

The Protective Shell

The Instinct To Live and Protection

The strongest instinct in a person is to live. This instinct can be overridden when we're coming close to death, when a loved one is in danger or when suicide is preferable to living.

The desire to protect ourselves comes from the instinct to live. We protect ourselves physically in many ways; protecting from the assault by another person down to the simple act of how we wash a knife.

We also protect ourselves emotionally by putting up barriers to others and by not being vulnerable. We reinforce our physical and emotional protection with many different thoughts and ideas. Our mind will protect us; even when this protection keeps us more separated and more isolated.

A Problem

Our survival instinct is fraught with flaws. We're raised by dysfunctional people in a dysfunctional world. As a result of the dysfunctional influence from others, many of our thoughts and emotions are off-the-mark.

Ways of protecting ourselves that successfully protected us in the past can now keep us separated and isolated as we repeat that same behavior in the present moment. As we keep re-creating this behavior, we can become more isolated and unhappy.

The Protective Shell

As we continue our self-centered, off-based means of relating and survival, a shell builds around us. As this shell builds, spontaneity, trust, innocence and vulnerability become less.

What we did to cope and survive is now slowly encasing our freedom and our ability to give and receive love. We live partially alive and partially vibrant. The well-intentioned dysfunctional self protection now is a prison that may keep harm out, though, at the same time, keeps us cut off from our natural spontaneity, trust, innocence and vulnerability.

This shell begins to form in childhood as a child's way to cope. These patterns or habits of behavior repeat and reinforce themselves. We become bound to a way of coping that was developed by a child who felt threatened. This protective shell is not our only way to ensure our survival.

I've seen this shell cracked in many people. Once the shell is cracked, some people fully reform the shell. Others continue to gradually widen this crack and their true nature continues to come through this layer of protection. In very few people I've seen this shell continue to crack more and more to the point where their true nature pours through.

Racquel's Recent Summary

Racquel (a twenty year student of Charles) recently summarized the work that she learned from Charles and that she teaches as: "It is continuity, a focus on purpose, a willingness to surrender all that is not serving our highest, and the overriding desire of the heart to be free that is the work."

Continuity, in Racquel's view, is about consistently participating in group work or in individual sessions. We benefit greatly from accountability and assistance. Continuity on our own, unchecked, usually produces slow progress for our shell to shatter.

In God's Time

There's a saying that certain changes are on God's clock or in God's time; that we cannot dictate when change will happen. I agree with that and I also think that some people use 'God's time' as an excuse as to why change hasn't happened to them.

One time I lamented to Charles about slow change happening in me. Charles then said to me: "Well Phil, maybe you're just lazy" That one sentence went deep in me. It was true. I was being lazy. I was wanting my lazy effort to be enough for deep change. Ever since that day, I've been in a faster gear.

I could have fallen back on 'I'm doing the best I can' and 'it'll happen in God's time.' I was doing the best I could and by receiving Charles' help, the best I could became so much more.

We Need Help

I've known that I needed help to progress. I've witnessed through the decades that almost everyone needs specific help to break their protective shell. The better the help, the more the shell shatters.

Running Out Of Time

I've witnessed many people's (and my own) protection stay in place after years of personal and spiritual work. Many people I know have been faithfully following their spiritual path or church teachings for decades and their shell remains firmly in place.

There's a Self Realization Fellowship (SRF) minister who is in his 70s. He's worked with many SRF members for decades. His experience is that many of the members, who have faithfully practiced for decades, are focused on a wrong goal. The members are focused on being a good devotee, on being a good person.

Many of his services address the goal that Paramahansa Yogananda gave – to become a child/servant/instrument of God. I've talked with this minister. He sees the separation and the relative suffering that exists in these well-intentioned people, and that time is running out for their shell to shatter and for them to live as a child/an image of God.

Having A Foundation For Shattering The Protective Shell

There needs to be some spiritual strength in a person before the shell can shatter in a positive way. (The protective shell shattering in a person who is not strong can have negative psychological effects.) Having a foundation of spiritual work before your shell shatters is like tilling rock-hard soil before planting. Trying to plant in rock-hard soil gives no space for the seed to grow. Once tilled, the soil is ready to nourish the seed.

Racquel's summary (continuity, a focus on purpose, willingness to surrender all that is not serving our highest, and the overriding desire of the heart to be free) forms a foundation for the protective shell to shatter.

More About The Protective Shell

A previous article titled Lightening Up and Stickiness ([click here](#) to read the two and a half page article) addresses the habitual energy that keeps the shell intact. The protective shell was put in place for a very good reason and wants to stay in place. This reminds me of the Japanese soldier that was found on a very small island many years after World War

Two ended. He was vigilant every day and in fear that the Americans would come and attack the small island.

He didn't know that he could've been living carefree for years on the island; that there was no one out there wanting to attack him. Quite the opposite, others would have wanted to help him; not hurt him. Our protective shell, very well-intentioned, can become like this Japanese soldier, ever vigilant and keeping us in unnecessary stress and in isolation.

The protective shell, so initially well-intentioned, wants to stay in place. This shell is precisely what's blocking us and keeping us living as a person of dysfunctional upbringing rather than living as a child of God/Love.

My Specific Approach To The Shell Shattering

The protective shell is an energy that is within the body. The shell isn't in the shape of a physical shell that evenly covers our entire body. The word 'shell' is used more metaphorical than literal.

The shell has key points in the body that keeps it intact. As the held energy in these key points is released, the shell becomes weaker and weaker. These key points are like the stakes in the ground that keep a tent upright and secure. Take away the stakes and the tent collapses and can be swept away by the wind.

There is physical tension in these key points that, when pressed on, is painful. There is also an emotional charge in these key points. The physical pain and the emotional charge produce a strong resistance to these key points releasing. ([The Lightning Up and Stickiness article](#) goes into more detail about the resistance of these points to release.)

As I work with these key points, the emotional charge and the physical pain decrease. There are times of dramatic reduction of both emotional charge and physical pain and tension.

As these key points lessen, more and more of the person's true nature comes through. Their spontaneity, trust, innocence and vulnerability increases. Their ease increases. Their response to stress becomes less stressful.

There comes a tipping point, a point of no return, where enough of the shell has been shattered that now the person is on a quick path to living in the freedom that they so want; that is their true nature. The tipping point is coming for some people in the group. This is when the spiritual path becomes even more exciting.

The good news for all people beginning new in the group is that the groundwork has been set for their shell to shatter. I've witnessed in the work with Charles that each year more and more of the protective shell could be released by everyone. There's a group momentum that makes each person's work easier (though not easy) and faster (though not as fast as most everyone would like). For each person in the group, there is much progress and also much work still to do.

May all beings live in their natural spontaneity, trust, innocence and vulnerability.