

## Pre-Entry

This article is inspired by Richard and by my many, many experiences of the 'Pre-Entry Show.' *Pre-entry refers to the days, hours or minutes before we come to/enter a meeting, a workshop or a retreat.*

### Who Are You?

Each person will find this answer for themselves. Here is my brief answer. I am peace and love. The Buddhists say that we're already perfect within; just like a diamond that's not yet shining only because it's covered by dirt that needs to be removed. From this place of peace and love, I can live my life. Do I always live from who I am? No.

### My Familiar-Voice Is Not Who I Am

There are different voices inside of my body and mind that tell me things. There is a voice that judges myself and others. There's a voice that tells me to say or to do certain things that are not in my best interest. In short, there's a voice that will 'coach me' about what to say or what to do that is not Who I Am. This voice does not serve the best interests of my Natural Self or the best interest of others.<sup>1</sup> *My familiar-voice is any voice that is not my Natural Self. It's a voice coming from my past – my past emotions, my past thoughts, my past feelings, my past experiences.*

I've lived from Who I Am enough to know, most of the time, when it's really Me or when it's my familiar-voice that is talking. There are times when it's harder to know if it's my Natural Self or if it's my familiar-voice that is guiding-advising-deciding. Fortunately this uncertainty is becoming less and less. And I have the tool of writing to greatly help during these uncertain times.

### Pre-Entry Resistance

I'm so fortunate that people were doing this work with Charles for many years before I started with my teacher. They told me something that at first I thought was strange. They told me that the more resistance they had about coming to a meeting, the more important it was for them to be at the meeting. I experimented with what they said to me. I didn't take it as my truth.

There have been many times when my resistance to going to a retreat or to a workshop was very high. I experimented and I almost always chose to go to the retreat or to the workshop when my pre-entry (pre-retreat) resistance was strong. And sure enough, I found, for me, that what they said was true. The strong resistance that was wanting to hold me back from being at the meeting was wanting to hold me back from being more free from the influence of the familiar-voice. And that the meeting helped move and release some of what was holding me back in life.

### So Odd

During a meeting I'll sometimes ask a person (an adult): Who is the only person stopping you from being happier? Who is the only person holding you back from living more free, more joyful? The people always answer that they're the only person stopping themselves from being more happy, more free, more joyful. This is very odd.

We want freedom and yet we also stop this freedom. Only we hold ourselves back; keep ourselves living small and guarded. When people talk of wanting to feel free, it's being free from their own self limiting beliefs and actions.

### The Pre-Entry Show

I've gone to about seventy weekend retreats with my teacher and to many one day workshops, so I've had a lot of experience at 'the pre-entry show.' *The pre-entry show is what goes on inside of body and mind in the days or hours or minutes before I enter the retreat or workshop.*

If my resistance is high in the days or hours before a meeting, I now say hooray! I now know that I'm going. I know that my stuff (the thoughts, feelings and emotions in me) is being kicked up and challenged. My familiar-voice will complain and bitch about going to a meeting. The more bitching and justifying of why not to go, the more motivation now for me to go.

### So Odd Part Two

We all want freedom (from ourselves) and more joy. The so odd part is that the familiar-voice (old thoughts, old emotions, old feelings) that limits us wants to keep making the decisions about what we do. This familiar-voice, this way of being, our ego (or however we want to describe it) wants to keep the status quo of living small and living from fear.

Our familiar-voice is afraid of change. Change could kill us. If we keep going as we're going, then at least we'll stay alive. This familiar-voice is wanting to protect us. The familiar-voice doesn't want to leave. It thinks it's doing a great job of keeping us alive.

### **The Familiar-Voice: The Incompetent Boss For Happiness**

For many people that are reading this, their life is over half way lived. Are you as happy as you want to be? Are you as happy as you know you can be?

The familiar-voice's job is to make sure that you survive. Its job is not having you find happiness. If finding happiness was its job, then you'd be as happy as you want to be.

The familiar-voice also has a destructive side, a dark side to it, that can lead you into multiple bad decisions and that can lead you into addiction. Darn. It's looking like the familiar-voice is not the best commander-in-chief for you to have the best life that is possible.

### **Our Decision**

There comes a time when a parent needs to let the child go and live and make mistakes and learn and grow. If a parent continues to tell a child what to do and when to do everything, then the child will be miserable. To live from freedom and joy, there comes a time when the familiar-voice needs to become more quiet and our Natural Self needs to take the lead in our life and in our decisions.

We need to decide what voice we're going to live from; from our familiar-voice or from our Natural Self. Actually this decision is made hundreds of times each day. And unfortunately most people have been listening to and following their familiar-voice.

This habit of listening to and following the familiar-voice is so strong that it's no mystery of why so much resistance can come up about going to a meeting. The familiar-voice wants to stay in control.

### The Trickier Voice For Me: The Take-Care-Of-Yourself Voice

It's obvious to me that the more that the familiar-voice kicks and screams and makes excuses of why not to go to a meeting, the more that I (my Natural Self) want to go to that meeting. The bitching-complaining-resistance voice will usually stop most people from going to meeting after meeting after meeting. So, for most people, the resistance voice wins out.

When the strong resistance voice isn't winning and we continue to choose to come to the meetings, then another voice can come in. The take-care-of-yourself voice. It's not as obvious for me (as it is when the resistance voice is speaking) when this much softer version of the familiar-voice says so caringly: 'You really need to take care of yourself tonight, don't go.' The voice may also tell me: 'you know you'll be tired tomorrow,' 'you're better off resting tonight,' 'you can be here and work on yourself tonight,' 'you don't really want to take that drive.'

Sometimes it's true that we need to rest. Though for me, most often, it's the familiar-voice taking another route to win it's point. The familiar-voice as 'I'm going to kick and complain and bitch until you listen voice' isn't working, so it masks itself in the softer voice of take-care-of-yourself.

I've had many opportunities to encounter this soft-and-caring-voice enough times to more easily recognize it. If I have doubt whether it's the familiar-voice or if it's my Natural Self, then I write.

### Entry

So we've made it to a meeting. We've gotten through the pre-entry show (if there was one). The pre-entry show is not needed, though some form of it usually comes up at some time; sometimes very strong, sometimes just a passing doubt about going, and sometimes our Natural Self is making the decision and we know that we'll be at the meeting.

Has there ever been a meeting where the extra energy of the group didn't noticeably help you gain something valuable or lose something that isn't serving you? There is a power, a help, in group work that is not there by ourselves. Every religion has people come together. They know the power of gathering together.

## **After The Meeting**

After the meeting we've got re-entry into our lives and potentially ongoing processing that started from the meeting. [Click here](#) to read a PDF version of the article Re-Entry. [Click here](#) to read a version on my website that is not PDF.

## **The Point Of No Return**

Our familiar-voice wanting to direct our life, the pre-entry resistance, the re-entry processing, and the on and off processing at any time (a.k.a. staying with uncomfortable emotions and uncomfortable feelings) are some of the reasons why so few people choose to stay with this work. The few that do stay all say that they don't regret for a second what they've gone through (and that they're very happy that they don't have to do it all over again). Everyone would want the transformation from listening to our familiar-voice to listening to and living as our Natural Self to be easier. It does get easier to live as our Natural Self, but the familiar-voice will do everything it can to stay in control and to get stronger.

There comes a point for everyone who stays with this work that they have a yes for continuing. It's not a matter of 'if' they'll continue. Yes, they will continue. Everyone that comes to this point of no return also recognizes that they need help. We can only get so far by ourselves. Group work is a way to go deeper than on our own. The people who have come to retreats regularly for twenty years know that they get more progress by going to a retreat than by staying home. No one who stays with this work ever wants to go back to how they were. The progress, the unfolding, the evolution never stops. Creation knows no end.

## **The Question**

When the 'pre-entry show' is playing strongly, what will you choose? It's a little bit like 'to be or not to be,' only it's 'to go or not to go.' That is the question.

## **Footnotes:**

- 1 (from the first page) Don Miguel Ruiz talks of a particular voice within each of us in his two CD set called 'The Voice of Knowledge.' I can tell you more about this.