

May 17, 2023 Wednesday Evening with Aaron

(This talk has not been reviewed by Barbara and Aaron)

On compassionate regret and taking responsibility to heal our old patterns, and, in opening our hearts to ourselves, increasing our ability to receive love and to open our hearts to others and the Earth; Q&A, how do we know if we're making progress?

Barbara: What I'm doing as I sit here is basically to challenge, because what comes through could be uniquely Aaron, or it could be something negative posing as Aaron. It's vital that I discern the difference here, and that I make it very clear that nothing that's negative can break into this space. That I consider this to be a sacred space, offered for the good of all beings, consecrated to the light and to love. And that anything that's negative has free will and may choose to listen. I'm not kicking you out, but you may not interfere.

I ask for a circle of light beings to hold a space that's so vibrating in love that anything that's very negative and has strong anathema to love will pull back because it becomes uncomfortable with that power of love. So, we're not violating anyone's free will. Anyone is free to listen, but that which is made uncomfortable by the power of love will back away of its own free will.

So, this is how we're protecting ourselves. And this is an essential part of what I do before I move into allowing Aaron or any other entity to speak through me.

Aaron: My blessings and love to you. I am Aaron. It's a joy to see you all here, a joy to be able to be with you, to share this evening with you. As Barbara was saying, thirty-four years ago people just knocked on our front door. And we made some wonderful friends that way, people that we still know and love thirty-four years later.

And then, as the years went by, new people came. And it's a joy to see the sangha, the community that has developed as Deep Spring Center—literally people from all over the world, of all ages, of all variety of work and interests. But what you have in common is a deep desire to live your lives with love, and to make sense out of the conditions of violence, hatred and fear that happen in the world. To understand how you can contribute to an Earth that is grounded more in love and light.

As you know, to this end we teach meditation, which is a vital part of the path. You can't just say, "I'm going to be loving." Of course, you can hope for that. But how do you become more loving when you're steeped in fear, anger, dismissal of others, dismissal of yourselves?

You know that on these Wednesdays I am speaking to all sorts of people, and yet anybody who comes into this I know to be an old soul, or you wouldn't be here. So, I'm not speaking to spiritual beginners, but I may be speaking to people who have not yet become accustomed to the specific vocabulary that I usually use. If you have a different vocabulary, that's fine. I have no need for you to use my vocabulary.

The ancient question is who am I and why am I here? Some of you have heard me talk about this before. Please listen with an open heart, because you may hear something new.

I speak about sentient beings as being of different densities—the density of light, the height of vibration within. On this earth plane, mineral is first density. Vegetable life is second density, and also animal life. Human is third density. Fourth density is that which you are transitioning into, fourth and fifth densities. And then we have sixth, seventh, and eighth density.

In terms of eight densities, the human is just progressing out of third density and into a higher vibration and a broader expanse of understanding, an understanding that no longer thinks in terms of duality and separate self, but rather holds all beings in their hearts as one.

For example, I like to use waves breaking in the ocean. You might sit on the shore and see one wave after another, after another, building up into a high crest, white foam on top, and then slapping down and running onto the shore. Looking at it, you might say, "I see a wave. It's a big wave. It's a powerful wave." And it certainly seems to have a separate identity, but there is nothing there but ocean. I know you can understand that. It's all ocean.

Children playing in the snow. Barbara's window looks out on her backyard. She has memories of her three sons, when they were little, building snowmen in the back yard. Dressing them up a bit, giving them names, and coming home from school to play with the different snowmen, snow-women, and snow-dogs, all seeming separate. But when enough sun shined down on them, they melted. The backyard became a soggy mass of melted snowmen and the snow that had fallen.

So there is the illusion of separation, and there is the truth that nothing is separate. People ask me, "Why do we need the illusion, if it's the cause of suffering?" Because, my dear ones, you are here to learn, and in order to learn, you need to—and have chosen to—step back into the personality self, the ego self, the mental body, the form body, and briefly to be self-identified with these. The only way to cease that self-identity with the small self is to move through it and explore it, and to know it's all an illusion. Nothing was ever separate.

There are the so-called aggregates of form body. But if I ask you is your form today the same as it was a year ago, you would all say, "No. I'm thinner. I'm fatter. My hair has changed. I have this scar." The body is changing.

The mental aggregate. Your thoughts change constantly. When conditions are present, the thoughts will arise. It might be a planning thought or a memory; it might be a fantasy. All the different kinds of thoughts there are arise out of conditions. They pass away. They are not who you are.

Look at the wave again. It has a form. Coming in, crashing down, and then it rolls out as water. There's no solid, separate self to the wave. You can't pick it up and pack it in a box and send it to your mother. It's impermanent. Its form is impermanent, and yet it is one hundred percent permanent in the fact that it's water. It's the ocean. I shouldn't say one hundred percent; we can conceive of a time when the oceans might dry up. But as much as anything can be permanent on the Earth, the ocean is permanent, but not the waves.

The essence of you is unconditioned, eternal, and permanent. And the mundane attributes like the form and the mental body with its thoughts are impermanent. Your feelings that things are pleasant, or unpleasant, or neutral, these are impermanent. Your emotions are impermanent. Even what we call consciousness is impermanent. The way your consciousness holds something is related so much to memory or presence. But consciousness is always changing.

You are not any of these impermanent aggregates. So, what are you?

You are love, if I could put it that simply. And you came into this third density human experience because of your willingness to learn more about love, to learn more about yourself as expression of the Divine and with the intention to bring that light and love down into the Earth.

It's like during a drought, the earth might be very dry. But if you have a deep well and a pump and a hose, perhaps you can pump some water up and water your garden, add water to the earth, and then things can spring forth from that watered earth.

In just this way, the Earth right now is experiencing somewhat of a drought, that love in some parts of the world is very hard to find. *You* become that staff of love, that ground of love, watering the Earth with your love, light and energy and thereby allowing and inviting that which is fresh and green and vital to grow—that which is emerging as awakened consciousness; 'awakened' because it is waking up to the deepest truth of itself and no longer caught in the narrow view that, "I am this body. I am this mind. I am these emotions." You are love.

This morning, when Barbara read my Quote of the Day, I asked her to print it out.

(For those who are new, every day—I don't know how this works—a new quote comes up every day. I think our transcriber gathered together several hundred of her favorite quotes and somebody in the office put them in a file so that each day a new one comes up. They always seem to be just right. Some of you are nodding.)

So today, I'm going to read this. It's a page, so please be patient with me, because this is where I want to go with this talk.

"All of you have a strong foundation of moral awareness, a deep aspiration to do no harm to others. Some of you may feel caught in selfishness, experience guilt when there is a self-centered response. All of you have experienced that kind of remorse, let's call it regret. It's very different for someone who's less mature spiritually, a younger soul, still very self-centered, one who has not given much thought to not harming others, one only concerned with what he/she wants. For such a being, yes, it could be good to ask them to reflect on the pain they have caused others, because that is one of the ways they begin to look at the self-centeredness and separation. That's a part of the whole process of growth. But once you have reached a point where you *have* looked at it, then to perpetuate guilt simply becomes further condition to hold unworthiness in place."

I'm going to read that again.

"Once you have reached a point where you have looked at it, then to perpetuate guilt simply becomes a further condition to hold unworthiness in place. There is a subtle difference between guilt and regret. So, I would say guilt may serve a brief purpose, for that younger soul. But such guilt needs to give way to regret, and especially

compassionate regret. Guilt is a fear-based emotion. Compassionate regret is a love-based emotion. There's a kind of sadness, an acknowledgment that, 'I have caused harm in the way I acted. I regret that. I feel sad about that. My intention is not to repeat that pattern. In order not to repeat it, I need to reflect on how it happened, how it arose.' But there is no sense of unworthiness in that kind of statement."

Now let's look together at the kinds of patterns that pull you down into self-anger, anger at others, despair, feelings of unworthiness, and feelings of fear.

Based on your karma, and even with the high intention to be of service in the world and to act lovingly—actually, *because* of that aspiration to act lovingly, when you move into a pattern that involves fear and negative response, then there's such a deep habitual pattern to turn that anger onto the self, because you have avowed you will not throw anger at others, so you turn it on yourself.

Turning it on yourself, you feel ashamed and unworthy. And then sometimes you act out that unworthiness, not taking in the love that is offered to you; not offering yourself that love; not showing yourself the compassion that you would show to a friend in your situation.

The core of what I want to share with you tonight is based on the reality that in order to bring this world into a higher vibration, each of you has to take responsibility—or want to take responsibility—to heal yourself and your old karmic patterns of negativity against the self, to show yourself compassion. The practice of compassionate regret is a beautiful pathway.

You are here as third density emerging into higher density; as beings learning both wisdom and compassion. But the primary learning for third density is compassion.

Wisdom will be a primary learning of the higher densities.

Some of you are collecting wisdom, reading and reading, trying to make sense with the mental body, but the heart is still armored, and especially toward the self.

One characteristic I find with many high third density beings moving into this transition is how hard you can be on yourself. So, I want to invite you to take a good look at that, and to remember this is not the path. If my intention is to bring more light and love into the world, I have to give myself that same light and love, because I am part of everything. Each of you is part of everything. And if you cannot cherish yourselves, how can you accept cherishing from others? And how can you cherish others and the Earth?

The practice of compassionate regret---and we're going to go into this to some deeper degree at the retreat. With vipassana practice, we watch how objects arise and pass away, arise and pass away. Empty, no separate self; just arising out of conditions and passing away when the conditions cease. This is wisdom.

But then we watch the object, let's call it, of self-anger, a feeling of shame or unworthiness, blame of the self. "I should do it better. I should understand it more. I should love more deeply. I should forgive." We watch and get caught in that kind of pattern.

Wisdom says it's all arising from conditions and passing away. And yet, if you are going to learn what you need to learn for this upcoming transition—to awaken, if I could use a different term; transition, awakening—if you are going to learn what you need to learn,

what you *choose* to learn, there must be deep compassion for this human, with such deep habitual patterns as a human, that you keep getting caught in many of the same circular stories. And at that point you can stop and say, "Oh, here I go again." You say it with a smile, not (*crossly*) "Here I go again!" but "Ah, there I go again." Compassionate regret.

Compassionate regret means to know, "Here I am doing it again, and I'm sorry to see that I'm doing it again. My intention is to break through this pattern and find its release. But I don't blame myself as a human, that I'm caught in this pattern. It's part of my karma, and I hold the intention to look deeper, to stay present."

Let me use Barbara as a small example here. Those who have known Barbara for years, or decades, know that she has a strong abhorrence of spiders, if I could put it that way. She has learned to tolerate spiders, and even to catch them in some kind of container and carry them outside. But she finds it beyond her capacity to love a spider. Sometime in the past year I asked her to try an experiment with me, to catch a spider and put it in a clear glass jar with a lid on it, so she would know that the spider could not come out and attack her in any way. (We're talking about a little spider; it's not going to attack her. But even the bigger spiders.) To catch it in a jar and spend fifteen or twenty minutes watching the spider in its fear scurrying around the jar, wanting release, wanting escape, afraid, and to offer metta to the spider. To truly feel compassion for this sentient being that feels fear, feels trapped. To let it know she loves it. And then, in ten or fifteen minutes—not much more than that; not to prolong the hard experience for the spider—to thank the spider for allowing itself to be uncomfortable for a short time to be her teacher. To really feel feelings of love for the spider, and then to carry it outside and release it.

It's been about a year now; she started sometime last summer doing this. She doesn't do it every day—she doesn't see a spider every day—but she does it when she can. She has not learned to love spiders, but she no longer abhors spiders. She is able to acknowledge, "You are my brother, my sister. You are a sentient being who can feel fear, and I love you and wish you well." It may not seem like a lot, but for Barbara it's been a lot.

So, as she keeps doing this, my hope is that sometime within the next few years, instead of a glass jar, she'll be able to hold it in her hand and talk to it and then carry it outside. That may or may not happen for her; it's okay if it doesn't.

Compassionate regret for any ways that she has harmed spiders in the past.

Forgiveness for the ways they have harmed her. She was bitten some years ago by a brown recluse spider who did a great deal of damage to her body; deep poison within the body, and scar tissue. Forgiven. Acknowledging that the feelings that come up are all habitual, all karmic in pattern, old patterns.

As you learn to truly open your heart to those for whom you have a feeling of despising them, to truly feel a sense of kindness for them, to forgive them, it opens the door to the ways that you may begin to find that which you have not loved in yourself, to open your heart to that, and to forgive yourself.

To work more with this compassionate regret, which is a way of saying, "I deeply regret (for example) the spiders that I have killed, slapping with a shoe out of fear. I deeply regret that I have used my fear in such a way as to harm other sentient beings. I forgive myself for this. I feel compassion for myself and acknowledge that I acted out of fear." And, of course, this is both literal and metaphor. There are the spiders that were literally smacked with the shoe, and there are the spider representatives, those beings that you have despised and have smacked with words or in some way diminished and harmed. As long as any being is still harming other beings, the love that we seek as the essence of Earth cannot fully ground itself into the Earth. It's like a block. The love tries to go in and all the fear and anger under the surface pushes it out. You have to soften, open your heart. And you cannot open your heart in this way to others until you open it to yourself.

In a nutshell, this is why you have come into a body, why you have incarnated. These are lessons you cannot learn on any other plane. On a plane where you totally know non-duality and there is no concept of self or other, there cannot truly be deep compassion because there's nothing for the compassion to move to. Everything is compassion. It's only when you're cut off from that compassion that you can begin to realize that you have free will choice to react with holding things away from you with negativity, with fear, or, still feeling that fear, to make the choice, "I will respond with love, even though my reaction is based in fear. I want to fight back. I want to hate. I want to kill. But I will not allow that of myself. I will remember that this spider and I are one, that this wave and I are one."

It strikes me that Barbara fears spiders, and yet she was almost killed having a near death experience after being seriously pummeled by a wave some twenty or so years ago. She doesn't hate waves. I wonder why she doesn't hate waves, when she is so afraid of spiders. Interesting; I'll take that up with Barbara.

The difference between the reactivity—and mindfulness watching the reactivity; feeling the tension in the body as it tightens to react; knowing the response that's about to come—and saying, "No. I hold the highest intention to do no harm to any being and to know my total connection with every sentient being and with the Earth, which is also a sentient being." To find the strength in yourself and the love in yourself to do that.

So, coming back to compassionate regret, this is one of the most powerful forces. Forgiveness is another one. Compassionate regret and forgiveness need to come together, otherwise regret can be a way of blaming the self. But there has to be a softness to it that is willing to forgive the self and all beings who poison the Earth, who kill each other, who hate each other, all driven by old karmic patterns.

Becoming free means moving past those ancient patterns and knowing that you are awake, and in that awakeness you know your interconnection with every living being. And that you do not hold yourself separate—not better than and not lesser than. And then you are open to learn from everything, to love everything, and to receive that love from everything.

Barbara has been exploring, these past six weeks. Six weeks ago, she developed a very serious infection in her toe, in one of the toes on her left foot. It actually had shown

that the infection had gone into the bone, so this was very serious. If it did not heal, they were going to have to amputate the toe. And if that did not heal, they were going to have to amputate part of the foot. There was no end in sight to it.

Barbara has a very strong, I would not just say belief, but understanding that the ever-healed is within every sentient being, the ever-perfect and that the distortion was also there, the infection, and that it had entered the toe. That bacterial infection was real, and yet the ever-perfect body, the ever-perfect toe, was also there.

She's been exploring for these six weeks. She's of course taking a very strong antibiotic twice a day. But she's also been exploring the way she relates to her body. For example, if her legs are dry or her hands are dry, and there's a jar of lotion, the way that she may look at that lotion and say, "Oh, I should put that on my body." But it's an obligation. It's not done with love; it's done as "I should." And yet the dry skin is saying, "I need love. I need love."

What blocks her from giving her body that kind of love? She's beginning to see the ways...She would not mind my sharing this with you. She's very open about her experience. It would be ideal for her to share it with you, but I'm not going to come out of her body and bring her in and come back. That's too hard for her. So, I am sharing.

She's looking at the old patterns that did not fully love the self because she felt unlovable in some ways. She felt she, for example, should not be angry. She felt unworthy. She felt she had been abandoned in this and in a past lives. And she was trying---I'm talking about years ago, not present but years ago---she felt, "I should be able to fix these old patterns." But that 'fix it' was kind of negative and contracted, not a loving response that says, "Ah, I see the old patterns and I do not choose to perpetuate them anymore. I choose to offer myself that love so that I can offer it to each person and to the Earth and to the waters and the sky." How can one take care of the environment if one cannot take loving care of one's inner environment?

So, she has come a long way in the thirty-five years that I've consciously worked with her, but this had to go deeper. She's been looking these past six weeks at any still-held-in-place misunderstandings; places where there was some degree of attacking herself, not fully forgiving, not fully cherishing.

She's moved into a pattern where at night when she gets in bed, she takes off this awkward boot that she's required to wear to keep her toe from pressing the ground, and she holds her foot. She rubs lotion around the foot—not on the wound, but around the foot. She says thank you to her foot. "Thank you for the ways you've held me and allowed me to walk, to climb mountains, to ski down mountains, to kick a soccer ball. Thank you for all the wonderful things you've done for me, Foot." Then she just holds it and invites energy into it.

I know a number of you have been offering light and love to Barbara and to her foot, to help support healing. She's been exploring the ways she's not fully invited that light and love in. The subtle experiences of, "Oh, I'm not worthy," or, "I shouldn't take more than my share," or whatever the stories. To really see these as ancient stories—thousands of years in the same repetitive story, as most of you have also. Unloved, not good enough, unworthy. Even what seems like a loving, "I *should* give it out to everybody else." But

what a gift to give and to receive, to give and to receive. You have to be willing to do both. What does it mean to just give and say, "No, I won't receive?"

So, she's been looking at this, too, and feeling a lot of gratitude as she feels the love and light coming in to her and looks at the place of shame, "I shouldn't need this. I should just be the giver." Helping to heal that old myth—which also many of you carry. "You should just be the giver." If everybody is just the giver, who's going to receive? How can you give without receiving?

So, Barbara's learning about this. The toe, of course, comes as a teacher, and she keeps saying, "Thank you, Teacher. Thank you. And now, please get better; please heal."

And the good news is that it is looking like it is healing. Tomorrow, she will have an x-ray to see how it looks in the bone. The hope is that the bone itself is also healing, not just the big wound on the surface. So, we'll find out how that is. But it seems to me that with all the love and light that's coming to the toe, the bone cannot help but heal.

Old patterns. I said, in the bit that I read on compassionate regret, "Guilt is a fear-based emotion. Regret is a love-based emotion. With regret, there's a kind of sadness, an acknowledgment that I caused harm in the way I acted, in what I said or did, or even thought. 'I regret that. I feel sad about that. My intention is not to repeat that pattern, which is so locked into the cells of my body and into my whole being. But I do have the option not to keep repeating it. My intention is not to repeat that pattern. In order not to repeat it, I need to reflect on how it happened.' But there is no unworthiness in that statement, there is love, just love."

I love seeing the cat tail bending back and forth, very sweet. So, let's take a break here and then I'm open to questions.

I love all of you very much. I am Aaron. I'll release the body to Barbara for now.

(break)

Q: ... and the ego-mind is always ready to put ourselves down, right, with guilt and shame and fear, but confession and regret is a healthy way to work with the human mistakes that we all make. But we all want to learn from them and continue growing. So, what Aaron shared was the theme of Richard Rohr's daily meditation today, also. So, I just thought I'd share that.

Barbara: Thank you for sharing, that's perfect. I find that distinction to be so important, because we're all so programmed to move ourselves into guilt, and shame, and unworthiness, especially those of us who are on a spiritual path and really want to get it right, want to be loving. And when we're not loving, when unloving feelings come up (sound effect), and that pulls us further away from love. Compassionate regret, the essence of that, of course, is compassion.

Q: Yes, a completely different way of dealing with those mistakes that we sometimes all make in our growth, in our evolution.

Barbara: Thank you. May I ask you what is your spiritual practice? Do you meditate in any special form?

Q: Yes, I'm a member of a Contemplative Outreach, that was started by Thomas Keating in the late 1980s. It's funny—you were talking about your group going back to

1989, but Thomas Keating started Contemplative Outreach in the late '80s, and Richard Rohr also started his meditation group in the late '80s. So, we all have that in common. There must have been something significant spiritually going on in the late '80s! But anyway, yes, I'm a member of Contemplative Outreach, and that's another organization, and they have a website, I believe it's .org. also. But they don't have a daily meditation like Richard Rohr does. And another contemplative that has a daily meditation is Mathew Fox. I don't know if you've heard of him, "Daily Meditations with Mathew Fox."

Barbara: I know Mathew Fox, yes.

Q: So, I follow those two as far as daily meditation. But as far as my membership in Contemplative Outreach, silent prayer, contemplative prayer twice a day is recommended for around twenty minutes. So, I've been doing that the last few years that I've been a member. So, that's my main spiritual practice besides spiritual reading. And I've also developed an appreciation for people like yourself, Barbara, that are channelers, spiritual channelers. I've developed a new appreciation for the spiritual that I call multidimensional spirituality; I'm sure you've heard that term. I feel that I'm growing in that area, and that's why I'm a member of your group—a new member.

Barbara: We're all multidimensional; we're all basically spirit incorporated in a body. So, we need all of this. My former religious affiliation is as a Quaker. I belong to Ann Arbor Friends Meeting. I grew up in a Jewish household, and I'm a Buddhist. I don't consider myself a Buddhist; I follow the path of the Buddha, a dharma path. And I'm a human and I'm spirit, so I guess I'm multidimensional. I have a lot of respect for all of this.

What we teach in Deep Spring, or the heart of what Aaron teaches, he tells us in his final lifetime over five hundred years ago that he was a Buddhist monk. He says he's not attached to Buddhism, he doesn't teach it as Buddhism, but this is how he found his awakening. Vipassana or mindfulness meditation (Insight Meditation, as it's sometimes called) is a moment to moment watching of the body and the breath and seeing how everything is based on conditions, growing out of conditions and passing away. The one who watches this is not consciousness but the awake part of ourselves.

He says that in terms of that which is aware of fear is not afraid. That which is aware of anger is not angry. Who am I, when I'm not busy being afraid, or angry, or trying to control, or any of that? Who are we?

Then that shifts into awareness. And this is his other meditation practice we teach, which is coming to this place of awareness and resting in awareness.

And the third is heart-centered practice—loving kindness and compassion and other heart-centered practice.

So, how these all mingle and support each other. I find these to be very powerful tools. I was a Quaker before I began any of this, forty or fifty years ago, but it didn't give me the tools I needed to look at what was coming up in my mind and body. I was trying to be compassionate and kind to myself and to others, but I didn't have the kind of insight into why this particular pattern keeps emerging. I don't mean intellectual understanding of it, but really understanding the flow of the habitual patterns. I didn't have the tools to

find the places where I was not stuck in those habitual patterns. So, I love these practices.

Q: Barbara, what is the name of that spiritual teacher five hundred years ago? I didn't catch the name.

Barbara: Well, this is who he was. He's never given us any name; he doesn't want us to try to find it in an encyclopedia. He says he was a Buddhist monk, and he does talk about his process of awakening. He's told that story, and I'm sure you can find it on the website. But he doesn't want us to look at who he was but rather the whole process of awakening, and how that happened for him and how it happens for us.

Q: And does it have a name, the awakening process?

Barbara: Well, vipassana. *Passana* means seeing; *vipassana* means a deeper, clearer seeing, in the Pali language. It's translated these days as Insight Meditation, or just mindfulness.

Q: Thank you, Barbara.

Q: Q made a statement about the '80s. I started my spiritual practice in 1968, when I started reading the Edgar Cayce books. But the thing that happened in the 1980s was that in 1986 or '87, Shirley McLain was on the TV in *Out on a Limb* and brought information about all of the things that you could do spiritually. And in 1988 I went to a human teacher who lived in Whitmore Lake and that's where I first learned to meditate. So, people were learning this aspect of what was available starting in the '80s, when it was on the tube and you could just watch it. It was a mini-series—I don't think they called it a mini-series back then; they called it something else. But that's how come I think it all started. The information became available, that's all.

Barbara: I remember reading *Out on a Limb* and then seeing the movie. I didn't see it as a series; I saw it just as a movie. And before reading the book, I had had a couple of out of body experiences, astral projection experiences, and had no idea what they were. It was such a relief to read that in the book and say, "Oh, that's what happened to me!" Other questions or sharing?

Barbara: (*reading Chat*) "Thank you for the words of wisdom in explaining the difference between guilt and regret. How does one know, not intellectually, that one is progressing on the path of compassion for oneself? Generally, we try to avoid the situations and triggers, and that doesn't always indicate if we have truly made progress." How do we know if we're progressing on the path of love and compassion for oneself, avoiding the triggers? Aaron is inviting me to speak to this. He says he could channel through me, but I can answer it, and he doesn't want to use my energy where it is not necessary for him to channel.

For me, I think it comes from intention. I have to be very honest with myself about what my intentions are. And if there are ego-based intentions, I have to be honest about that. And sometimes it is going to be ego-based.

But there is also a level of very pure intention in each of us. From that level of very pure intention, I am able to see where I am deluding myself, where I'm avoiding something. I am able to welcome things that are not particularly comfortable because of the power of that loving intention.

And I think as we progress on a spiritual path, we go deeper into our hearts of intention to be of service to all beings, to do no harm, and so forth, not from a place of scolding oneself or "I should," but just, "This is what I aspire to." We are just so drawn to it. Love draws us. The essence of ourself knows where we feel comfortable.

For me, I don't feel comfortable in a place where I'm trying to avoid fear, or anger, or other things; to say, "No. I'm not going there." I've learned that I can be honest with myself, when there's a negative emotion, and not be afraid of it, because the only way that I'm going to get past it and make peace with it and transmute it is to be present with it. So, the power of intention is the heart of the answer for me.

How do we know if we've truly made progress? It's not that it gets easier; it's that it is easier to be present with the things that are uncomfortable. It's still unpleasant to be with them, but it's like...Okay, I'm looking at my wall, and I see a place where it really needs to be painted, where something has stained it. "Oh, I don't want to paint it: I'm just going to ignore it." But eventually I have to acknowledge this stain on the wall. And if I want to get the wall looking right, then I have to get out the paint and paint brush and paint the wall. Okay, I'm willing to do that because I would like a lovely wall. So, that's the way it works for me.

I wonder if there's anybody else who would like to add to that.

Q: I just wanted to add something. In the 1960s, when we started reading the Edgar Cayce books---First of all, when I was sixteen, I remember being in the supermarket check-out line, and I saw an astrology booklet in the sales rack. I pulled it out. It was a little pamphlet, and I read it. And one of the things I read was, "Do you believe in reincarnation?" And I said, "Yes, I do," to myself. And then, a few days later I said, "Reincarnation---what is that?" I had no clue what it was. But there was a part of me that believed that I believed in it.

Then, after *Out on a Limb* was on the tube, there were several people at U of M and we sort of made connections with each other, that we had read Cayce back in the '60s. And so, we decided that what we should do is all have lunch together and then find a current psychic that we could trust. And that's how we got to meet this person in Whitmore Lake, and we went, one by one.

I didn't get the information, but two of the others got the name of Kathy Florida from their hairdressers, and they lived in different parts of Michigan. And so, that's how we sort of came together and all started. It was a time when things were ready. It was time for it, that kind of information to come out. That's all.

Barbara: Thank you, Q. I think in the '80s there was---can I say it this way---there was something in the air? (*laughs*) There was something going on energetically. It was probably just a time where there was so much, for a lot of us, confusion and pain, and a sense that we needed to do something about ourselves and the world, and we didn't know what to do.

For me, my background before that was that I had been doing things like going on Freedom Rides in the '60s. I was really concerned about the state of the world, but I saw that what I was doing, I was doing it for a loving reason, but I was still adding anger

to the world. I was committed to non-violence in action but my heart was still not in the place of non-violence. And I felt there has to be a better way.

I had been meditating all of my life, but it was not something that I really took into my daily experience. And I realized I need to go deeper spiritually, if I'm going to come up with any answers about how I'm going to live in the world. And that is what I think led me finally to open to Aaron, because my questions became deeper and more sincere. He had always been there, but I wasn't ready to hear him until then.

Q: Barbara, you had asked does anybody want to respond to Q's question that he raised. So, there are three basic things I could say.

Q, I noticed you said generally we try to avoid the situations that trigger, and that it doesn't always indicate that we have truly made progress.

I've been studying under Aaron for thirty years, so one thing I've learned strongly is a sense of non-duality, that everything is expression of the Divine.

When I first learned that, I challenged myself to look at things that I didn't like, or things that I thought any good person could condemn as bad. So, I challenged myself to look at those things and put them in the framework as expression of the Divine.

By doing that over and over, it opens the heart. And instead of becoming reactive to anything you would see in the world that you didn't like, you become more present with it. And there's a spaciousness of the mind that doesn't have to be reactive.

There's one more thing. When there's the spaciousness of the mind, the 'I' falls off. The 'I' tends to create separation and makes up stories about people. But ... you say it doesn't always indicate that we have truly made progress.

The indicator of progress for me is that the heart is more open and receptive, understanding, compassionate, doesn't need to be reactive. And when I say compassion, I mean that when you see that person being angry or hateful, you see that they're suffering and your heart opens up to that person. You realize that they are at the lower level of learning and that they still need to learn a lot, lot more. And once they do, they *will* be happier. They *will* make better decisions and be more skillful with their humanness.

So, I put that all together, and that shows me a progression. I hope that's helpful to you—that there's no 'I' making the judgment; that that 'I' falls away as it recognizes everything as an expression of the divine. And then there's more presence and spaciousness and non-reactivity. And wisdom that comes out of that. Thank you.

Barbara: Thank you. (*reading Chat question*) "Can you explain why the Buddha said Brahma Viharas do not lead one to liberation of the mind? (Brahma Viharas are these beautiful states of the heart, of loving kindness and so forth.) I'm guessing it's because wisdom is required, vipassana, because in Aaron's talk he said that wisdom is more for higher density learning than third density."

Q, I was going to answer this, but I'd rather Aaron answer it and I'm too tired to come back into channeling mode right now. So, let's you and I talk about this some other time. I think you're coming to the retreat, so we'll talk about it there. Thank you for your question. And I think it's a very good question.

I would only add, as Barbara, that wisdom and compassion are like the two wings of a bird; they both need to come together. Wisdom alone won't carry it; compassion won't carry it either. But if we only focus on wisdom and leave off the compassion, that's not going to do it. And wisdom in some ways is the easier path because it doesn't get as personal. Compassion touches on the places of pain. It's more trying to put these together. So, the Brahma Viharas alone won't do it, no, and neither will vipassana alone. But bringing them together in balance will.

Q: I just wanted to (speak) briefly. That's a beautiful metaphor, the two wings of the bird that we need to balance and they flow together. Also, I want to share that what Q shared, they're also my feelings, in having studied the mystical tradition and being involved in meditation. That for me, I find that progress is being in that loving flow in the present moment.

A lot of mystics emphasize their spiritual transformation is living in that loving flow of the divine spirit in the present moment. There's not that 'I', there's not that ego 'I', that ego self in that flow. And that's where the oneness comes in. It's a beautiful, loving flow. I'm certainly not there yet, but I have a vision, an intuition. So, when I try to evaluate my progress, well, I know I'm not there, probably, but I'm still open to the spiritual transformation of that egoless state of flowing, loving oneness. So, that's my spiritual goal, but it's with the grace of God, also.

Barbara: You're bringing in the word grace, and I think it's very valuable to look at what we mean by grace, and to know that this is part of it.

It's not grace as something that's bestowed upon us because we're part of that which bestows. It's the grace to receive; the grace to give.

This is a conversation for another time that will involve Aaron: what is grace, and how does grace come into this whole mix?

And Q, what you said at the beginning about this flow—this, for me, is the beauty of Pure Awareness practice. It's what allows us to rest in that which is awake within us. Not "I'm trying to get to that which is awake," but that which is already awake. And not get it confused with the mundane consciousness that sees this and that and does this and that, but just, ahhh, this awakened presence. This is part of grace.

Okay, anyone else?

Q: I like that: "awakened presence." Thank you, Barbara.

Barbara: Okay, we do have another ten minutes, but if there's no other sharing, we can end here. This is our last Aaron Night until September. I will miss seeing you all over the summer. I hope to see many of you at the June retreat. Besides the instructions and dharma talks, we will have some good opportunities in small groups to share with Aaron in formal times during the week, to ask questions and just to hang out with Aaron.

So, other than that, we'll see you in September. Have a beautiful summer.

Thank you for everybody who continues to come with your beautiful questions and your loving hearts to make this growth possible for all of us. I love you all very much. Aaron says he does, too.

I want to remind you that I offer this on a dana/donation basis. Dana does not mean donation; dana means generosity. I do everything that I do freely. Deep Spring has to



charge to have the money to pay the office person and the equipment and all of that, but I don't charge for my teaching. If you'd like to make a donation, there is a PayPal link on the website. Your donations are very welcome but they are never essential for you to join us; you are free and welcome to join us. That's all. Love to you all and good night.