**Being Our Highest Potential**

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Our world is one of duality – good and bad, dark and light. So often, we hear of shadow work, delving into our own darkness, accepting ourselves just as we are with all our faults and insecurities. A worthy undertaking if one has never ventured there. Hiding from our whole self, living in a world of denial where we only want to think happy thoughts – seeing our lives as perfect and ignoring the difficulties – often has a price. One day, we wake up to find our delusions falling apart as negative events occur to re-balance our lives – something we have all faced.

So, how can we achieve equilibrium then? How can we enjoy a happy, fulfilling life and stash the rose-colored glasses into the glovebox at the same time? Sometimes, a compromise is called for. Suppressing emotions is not the answer. According to Chinese Medicine (my own field of study), blocking emotions can have serious repercussions on our health. Our emotions are what make us human. They are a rich treasure trove of feeling that connect us to our Shen or Spirit. When we delve into an honest exploration of emotion, we can ride those feelings into a deeper level of understanding about our hidden desires, fears and potentials.

Too often, however, we get lost in those emotions. Our shadow self seems to loom over us like a giant Darth Vader, ready to pounce, taunting us with our insecurities and weaknesses. Sometimes, we dive down into the deepest depths of despair, a tough place to dwell and often hard to dig our way out of. Life borders on depression, a dark night of the soul. Most people totter precariously on the ridge between hopes and dreams and disillusion or a grave disappointment with life. Often, we are afraid of our own highest potential, sabotaging ourselves each time a ray of light enters our world. To be happy in our society is too often frowned upon because it only serves to highlight the suffering and inadequacies we all face.

What is the answer then? How can we honor our emotions and all that they stand for without getting caught in the trap of doom and negativity that always looms so close beside us, waiting for an audience? How can we reach for our highest potential and envelop the feelings of hope, love, joy and true meaning while still living in the light of reality?

Perhaps the answer lies in an understanding of our true nature. Think about it…. Who were you as a child when the world was still innocent, before any negative influence entered your life? Some people might need to go far back in their memories because life can be harsh at times, even in utero. Yet, we all have those memories somewhere inside us. We all *know* the feeling of innocence, of hope, of unlimited potential in the heart of our being. It may be buried beneath layers of social conditioning, years of protective psychological mechanisms, of a lifetime of abuse. Deep down, beneath all of that, however, lies our true nature. It only takes a moment to find it. Just sit in stillness and it will come. In Chinese Medicine, this is called our Chong Mai, and it is the place of miracles where all true healing occurs. Our Chong Mai is our original blueprint for this lifetime, a “place” we all have access to through looking inward with conscious intent.

Once we discover our root, shining a light into the darkest corner of our being, we can set about nurturing it . . . secretly, quietly . . . for it is ours and only ours to cherish. Then, as it stems and blooms from the subsoil of our gritty-ness, we can water it with kindness to ourselves and others. When we let the sun shine within our world – all those little things we find beautiful or nurturing to our soul – we allow our personal flower to germinate into something fulfilling in our lives. Caring for ourselves and others, always, with sensitivity, respect and understanding, we realize that everyone harbors this same seed of potential. No matter what life deals you, no matter how dark the days have become, it is always there for the asking. Just know, beyond a shadow of a doubt, that a beautiful, inextinguishable light shines deep within. We *are* that spark in all its glory.

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