

Returning To Love

The Past Is Not Past

All of the anger, resentment, hatred, fear, doubt, self-loathing, jealousy, envy and judgement that is inside of us is from the past. Some people refer to all of this as baggage. My teacher, Charles, likes to call all of this our 'stuff.' Stuff is all of the unresolved issues from our past; emotions, feelings and judgements that we carry and that limit our freedom and our happiness.

Some of the events that created the stuff that we carry are from so early in our life (crying for long periods of time in our crib, living with the fear and anger that was inside our parents, feeling rejected) that we don't have memories of them, though we carry the feelings of alienation, rejection, being unloved or being unlovable.

Also there are events that we've forgotten and we carry emotional wounds from these forgotten events. We also have memories of many of the events that we still carry stuff from. *We do not know the amount of emotional and mental anguish that is carried from these many 'stuff producing events' in our life; with much of the anguish being under the radar of our usual thoughts and feelings.*¹

What stops you from being fully happy now and now and now and now? It's something inside you. *It's the accumulated emotional and mental burdens, many unknown, that dull us from living the happy and fulfilling life that we know is possible.*

Many people have traveled to third world countries and they've seen the happiest children on earth. Their clothes may be tattered, they may not have abundant healthy food, and yet they are very happy. Many first world children have abundant food, clothing and shelter, and yet they are angry and unhappy. Happiness, truly, is an inside job.

How To Be Happy

Stuff gets in the way of our True Nature coming through. Take a few moments to feel inside and consider the following question. When you really feel love, is there any effort needed?

I went to a therapist decades ago. He asked me: “Do you know how to be happy?” I didn’t have a good answer. He said: “You’re happy when all of the other stuff, the anger, fear, greed, envy, jealousy and judgement is not there. Happiness is there when you’re not caught up in all of the other stuff.”

I really felt into what he said. I challenged what he said for months. I found it to be true. When I was happy, my stuff wasn’t active. When my stuff was active, I didn’t feel happy. For me, this was a revelation.

Three Parts To Our Group Work

There are three parts to the group work that we do. Release stuff, be gentle with ourselves and be present in our compassionate heart.

The last part may sound big – be in our compassionate heart. This is our True Nature; being compassionate. Anything else is a distortion of Truth. When our stuff isn’t limiting us, we’re automatically in our compassionate heart. Being in our compassionate heart just shows up. When this happens, there is no effort needed to be compassionate.

Releasing Stuff

One part of the group work that we help our stuff to release. *The events of the past are past. What is not past are our ongoing thoughts (judgements and conclusions, blaming and damning) and ongoing emotions (hurt, anger, fear, sadness) about the events of the past.*

An article, [Uncommon Happiness: Beyond The Limits Of Therapy](#), was recently written that addresses the work that we do in the group and of some of the ways that we help the past-stuff release. This article addresses happiness and how therapy can often lead to understanding without letting go of enough of the emotional and mental past-stuff to feel happy.

The group work uncovers unhealed layers inside us. It takes courage to go into the darkly held places inside us, and it usually takes a push too.

Venturing Into Our Stuff

As long as we stay within our comfortable or not so comfortable usual boundaries, little change happens. It’s when we venture out into the unknown that much can change. Think of the person who centuries ago stayed in their small village for their entire life.

Nothing much changed. They were not influenced by other cultures or by people outside their village. If this same person wandered away, they could become a much different person.

The group work is to take us outside our little village; to take us outside our usual limits of what's comfortable or not so comfortable so that we can expand more and more into our full, true self. It takes courage for the village person to wander off. It takes courage for us to go into our stuff; to go into the emotional and mental self-limiting feelings and thoughts that we carry.

All of the entertainment and ways of escape (keeping busy, drugs, alcohol, sex) are designed for us to feel better in the moment. *People in the group are being asked to do exactly opposite of what everyone wants to do. The people in the group are being asked to go into their uncomfortable feelings and thoughts; and also being asked to go into what is most uncomfortable.*

The people in the group are understanding more and more of what is being asked of them; including needing to be pushed to go where they've avoided going; into their darkest depths to bring Light to that which is dark.

My Unknown Stuff

Each of us carries quite a bit, or more truly said, a lot of stuff. I remember when I first met my teacher. He said in our first meeting that I had no idea how much stuff I had. In this statement he was also saying, but not in words, that I had a lot of stuff in me. I immediately told him that I agreed with him. I didn't know how much anger, fear, judgement, shame, envy, jealousy and doubt was inside of me. Through the eight plus years I've been with Charles, so many strong and Self-restraining feelings and thought-judgements have been released.

Going To Our Known and Unknown Stuff

I'm going to use a model through the rest of this article. I'm going to list anger as the first layer of stuff that we encounter as we feel inside and hurt-sadness-grief as the second layer.

These two layers can be in the opposite order. *If hurt-sadness-grief is the first layer, then anger is always under the hurt-sadness-grief.* It's good to feel the first layer fully (whether it's anger or hurt-sadness-grief).

Women, in general, will find hurt-sadness-grief more as the first layer than, in general, will men. Women, in general, be in the hurt-sadness-grief for a long time before they get to the anger that is co-existing (as the second layer) with the hurt-sadness-grief.

In general, it's easier for men to access anger and it's easier for women to access hurt-sadness-grief. Men can be in the anger for an extended time before they get to the hurt-sadness-grief that is co-existing (as the second layer) with the anger.

It's only when the second layer is fully felt and released that the first layer is at peace. Now let's begin with this model; knowing that layers one and two can be either anger or hurt-sadness-grief.

Anger: A Common First Layer Of Going Into Our Stuff

99.98% of the people on earth have anger inside them. Anger is not a natural state. Anger is a state of being reactive. Something provokes the feeling of anger. Anger shows up for a reason. The anger inside has been accumulated through many, many different events in our life, *and made into greater amounts by the many thoughts that continue about these past events.*

All of the people in the group have anger in them. The people in the group are beginning to experience more deeply the anger that is held within. There is a safety and a guidance when going inside ourselves when we're at a group meeting. This safety and guidance in the meeting allows a person to go more deeply and more fully into their anger. This feeling safe, feeling supported and prodded to go deeper creates a momentum for them to go into the layers below this first layer of anger.

Most people are very hesitant to go in this direction; hesitant to feel the seething energy of anger that is behind a lot of their hiding, masking and reacting. This is why so many people stay locked up; a prisoner of their own making. They either don't want to or don't know how to go more deeply into their known and unknown anger.

Three people in the group in the last two months have gotten very angry with me as they've gone deeper into their unknown anger. With the first two people, I was talking with them and I didn't have my hands on them. The third person I was pressing into his body while I pushed him with my words.

Each person *really* didn't like me at the time. People in the room were uncomfortable with what was occurring between each person and myself. Some people in the room were internally questioning what was happening.

Each of these three people ended up clearing a lot of held energy. The third person, a man, wanted to physically hurt me during this time (he didn't). I mean that: he really wanted to physically hurt me. That's how mad he was. He had the most obvious 'upside' from his anger explosion. The other two people also had big gains in experiencing what they're carrying, and in how the unknown held anger is binding them from living as Love.

Hurt-Sadness-Grief Under Anger: Layer Two Of Going Into Our Stuff

Hurt-sadness-grief is under every angry feeling. More and more people in the group are going into this second, deeper layer. Deeper healing takes place when a person touches into and stays with this second level. Staying with is not thinking about or indulging in. Staying with is feeling the hurt-sadness-grief without any commentary, without being sucked into and without pushing away from. Staying with is gentle.

When the hurt-sadness-grief is stayed with, as if holding a child through its tears until the child is again happy, the hurt-sadness-grief can heal. *When this healing is complete, there is no more anger (that is in the first layer and covering over the hurt-sadness-grief).* It can take a number of times of being with the hurt-sadness-grief before it resolves and releases.

[Note: If hurt-sadness-grief is the first layer, then staying with the anger underneath will greatly heal the hurt-sadness-grief.]

There is one more layer of healing, but first there is more to consider when gently staying with the charged emotional and thought energy of these first two layers.

Gently Staying With, Which Isn't Necessarily Gentle, and The Charge Discharging

Nothing exists without energy. Thoughts and emotions need energy to keep alive. The first two layers of anger and hurt-sadness-grief can have a lot of energy; thus they can very much influence our decisions and our lives. The stronger the thoughts and the emotions, the more energy and influence they have. Very little energy to the emotions and thoughts, and they have very little influence over us. No energy to the thoughts and emotions and they even don't exist.

When our anger or hurt-sadness-grief are strongly active, these emotions dominate our behavior. In gently staying with these emotions, they may be very forceful and demonstrative (we may cry, weep, scream or shake) and yet, we can caringly-gently be with them; not carried away by their force. We're present and yet detached; just as if

we're in a rainstorm and being soaked. We can be soaked in a rainstorm and be very upset. We can also be soaked by rain and gently be there while we're being soaked.

The work with my teacher and the group work provides a very supportive environment to 'be soaked' with our anger and hurt-sadness-grief; to be soaked through and through with these emotions, and also to be gentle with ourselves at the same time. These emotions are leaving, and they're not acting out in a way that makes them stronger.²

As the charge of the held anger and hurt-sadness-grief is discharged, these very strongly held emotions become less strong. If this discharge happens repeatedly (it's most common for these energies to need to dissipate repeatedly before the charge is gone) or completely heal-resolve at one time, then the anger and hurt-sadness-grief become defanged.

By gently staying with the energies as they discharge, the charge becomes less. The second part of the group work (the first part is for our stuff to release) is to be gentle with ourselves so that we don't re-form these energies through our thoughts (judgement, victim, blame).³

The article [If It's Not Neutral Or Loving, Let It Go](#) addresses how to not have the energies of anger and hurt-sadness-grief re-form again and again and again. The article [Uncommon Happiness](#) addresses some ways to support the three steps of our work; for our stuff to release, to be gentle with ourselves and to live from our compassionate heart.

Fear: Underlying Every Anger and Hurt-Sadness-Grief Feeling

Fear is a part of human nature. When our life is threatened, fear comes up. Many terrible things can happen to us at any moment. An accident may happen. A diagnosis may happen. Our life can be put into terrible circumstances at any moment. This uncertainty brings up fear.

Until we completely trust in Life, there will be fear. Since complete trust and surrender is always in the moment, we can find many, many moments when we don't have complete trust and surrender; actually we live almost all of our life without complete trust and surrender in each moment. What keeps our anger and our hurt-sadness-grief going is fear.

Just as being with our anger and with hurt-sadness-grief (like being with a crying child) can heal the anger and the hurt-sadness-grief, being gently with fear can free us from the fear.

Love: The Final Stage

We are human. We have feelings. We'll feel hurt, sad, angry and fearful. This is human nature. Each time these constricting states arise, can Love come back and co-exist with our fear, anger, guilt, sadness, hurt, shame, doubt and grief?

The people in the Thursday group and I, at the last meeting, started an experiment. The experiment is this: Have our default setting be compassion.⁴ This means that each time we're in aversion, judgement, fear, anger and all of the other binding feelings, can we come back to compassion? And if we're not in any of these binding states, can we consciously be more connected to compassion in the moment? Compassion is open; open to feeling what is there. Compassion is Love; feeling Love when every constricting feeling and thought is there. Compassion is a feeling acceptance of everything that is happening and of what we're feeling. Compassion is a gateway to ease and Grace.

Compassion is the balm that heals all of our known and unknown wounds. As written earlier, being in our compassionate heart in the third part of our group work. Compassion-Love spontaneously arrives when our stuff isn't blocking compassion. Compassion quickens us on the road to freedom.

May all beings feel compassion.

Footnotes:

- 1 Charles says that it would be a piece of cake to work through what is created in just this lifetime. It's lifetimes of stuff that we're unaware of that makes the amount of stuff so great. The reader can decide if this feels true or not. Whether there are other lifetimes or not, we carry a lot of emotional and mental residue from the many interactions and thoughts that happen throughout our life.
- 2 We can also make emotions and judgements stronger. We can energize the anger and hurt-sadness-grief with stories of being a victim or with stories of revenge. This will increase their force and their influence on us, rather than dissipate and heal-resolve.

- 3 A lot of emotional release work is temporary in that the emotions are released, and then the charge again re-forms through our continuing charged thoughts about the event. Many people in the group have gone through the cycle of releasing and re-forming prior to being in this group.
- 4 This compassion exercise is from an exercise at a meditation retreat. I'm giving credit to where it's due. I didn't originate this exercise.