



Health THROUGH EMBODYING ONENESS

Jaqueline Lapa Sussman, MS, LPC

“ONE LOVE, ONE HEART . . .
LET’S GET TOGETHER AND
FEEL ALL RIGHT”

☞ Bob Marley

THE INDIAN WORD “NAMASTE” IS AN ANCIENT SANSKRIT GREETING, WHICH HAS BECOME POPULARIZED IN THE WEST. IT IS OFTEN SAID AT THE BEGINNING AND ENDING OF YOGA AND MEDITATION CLASSES, AND EVEN SPIN CLASSES. More than a mere hello or goodbye, Namaste has a deeper meaning. Spoken as the hands are brought together at the heart center, bowing to the one being greeted, it expresses profound respect. Translated, Namaste means, “I bow to the God within you,” or “The spirit within me salutes the spirit within you.” It acknowledges that we are all made of the same One Divine Consciousness. It is recognition of the light, or divine spark, contained in the other, as it also is in us. We are all one. The meaning of Namaste was brought home to me recently when I visited my son and his girlfriend in Queens, a richly multicultural borough of New York. During an afternoon of visiting shops and restaurants, I began to notice that in this neighborhood Hindus, turbaned Sikhs, Muslim women in headscarves, Latinos, Whites, Blacks, and Hassidic Jews with skull caps were all shopping together in close proximity. I began thinking about how this diverse group of people, often living in fear and distrust of each other, were nonetheless all here shopping peacefully next to one another. Suddenly, this observation triggered a shift in my ordinary perception, and instead of noticing their obvious differences, I saw a radiant light emanating from each one. Although appearing outwardly different in garb and skin color, the very same light beamed from each one. Overcome by this insight and elated with emotion, I felt profoundly grateful for this awareness. It was a direct experience of the knowledge that we are all made of one and the same essence. The experience seemed to mirror what the great sage Swami Muktananda implored when he said, “See God in each other,” and what Jesus must have meant when he said, “I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you,” (John 14:20 KJV).

Stepping outside after purchasing a coat in one of the stores, I noticed that the city skyline appeared bleak and grey. Tall buildings obscured any visible sign of nature, the landscape seemed austere and cold. Yet, in the midst of the overcast skies, I discerned a beautiful heavenly light descending from above, illuminating and filtering through everything. I knew that my mind had opened in some manner so that I could perceive this light so palpably filtering down upon the grey city. I then saw it in the eyes of the Sikhs and the Muslims, in the faces of the Jews, the Blacks, the Whites. Everything, the light, the skies, the city and the people seemed to sparkle in a joyful dance of incredible illumination and joy. “We are all One,” I realized. We are all infused with the same divine spark, though most of us believe we are separate from each other. Thus, we are caught in a grand illusion.

Oneness is the natural state of mind existing within us, yet often separated from our conscious awareness. It is the awareness in which we experience our unity, or sameness, with people, nature, the world around us. It is the understanding that, author and mystic Rasha describes as, “We are as a drop of water is to the ocean—bonded in Oneness to it, being of it and unto it, yet having identity and self perception.” When we embody Oneness, we automatically experience peace within us, a love filling us, and utter fulfillment within ourselves and the world.

Young children are wide open, and naturally live in the consciousness of unity with all living beings, such as their pets, the trees, the flowers, and the people in their lives. An example of this is when I was with a four-year-old boy in a park seeing a tree whose branches were being pruned. He pointed to the tree and said, “I feel sad. That tree is crying.” As we grow, we lose our innocent sense of oneness with the world around us. We close down due to our cultural conditioning, which constantly

emphasizes our separate sense of self. This consciousness of separation from one another and the earth stems from the views and messages we receive from our parents, our culture, religious views, and educational institutions. We are taught to compete, get ahead of the pack, feel superior to others, and distrust those different from us. We learn to value materialism and to accumulate more and more “things” of this world while closing our eyes to all the other inhabitants we share this earth with who are in need, hungry or, suffering. We are driven by fear and scarcity and have not understood that only through a genuine and all inclusive love are we, ourselves made whole.

The barriers we build towards each other inevitably lead us to feel more isolated and insecure. This feeling of separateness

is the cause of our inner suffering. It is the breeding ground for distrust, and has paved the way for countless wars, political battles, bloodshed, and incalculable examples of man’s inhumanity to man. To understand that we are all connected requires a shift in consciousness. Embodying this awareness at the very core of our beings imbues us with a deeply fulfilling love that nurtures and feeds our very soul. The source of this love is to truly know we are the other. Love unifies all that has become divided.

The Dalai Lama stated that “ME, ME, ME” people are the first to suffer heart attacks and that those who are empathetic, with “great open hearts,” swim in an oceanic connectedness of emotional and physical wellbeing. He is saying that the physical body does not break down at random, unaffected by the condition of one’s inner self. Health requires being in a state of wholeness, which means that our thoughts, feelings and actions, both within ourselves and towards others, are in harmony.

Mind and body act as one uninterrupted chemical and neural flow. When we think loving and harmonious thoughts, we release endorphins and other pleasurable, health inducing chemicals to our bodies. When we are mired in fear or hatred or paranoia, we release stress chemicals such as cortisol and epinephrine, which negatively impact our bodies and organs. Our attitudes, thoughts, and emotions are directly linked to our physical health.

Buddhists teach that the elimination of egoism and possessiveness heals the split at the core of the soul, resulting in peace and equanimity, both within ourselves and towards others. To live bathed in health-inducing harmonious chemicals means to live in a manner that we do not injure ourselves or others through divisive and self-serving thoughts, deeds or actions, and we recognize with love that we are One with every living being on the planet. The truth is that we are never separate from Oneness with all creation because we are already a part of it all. It is just our mind’s conditioning that makes us believe in this painful illusion.

To cultivate Oneness, begin to practice it by trying to see the divine spark or, essence in everyone you meet. Whether you are looking at the clerk in a grocery store or the president of a company, instead of seeing them as their roles, try to take a moment to look them in the eyes, and imagine the

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w.t. hyde

W.T. (Terry) Hyde
Alternative Health Practitioner
Energy Work
Consults via phone and office
801.372.8380

Book and CD *Counting Horses*
ebook available at iTunes, Amazon, Sony,
Barnes&Noble, Kobo and eBookPie
www.countinghorses.com

same spark of divine energy existing in them as resides within you, and in your mind silently greet them saying, "Namaste."

As I practiced this myself, I found my heart softened and opened in a reverence for all of life, and a feeling of love arose and enveloped me from deep within. There right before me, was not a stranger but a real human being, someone I could know, love and care about. In this manner, everyone I met became part of my being and the sense of separation from them disappeared. The hardest, however, was feeling a sense of Oneness with those who had hurt me. Yet as I looked for the divine spark within them, I softened and was able to see their humanness. I was able to keep my heart open, without getting mired in hatred or resentment. I also noted that I stopped perceiving myself as a victim run by my ancient fears of life, constantly waiting for the "other shoe to drop." And when trouble did appear, I navigated through it with increased centeredness and ease knowing the discomfort would pass as I embraced the fact even that was part of the Oneness of all that is.

Embodying the awareness of Oneness is a great healer of all that divides us and allows for a life of serenity, love and peace.

Image Instruction:

In interacting with others, our bodies, our minds, and our souls are involved in every transaction with every person we engage with. Every interaction has consequences of either increase or loss of health based on our attitude and behavior. We can enhance our health and wellbeing by feeling unity, or sense of Oneness with others, creating love and good feelings, and we lose it by seeing them as adversaries and creating discord and chaos.

As you read the instructions below, allow the images to form in your mind's eye and notice how you feel. You can see anyone you choose in the image below.

1. See that you are at a store, a meeting, or some other place interacting with someone.

2. See how you naturally feel towards the person. Is it open, closed or, neutral? These are your emotions and body feelings while dealing with this person.

3. See that you are interacting with the person, and also waiting for their response. What are your mind, emotional and body states like?

4. Waiting for the person to respond is waiting for a cue, which affects your mind in some way. You are in a receptive state of expectation. How do you feel? How is your body?

5. See that this person is also in a state of expectation regarding you. You have the power to affect the outcome of your interaction.

6. Now, think of that person as an extension of your own self. Recognize that you see the essence or spirit in him or her that is the same as within you. How do you feel?

7. Touch this person with good feelings in some way. How does he or she respond to you in the image?

8. Do you notice the difference in your body when you approach this person with a sense of Oneness and positive feelings? This is how you create wellbeing.

9. Practice this with everyone you meet. ■



Psychotherapist Jaqueline Lapa Sussman MS, LPC has delivered lectures worldwide and has trained top-level government officials, corporate leaders, health

care providers, professional athletes and university faculties. She has been featured in numerous magazines and newspaper articles and is the author of the books, "Images of Desire" and "Freedom From Failure."

Visit Jackielsus@aol.com