

## AWAKENING IMAGINATION

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We often perceive imagination as either a power we have or a power we don't have, like being creative. "Oh I cannot imagine anything new" or "I cannot imagine anything beyond what is here already."

It is interesting and a great sadness to me that we perceive and limit imagination in these ways.

Imagination is not a gift some of us possess and others do not. Imagination is one of our great birthrights, a gift built into human existence.

It is not for the precious few.

What *is* true is that often only a few of us know how to use our imagination in ways that are wholeness making and nourishing for the self and others. Instead, we often use our imagination to lock ourselves in to old habits and ways of perceiving what is possible and what is impossible, what could be versus what *should be* happening. We also lock in the world based on these perceptions.

Or we swing in the opposite direction in which we think our imagination is infinite and there are no limitations to life. So we focus upon imagination as a type of will or demand, trying to push ourselves and life into the shapes, forms and activities we have determined must happen here and now. Often, we are disheartened and defeated when things don't unfold as we think they *should*. Then we collapse into judgements about ourselves or life.

Imagination is fundamentally an intimate act of relationship, a relationship between possibilities and what already is in existence. Both are needed.

I find that I often move back and forth between what I would call emptiness or spaciousness of possibilities and life *as it is* in all the different forms and shapes which are appearing until there is increasing relationship and Unity.

This weaving back and forth stimulates my energy and excitement, my curiosity and my wonder about what could be. It is a collaboration with life. It is life being itself.

When we limit our imagination (which is an imaginative act even if unconscious) we limit what *could be* to what has already happened, to our histories and memories of what was safe and unsafe, what generated the love or attention we desired and what did not. We get lost in imagining new content to our lives, where somehow our histories can be changed by what we do today so we can overcome or even obliterate the past which is weighing us down. We spend our imagination then like *free money*, throwing it away while simultaneously bowing down to the idols of our past.

Imagination doesn't follow a straight line from the past to the future. It appears in fragments, pieces, sparks of interest and attraction and calls us out to engage and explore and discover something new. Imagination by its very nature happens within the context of relationship or collaboration with all of life. As we carve and shape and form words or ideas and images, so too who we are is carved and shaped as we go.

It is impossible to truly engage with the transformation built into imagination without changing how we perceive ourselves, right along with how we perceive the world. We cannot evade the ways imagination shapes us. It is folly indeed and it locks us in via our imagination rather than open us up to the freedom which is ours to know and live into.

Imagination is not simply about imagining something new. It is about allowing our imagination to reveal to us something which is true about reality, about life which until that moment we could not see.

I love the moment of Jacob wrestling with the angel in which he realizes "God was in this place and I did not see it."

This is a moment of true imagination – a moment in which Jacob, as he wrestled, was transformed and could perceive more of what was there – the wholeness of life which was always present – which he had denied up until that moment.

Such is the great gift of imagination! Life is often like a hidden text which beckons us to engage in relationship using our imagination, wrestling until we can perceive

anew that who we are or believe ourselves to be is not separate from what we perceive is here within life itself.

When we are lost in imagining all of the terrible things which *could* happen –which are often a projection of the terrible things that actually *did* happen in our past – we greatly limit our ability to go through the illuminating process of imagination. We limit our wrestling with the angels of our lives, which appear in the form of what is happening here and now. Instead, we wrestle only with the ghosts of the past. Thus, we do not allow ourselves to be curious, to discover, to go through the wrestling process and imagine the increasing levels of wholeness, nourishment and aliveness that are possible in every moment.

When we treat our lives as they are now or our desires and longings for greater wholeness and freedom as either unimportant or something to be ashamed of, we leave our humanity out of the great imagination of the Unity of All That Is. We render ourselves helpless before the forces of creation or try to overcome our helplessness by a type of power which eliminates a deepening relationship with our limited imperfect self, who is the vessel of imagination.

Wholesome Unity with All That Is is not arrived at by a process of exclusion of our powerlessness or the limited focus upon power.

When we slide into one extreme or another, we prematurely limit and block our imagination's greatest capacities.

We all need to wrestle directly with All That Is, the Source of All, to illuminate who and where we really are in the moment and not just where we think we are or where we should be. We cannot leap past our powerlessness to a false type of Unity which may even be intuitively felt as true but is not yet integrated in our sense of self.

In order to know Unity and the true power of imagination, we have to claim all of ourselves. Otherwise, we are favoring a type of pseudo awakening that is still excluding and killing off the unawakened aspects of our own being.

The paradox is that in order to be truly free to imagine increasing levels of wholeness, to perceive the wholeness which is available in any given moment, we need to awaken to the prisons we have erected within and around our lives,

including the false ideas or imaginings in which we have tried to skip over the necessary wrestling with the angels of imagination.

One of the great challenges is that we don't recognize our desires and longing as actually an intimate and vital feature of the world, the illuminating urge to be, which arises out of imagination.

Notice when you use your imagination to create a fantasy world that is apart from the body, rather than imagining in the body – which is to say to be located here and now, a unity of the inner and outer worlds. All awakening in our imagination happens in the body, wrestling with life as it is.

Meditation: Illuminating Urge to Be

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Consider and take as true that the illuminating urge to be and all of its pressure to come into being is *beyond* the everyday consciousness of the unhealed ego who splits and divides the world into opposites of this *or* that, of pushing or staying still, of imagining only repeating the cherished past *or* trying to escape from the pain of the past. Take this as true. Stay with that.

All of your thoughts are pictures or demands for you to be a specific kind of person, achieve a particular series of events or activities. These images have *already happened*. They are memories of events or experiences from the past. It is not the living thing. *They* are not alive, but what is left over, the way a photograph is what is left from a creative moment. These thoughts are the past.

*Stay with what is left.*