

True Freedom

Dale Goldstein

Poem

Willing to die,
you give up
your will, keep still
until, moved
by what moves
all else, you move.

— Wendell Berry

I had worked summers from before I turned 14 until the year I turned 24, when I completed my master's degree in social work. My wife and I decided to celebrate by driving across the country from Detroit to San Francisco, stopping at National Parks along the way. Our first stop was in Chicago to see some good friends we hadn't seen in almost 2 years. We intended to just stay overnight, but we ended up spending five days and nights with them, talking politics late into the night and listening to lots of '60s music – especially The Moody Blues. And on that fifth day – which happened to be my 24th birthday – I had what Dr. Abraham Maslow, the Father of Humanistic Psychology, termed a “peak experience.” For the first time since I was 9 years old (when “the veil” descended), I felt completely free and totally alive.

I stayed “high” for a few days afterwards and had some very remarkable experiences, but then I lost the freedom that had visited me. And I began an earnest search to recapture that aliveness, to learn how to get – and stay – there.

My journey back home to my True Freedom, my Original Nature, has been a rich one, filled with joy and pain, love and fear, epiphanies and stagnation, side roads and dead ends, frustration and release. At one point in my life, I spent 10 years “beating my head against a wall,” practicing a spiritual discipline that just didn't work for me at that time in my life. I stuck with it because I was told – and believed – that it was the only way to



freedom. From this experience, I learned about pain, patience and perseverance – three valuable qualities on the road to freedom.

I have explored, to one degree or another, innumerable pathways to freedom, some physical/ energetic, some psychological/ emotional, some spiritual, and some a combination of these. A few of these paths I have walked down have changed my life, brought me closer to regaining and retaining the freedom I have yearned for.

The path that I like best – that in 33 years of searching for True Freedom I have found to be most direct (and, consequently, effective) in getting free, I call Heartwork. Very briefly, Heartwork is a process of starting by acknowledging the suffering in one's life, and then looking and letting go increasingly deeply into the place in the body where the dis-ease lives, consciously descending through layer after layer of the "false self," until one arrives at the "point" where the journey began – one's True Nature. Here, one experiences one's True Freedom, and from this place, one can look back out at the surface of the funnel and see how one created the suffering, thereby disempowering the pattern forever.

The Heartwork process is beautifully described in the following poem, written by Maribeth Price, a participant in the first Heartwork Intensive at the Omega Institute in July 1982. It not only describes the process she went through to finally – after 25 years of psychotherapy – free herself from the trauma of having been killed in an automobile accident, but it also conveys the spirit and power of Heartwork.

The Descent

Life's spectator no longer could I be
And so myself did plunge
Through fear's dark sea:
Falling, drowning in despairing tears,
Ocean inhaling, sinking to unknown depths,
Imploding anguished cries I disappear into darkness
And am lost.

Then struggles cease,
Too tired to fight,
My being starts to yield,
Begins to pulse in rhythmic union
With all that once seemed foe,
Feeling with each heartbeat
Feared enemy becoming friend.

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Then waves embrace and cradle,
Like loving arms enfolding,
As they lift their host up slowly,
In gentle reverent Hands,
Upward through shining rainbow hues,
Until, in one bright blinding flash,
I breathe the sun and hear earth sing
As I begin to dance.

More examples and a detailed description of the Heartwork process can be found in the “About Heartwork,” “How It Works” section of our website at www.heartwork-institute.com.

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