

Self-Empowerment

Summer 2008

The newsletter dedicated to nurturing personal development

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Experiencing ‘A New Earth’

Have you seen any of the Oprah Winfrey and Eckhart Tolle weekly web classes? Oprah held a 10-week online discussion with Tolle, the author of the best-selling book *A New Earth: Awakening to Your Life's Purpose*. Millions of people all over the world have viewed the program. If you have access to a computer, you can watch past programs on www.Oprah.com.

Here is Amazon.com's description of the book and its author:

With his bestselling spiritual guide *The Power of Now*, Eckhart Tolle inspired millions of readers to discover the freedom and joy of a life lived "in the now." In *A New Earth*, Tolle expands on these powerful ideas to show how transcending our ego-based state of consciousness is not only essential to personal happiness, but also the key to ending conflict and suffering throughout the world. Tolle describes how our attachment to the ego creates the dysfunction that leads to anger, jealousy, and unhappiness, and shows readers how to awaken to a new state of consciousness and follow the path to a truly fulfilling existence.

The Power of Now was a question-and-answer handbook. *A New Earth* has been written as a traditional narrative, offering anecdotes and philosophies in a way that is accessible to all. Illuminating, enlightening, and uplifting, *A New Earth* is a profoundly spiritual manifesto for a better way of life—and for building a better world.

About the Author

Eckhart Tolle is a contemporary spiritual teacher who is not aligned with any particular religion or tradition. In his writing and seminars, he conveys a simple yet profound message with the timeless and uncomplicated clarity of the ancient spiritual masters: There is a way out of suffering and into peace. Eckhart travels extensively, taking his teachings throughout the world.

Self-Empowerment is expressed beautifully by the combination of Oprah, Eckhart, and those who asked their questions through this world-wide-classroom. It is truly a phenomenon. Recently, on one of Oprah's regular afternoon programs, she highlighted six people whose lives were greatly impacted by this online book discussion. One woman recently went through a bankruptcy and another is in terminal stages of cancer. Each has tapped into a level of inner peace that is a blessing to witness. Another guest, an army captain stationed in Iraq, gracefully shared the peace and focus that he is experiencing after reading Tolle's book. He held up a laminated 3x5 card with notes that he had copied from the book to remind him of positive and uplifting messages while he copes with the hostile environment where he is currently stationed. He carries it with him every day.

An Inside job

How could anyone be peaceful after a bankruptcy in which they lost their house, car, and many belongings? How could someone dying of cancer feel peace, joy, and gratitude? How could a soldier in Iraq describe the ability to feel peace and focused presence in the midst of incoming hostile explosions?

The “experts” have always said that peace is an inside job, not a result of making one's environment comfortable. On some level we all know this is true, but until recently we did not have so many wonderful teachers to help lead us step-by-step to nurture that inner state that is independent of outer circumstances.

Those who seek an unshakable peace, the peace that passes human understanding, are finding teachers such as Eckhart Tolle and others who have found ways to express teachings that aim us in the direction of having our own experiences of enlightenment. Yet no words can make the experience happen for anyone else. Each must open to their own willingness and capacity to allow peace, wisdom, and joy to emerge from within.

The 84th Problem

In his article, “Personal Disarmament” (www.dawsonchurch.com/images/PersonalDisarmament.pdf), author Dawson Church, PhD, tells the following tale:

A poor farmer came to the Buddha for help with his problems. He told the Buddha about the wilting of his

crop. The Buddha said, “I can’t help you with that problem.” Disappointed, the farmer told the great teacher about his shrewish wife. “I have no advice for you about that one either,” said the Buddha. The farmer poured out all his problems, eighty-three of them to be exact, but the Buddha could help with none of them. The exasperated farmer exclaimed, “Well, what good are you if you can’t help me with any of my problems?”

“I can help you with your eighty-fourth problem,” the Buddha responded.

“What problem is that?” asked the farmer.

The sage responded: “Your eighty-fourth problem is wanting release from your other eighty-three problems.”

The farmer looked baffled, so the Buddha elaborated. “We all have about eighty-three problems,” he explained. Sometimes we solve one of them, or two or three. But new ones always arise to take their places. Every person, rich or poor, old or young, has about eighty-three problems. Being content – in the midst of them – being at peace inside, despite the imperfections of the world, is the heart of spiritual work. That’s the only problem I can truly solve.”

The Way of Buddha, Jesus, God, Spirit, or Love

There are different words and different practices for the ways to inner peace and the solution to our 84th problem. While some may debate the issues that are triggered by the use of the word God, others know that such debates are a distraction from the goal of finding equanimity in all situations.

Is one teacher of peace better or worse than others?

Don Miguel Ruiz writes of four agreements: Be impeccable with your word, Don’t take anything personally, Don’t make assumptions, and Always do your best.

Angeles Arrien describes a four-fold way: Be present, Pay attention, Be authentic, and Let go of attachment to specific outcomes.

Are these teachers saying something that is new? No, spiritual teachers have been saying the same things for thousands of years.

So why do we still have the 83 problems that we are trying to solve? Can we really solve any of them, or are they replaced with more problems shortly after solutions are found?

I have come to believe that each of us is both student and teacher. We each have access to INSPIRATION. From inspiration we are given the gifts of peace and wisdom. From inspiration we are led and companioned through the valley of the shadow of death with less fear and more faith.

Each and every one of us can experience inspiration. Whether we are inspired to follow the teachings of Buddha, Jesus, Krishna, Lao Tzu, any spiritual teacher, or the Voice of Love from within, we can each receive the help we need.

In order to live a life of less conflict and more ease, we can access the part of ourselves that knows the way to Inner Peace. It is from the cultivation of Inner Peace that we create ‘A New Earth’.

As we cultivate that Inner Peace, we are teachers of what we are practicing. Others learn from us and share it with others. The ripples of our work on our own mental and emotional well-being fan outward to smooth the energy of conflict all around us. As we lay down our ‘weapons’ of anger, guilt, and fear, so do others. When we stop sabotaging our own lives, we free ourselves to give more generously to others. When we stop the insanity of attack and defense, we allow for a space to be our real selves. It is from the experience of Inner Peace that we can feel real joy, and we can delight in creativity. Most importantly, it is from Inner Peace that we find lasting solutions to our problems.

Pulling up the Roots

When the root cause of a problem is released, we no longer fall into the trap of replacing the old problem with another version of the same thing.

When a problem is dealt with at a superficial level, with fight or flight, it is usually replaced with another, different in appearance, but ultimately the same problem in a different form.

When the deeper level is addressed, pulling up the roots of the issue, we are free of the bondage to our past.

Loving it ALL?

Spiritual teachers Candace and DavidPaul Doyle encourage us to extend love and acceptance to all of our thoughts and feelings. Instead of attempting to resist and judge our negativity, we are encouraged to view our compulsive negative thoughts as simply thoughts that float down a river, where they can be picked up and held for a time if that’s what we choose to do, then released to the ever-moving stream of thought.

In this way, we allow ourselves to be released from guilt for having negative thoughts, which come and go. If we extend love or acceptance to them, they often melt in the warmth of acceptance, instead of giving them the power of something to resist or be in conflict with.

That practice reminds me of the teachings of the Great Masters who tell us to love our enemies. Could it be that they were talking about our own negative thoughts, rather than a person “out there”? If I offer love, acceptance, forgiveness to my own thoughts and feelings, what kind of life would result from that practice? I cannot

guarantee the results of a perfect practice, as I have not (yet) attained that, but I can tell you that miracles abound from its practice. The more we discipline ourselves to extend love and acceptance to each thought we become aware of, the greater the experience of Inner Peace. The greater the experience of Inner Peace, the more we receive Inspiration. Then, the more Inspiration flows in our lives, the greater the faith, fearlessness and freedom.

May this practice lead to the wisdom, self-respect, compassion, and self-love that reveals the healing of all sentient beings. May we all have a new experience of empowered life on a New Earth.

Your fellow traveler, *Rev Jill*



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THANK YOU!

Thank you for your continued generous support of this newsletter and the work of Agape Interfaith Ministries.

Whether you sent a financial contribution, a book of stamps, a note of appreciation, or a prayer, please know that each of you is loved and appreciated.

**Thank you for your support!
Blessings to you!**

Circle of Miracles Prayer

I now ask the innermost center of my being to release all negativity from the week just passed, and throughout my life.

I let go of angry feelings and disturbing emotions.

I remove from my mind thoughts of doubt, fear, guilt, and judgment.

I firmly discharge any beliefs of inadequacy, ill health, or scarcity.

Beginning this very moment, I replace fear with love.

I allow myself to see the world as a possibility of goodness, peace, and harmony.

I patiently look for good intentions, gentleness, and cooperation.

I find evidence of health, forgiveness, joy, and abundance.

Because I sow strong, vigorous seeds of positive expectations, carefully water and nourish them by making an optimistic attitude part of my life, the Divine Creative Force within me grows a bountiful harvest from the very seeds I have sown.

And so it is!

This is one of several prayers found in the weekly celebration service of *Circle of Miracles*. This unique non-denominational spiritual service offers an open, loving environment for finding inner peace, inviting everyone to express their spirituality in a joyful, serene, and accepting atmosphere.

Circle of Miracles Church & School of Ministries,
10 Beulah Road, New Britain, PA 18901
(215) 598-8002 www.CircleOfMiracles.org
Sunday Celebrations: 10am to 12noon.

Daily Word

I open my mind and heart to the Christ of my being.

The disciples called Jesus Rabbi and Teacher. All of them were proficient at a trade or craft; however, they were eager to learn more. The lessons Jesus taught them and the answers He gave to them helped them grow and develop spiritually.

My inner teacher is my Christ nature, the very essence of Spirit that is within me. As I turn within and become still, I become totally focused on the Christ of my being. I listen, and I learn whatever is needed for the next steps of my journey.

I am thankful for all the teachers and mentors who have taught me along my path of life, and I am grateful for every opportunity to be a guide for someone else. Most of all, I give thanks for the Christ nature of my being, my teacher at all times and in all situations.

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Blessings to you!

The mission of Agape Interfaith Ministries is to encourage, support and inspire a deepening conscious relationship with Divinity for the greater experience of wholeness, abundance, love and peace. We serve to elevate consciousness through individual and group educational activities, and community service.