



Stand up to your feelings

Swami Chetanananda

Sometimes people come to me for help with feelings that have nothing whatsoever to do with their circumstances. It's because there are parts of us that wake up as we do our work, and it takes time for the energy in those parts of us to get integrated. As we go along in our days, the feelings that we have, whether they be attraction or aversion or anger or fear, are like transistors or circuit breakers that can be tripped. Our energy will be going along and we hit a feeling. What happens when we hit that feeling? Our energy is redirected. It gets going in a different way. There's nothing rational about it. Yet so much of the time we do not question the feelings that we experience, we just allow them to redirect our energy. More importantly, we don't stand up to those feelings.

That's what happens with panic attacks. When a person has energy that's not well-integrated into their system, it starts knocking around, getting a strong vibration going, and that sets off the adrenals, triggering a fear response. Often there's no reason for it. The mind is a threat recognition mechanism, and so everything that we don't immediately have a label for becomes something to be afraid of. Instead of looking at the feeling and saying, "Wait, I have no reason to be afraid," and then standing up to it and beginning to recognize, respond to and channel that energy within ourselves to the depth that allows it to be fully integrated, we react. We have to become strong enough to observe our feelings and recognize when they are inappropriate to our circumstance and not allow them to redirect us.

We practice every day to be able to experience and acknowledge all these different dimensions of feeling without ever losing our center or being scattered by our feelings. We practice every day to be able to engage all the energies that exist within us and in our environment and to be able to harmonize ourselves in those energies and genuinely flow in them. We need to be able to take in our life experience and be nourished by it and grow clearer and stronger, rather than being walked around the block like a Chihuahua on a leash by our feelings. Most people have no perspective on their own feelings and emotions so that they are being walked around the block regularly.

When you are growing, you are breaking down all of the tensions in you that are just like the strings on a guitar. When you add tension, you get different feelings—just as you get different notes by plucking the strings. The different feelings that we



have are reactions to the input coming at us, or to some energy that is being released inside us, or both, and playing on all the tensions that we are. If we're not playing our own instrument...we're being played, aren't we? There is very little that we can control in our life—very little. But the one thing you can learn to control is your own energy.

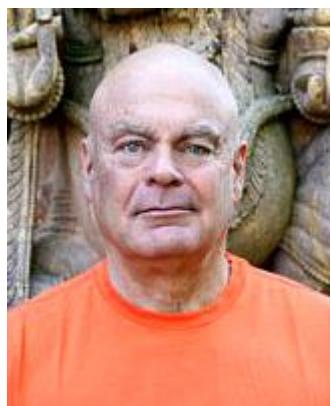
Doing our spiritual work, we have the potential to release tensions and allow our creative energy to flow to a depth within ourselves in which we can hold a very big space of love and compassion. In that space, Unimaginable Possibility becomes available to us on a daily basis and the fundamental beauty of our own essence is expressed throughout the whole field of our life and in all of the relationships that we have.

If it were easy, everybody would be doing it, because "easy" is popular. This work isn't easy. This is for those people who have chosen to become awakened. So, as you go through your day being played by your feelings, take half an hour out to get in touch with a deeper place within yourself and start to unwind some of the tensions around which you are being played. That simple effort, of getting in touch with your own heart, and holding the awareness of your own heart long enough that you feel in your chest that your heart is breathing on its own, feels wonderful. In the beginning it might take you a while to get established in that experience, but once you do, it's really unbelievably simple.

Stop being jerked around by your feelings and your fears. Put on your big boy or your big girl pants and start to stand up to yourself. All the tensions we encounter have nothing to do with our present, ever. It's always us in a fight with somebody or maybe a bunch of people in our past--or we're planning a fight in our future. None of it has anything to do with anything. It is all just the drama we use to distract ourselves from growing. Human life is precious, and being reborn is not guaranteed for anybody. It's only when we are really, truly, gathering the energy of our everyday life and lifting our spirits every day that rebirth becomes our destiny.

Take the opportunity that this human life provides you to really grow and discover something wonderful about yourself.

Swami Chetanananda



Swami Chetanananda ("Swamiji") is the abbot and spiritual director of the Movement Center. He encourages his students to discover the amazing possibility that resides within them, and to connect and live from it each day. A teacher in the lineage of Bhagavan Nityananda of Ganeshpuri, he is a powerful presence and a source of great nourishment for those who come in contact with him.