all sentient beings. That's it! Who can explain it?

I want to share the joy that I find in dharma with anyone interested and if I can explain or demonstrate the value of the dharma, I'm whatever that is. But I would be embarrassed to call myself a dharma teacher. I'm just learning this stuff.

An astrology teacher? Yes, I am that and a good one. Dharma? No, I'm not that. As I understand it, this inner urge and drive within me is my particular form of Bodhicitta, what is called "awakened heart." That I have, thanks to the blessings of my teachers.

As to where this all came from? It came from way back when I was young. When I met my wife Margaret in 1971 and married her only months later (we have been married going on 48 years), that was an iconic event for me – life-changing!. Our first child, Lotis, came in 1973, but before then I had a kind of spiritual breakthrough, not on drugs or anything. Just naturally and a total surprise.

This was in December 29, 1972 at 10:00 to 11:00 AM. When I had this major opening, a kind of spiritual breakthrough. Of course, as an astrologer I have a time and date. LOL

I was in Detroit the night before, and had stayed up late talking to a very dry occult scholar who definitely had a bad case of the "Ivory Tower."

Anyway, I woke up the next morning with a terrible headache. It was so bad that I found my body dropping to the floor where I began to go through some very strange motions, over and over. Later I was told that this is a traditional kriya or yoga asana sometimes called "The Cat." It involved vigorously bending my body at the waist much like a cat throwing up a hair-ball -- probably more than you want to know. Anyway, it was spontaneous and quite natural. I simply could not 'not' do it.

The upshot of all this was that through this exercise, and very gradually, I cast off (like a snake sheds his skin) not only my headache (and all of the intellectual accumulation from the night before), but also my entire tendency to leave the body in

'intellectualisms' of any kind. That was the outer part of the experience, the physical. There was also an inner component.

I won't say too much about the inner meaning of it all, but suffice it to say that for a time (quite some time) after that I was able to participate consciously at what I can only call "communion," how people commune in the moment. I was aware that the mind continually gives birth to the moment and that when uncomfortable things arise in the mind when we are with others, everyone sees them, but that we all tend to turn inward simultaneously and take it personally, and do not refer to it publicly. It is like the proverbial elephant in the room. We were like sea anemone, if you have ever seen them, opening and closing in the moment as thoughts of joy or fear appeared in the group mind. I know this would take a whole blog just to describe, so here I will just touch on it lightly. I just did.

And in my vision at the time and it went on for days, I witnessed a group of us, our minds opening to the present moment like flowers opening and then, when a hard thought would come up (or a fear), everyone saw it (perhaps not consciously) and would close back up simultaneously, opening and closing in unison, and no one was aware this. I was aware for that time.

During the physical asana or posture I was spontaneously performing, a graphic image formed in my mind. It was a symbol of the heart and the flame, intertwined as one. Call it the inner and outer, the young and the old, whatever. It literally symbolized my experience and it became a symbol I have used ever since. With that symbol I formed what I then called the "Heart Center," a sanctuary for communion studies. The true nature of communion was what I saw in the experience I had. It was mind boggling, but totally natural. That is how the Heart Center was born. That's been going for 47 years.

Later, when I formed an official dharma center, my root teacher, the Ven. Khenpo Karthar Rinpoche allowed us to keep that name and we became the "Heart Center KTC (Karma Thegsum Chöling) which we remain today, although now as a study group.

Perhaps this account will help to explain why I am into sharing dharma as best I can. I very much resonate to the "Song of Songs 5:2 "I Sleep but My Heart is Awake." By that verse, I mean that despite our conceptual mind chattering on, our heart intuitively knows. This poem I wrote perhaps says it better.

HEART HEARING

Although I won't,
Often listen,

My heart,
Always,
Wants to know.

[Graphic by me years ago, perfected by my dear friend Stanley
Doctor.]

