

## Charles' Number One Practice

### Introduction

Many people reading this article know that Charles has been my teacher for over nine years. In the last month Charles retired from teaching, though a teacher never stops teaching. Their influence becomes an active force in a student's life; even after they stop meeting with their students. This article is written in appreciation for Charles' influence in my life.

Many spiritual teachers tell their students that meditation is the most important practice. Charles did talk of the importance of meditation and to meditate, though meditation is not the number one practice that he recommends. Charles' number one practice is to write daily; and keep writing to open the channel, more and more, to Divine Guidance through writing. Charles has said that writing is the hardest, and most the valuable, practice to develop of the practices that he recommends.

### A Very Recent Input About Writing

This week a senior SRF monk who I've worked with for many years surprised me with an answer to a question I asked. The question was: "Do you write to receive guidance?" We've worked together for years and I've never asked him this question. Before I finished saying the last word, guidance, he answered with a vibrant "Yes." The answer surprised me, and what also surprised me was the speed that the question was answered and the emphatic way that he answered.

He did speak for quite a while about writing. He said that he writes every night as part of his spiritual practice. He said that writing has transformed his life and that writing has deepened his connection with his Guru. In his spiritual practice, meditation is most important. Though, because writing every day has also been a practice for him for many years, this practice of writing also is very significant.

### My Journey In Writing Before Meeting Charles

In my first year in college I kept a journal where I'd write of the day's events. It was mostly writing of what had happened that day; infrequently insights would come in addition to reporting about the day.

When I was in chiropractic college, I practiced writing in a couple of different ways. I'd keep writing and writing without stopping or thinking. I'd also let the pen do any movements that came; sometimes words and sometimes just the pen moving in random ways. I didn't trust what was coming through in writing as a clear guide. I gave up writing after many months.

In the many years between college and meeting Charles, I would occasionally write/journal, though I don't remember writing feeling significant for me except when writing was part of an eight day intensive in 1992. Writing was far from being enough of a regular practice for me to gain some traction and depth.

### My Early Years Of Writing With Charles

Charles, right from the beginning of working with him, made it clear that writing could greatly enhance spiritual growth. He kept telling people: "Go direct. Go right to the source of the greatest wisdom that you'll ever receive. The greatest wisdom is inside you. God wants to talk with you and guide you. Writing is a direct way to build a stronger and stronger connection to God."

Charles also said that if guidance came and if you repeatedly didn't follow it, then, after a while, guidance would stop. Why would God/Spirit/Higher Self keep giving you guidance if you're not going to use it?

Two aspects were strong in stopping me from writing in the early years of being with Charles. The first aspect was the resistance in me to write. Something in me didn't want to write; my mind didn't want to be usurped from its position as the decision maker. The second aspect was that I trusted Charles when he said that if we repeatedly didn't follow the guidance, then the guidance would stop. I wasn't ready to turn my life over to guidance. If I didn't write, then I wouldn't have the dilemma of whether to follow the guidance or not to follow the guidance. No writing, no guidance, no dilemma; and also no additional help.

I could go many days and sometimes even weeks without writing. I knew inwardly that what Charles said was true; that the greatest wisdom and help is within. Charles said it's like having a spiritual master available to talk with you. It was up to me to open to this help.

### Gradually

Gradually over the first three years, I opened more to writing. I was cautious, scared of what may come through in writing. Charles assured us that God wouldn't ask us to do anything that was not for our highest good. Since God wouldn't ask us to anything that wasn't in our best interest. He also directed us to use common sense when it came to following what came through in our writing. If it comes through in writing to jump off a bridge, then use common sense and don't follow that.

I've never known anyone to tell me, in the years that I've been with Charles, that the guidance that came through in writing wasn't in their best interest; and I've talked with many of Charles' students about writing through the years. The opposite was always said; how writing helped them so much. Writing helps to deepen our spiritual connection; when we're doing well and when we're stressed.

It was a combination of my growing trust in writing and in talking with others who wrote daily that helped me to continue, and to deepen in, writing. I found the time during the three day retreats and the time during the one day workshops to give me a boost in writing. It was easier for me to write in these settings than on my own at home. These repeated recharges to writing helped me greatly in developing the habit of daily writing. The group meetings that I hold almost always have a time of writing; to help those coming to the meetings to deepen in their writing practice.

What helped me keep going through the hard early stages of writing was seeing the people that came before me write and write and write. I saw, without any exceptions that I know of, that the people who were writing more seemed to be traveling faster on the spiritual path.

I remember when the shift happened and I knew, without a doubt, that what was coming through in writing was always in my best interest. This helped boost my frequency of writing. I was no longer in doubt about the guidance that was coming through in writing. I believe that the greatest wisdom is already inside me, that writing helps me access this wisdom, and that this wisdom is always in my best interest.

Writing went from resistance and questioning its merit to being a daily practice. Gradually over the first three years, my trust in writing deepened. In the last years, I've been writing daily. Very rarely is there a day that I miss writing.

### A Different Path

Writing has influenced me to make many different choices over the years. Without the guidance that came through in writing, I would have chosen to do other things that what the writing said.

Of course, I don't know what my life would have been like without following the guidance from writing. I do know that I never thought that I'd be doing this well, and living in such perpetual blessing. This doesn't mean that every moment is bliss or even comfortable. I'm living with more joy, happiness and appreciation than I knew was possible. The inner gripe is gone.

### A Current Example Related To Writing

The group has been essentially closed for a year and a half. One person was added early this year and nobody was added the previous year. The main reason that the group is closed is because sharing takes time and our meetings are long with the number of people that we currently have in group.

Currently two people are interested in joining the group. Both of these potentially new people could step right in and work. They would probably fit in without feeling like they're coming into a place that is overwhelming for them. It wouldn't be like a friend of mine that joined an experienced bicycling group and soon found that he couldn't keep pace with the group.

In bringing in new people I need to find out if it's good for the new person and also good for the group. Charles limited his retreats to nineteen people because he said that he needed time to work with each person so that they can open.

If I were to choose which person to add, I would choose the woman (there is a woman and a man who want to join). Writing said that the woman isn't ready. To me, she seems ready. She is absolutely willing and wants to join the group. Writing said to talk with the man and then to write more after talking with him. The writing didn't say if he was to be added or not. This is one example of how writing makes a difference in my life.

### No Dilemma and Some Discomfort

I cannot remember the last time I had a sense of dilemma; a sense of 'what am I to do?' that lasted for any significant period of time. I watch friends, people that I work with in my practice and people in the group that have, at times, a great dilemma about what to do. I watch them hem and haw, weigh out the pros and cons and wrestle with what they should do. None of this prolonged dilemma happens with me. Writing makes it very clear what to do.

I don't always get an answer of what to do when I write. At times, because I don't get an answer, I know that the choice is up to me. And yet, at these times, there is not a great sense of dilemma.

### Gaining Confidence In What Comes Through When Writing

In the last meeting a woman in the group said that she wasn't confident enough in her writing to trust what comes through. She writes sporadically; sometimes not writing for days. She hasn't developed enough trust by writing daily over a long period of time. I understand why she doesn't fully trust what comes through in writing. I remember when I wasn't so sure of the accuracy of the guidance.

One suggestion I have when you have a question of whether it's true guidance or not is to write about the same question about three times over a period of days or weeks. If the answer keeps coming through the same and if you're not feeling an inner conflict while writing, then these are good indicators that the guidance will help you.

We've all had the feeling when someone was lying to us. We couldn't know for sure that they were lying, but something didn't feel right as the person was talking with us. Similarly, our intuition will help us to know if the guidance coming through writing is correct.

Something not feeling right can be that the writing is not true or it could be that the mind is 'throwing a monkey wrench' into the mix to stop us from following the guidance. Our mind will want to stay in control, so the mind will throw in doubt in when it can. As you write more, you'll get a better and better feeling if what is coming through in writing is guidance or if your mind is murking up (or making up) the message.

A big part of our spiritual work is to find out what right action really is. Writing, in the way that Charles' taught me, has brought me to, what feels to me, right action many times; whereas my mind would have told to me take a different action.

May all beings live in their Divine Fullness.

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