



## Spiritual Warrior Training 101 ~ Lesson 1

### **Life Happens**

*“Do not look upon this world with fear and loathing.*

*Bravely face whatever the Gods offer.”*

*~ Morihei Ueshiba, The Art of Peace*

Are you ready to embark on the path of a spiritual warrior? I'll warn you in advance that this journey takes courage, trust and fortitude. It requires opening up your mind, heart, eyes and intuition. The reward however is living a more peaceful life, of integrity, balance and love. If you're dissatisfied with the life you have been living, why not give it a try?

Our first lesson is to shift our attitude to the acceptance of a world beyond our control. If we are to find peace in this seemingly chaotic world, there is one ultimate reality that we must come to honor in our lives: external change is the only thing we can ever count on. Accepting, owning and living this condition of human existence is the first key to becoming a spiritual warrior.

Life is a powerful journey, a moving, shifting, flowing river. Just as we can never step into the same river twice, we must accept that “life is change.” When we fight this inevitable conclusion, we tend to hold on tightly to whatever we feel is our security. Yet security is a grand illusion and living in that illusion inhibits our growth with resulting stagnation. One of the greatest mistakes many of us make is in trying to “control” our lives and the lives of others. People who think they can “control” life invariably manifest anxiety disorders, personality disorders, narcissism, and co-dependent behaviors. They live lives filled with tension, frustration, worry and anger towards the world and toward themselves. Transforming this illusion is the first step toward living the life of a spiritual warrior.

I invite you instead to make the conscious choice to view your life as a grand adventure of the Soul, accepting and flowing peacefully with whatever transpires in your life. Further still, why not take on the attitude of allowing whatever happens to take the form of a lesson. Therefore, no matter what happens to you in life ask yourself, what can I learn from this? The spiritual warrior understands that there is a deeper purpose behind the so-called “random events” of life, opening his/her heart to the underlying message and trusting that everything is happening for a reason.

Faith that the universe has a profound plan for us is the key to acceptance of a world that often makes little sense from our ego's perspective. As we develop faith, we come to accept that from all external events, we can glean some wisdom and grow our souls. This transpersonal view suggests that the process of change is a requirement to growth. Writer, Peter Russell in his exceptional book, *Waking Up in Time*, warns us of a potentially, fiery future for us all:

The winds of change are brewing into a storm of change – perhaps a hurricane of change. How can we cope with such change? If we are to survive the accelerating changes that are coming our way we need first to be flexible. We need to let go of outdated assumptions and habits of thinking that no longer serve us. We need to find the inner freedom to see things with fresh eyes and respond more creatively. And second, we need greater inner stability. We need to be stably anchored in the ground of our own being so that when we meet the unexpected we can remain cool, calm and collected, not thrown into fear and panic.

Russell argues that once we find our center point of balance, the winds may blow, but we will survive as we open to whatever comes next. As human beings, we walk two roads, that of earth and that of sky. We are asked to both ground our beings in the materialistic earth and at the same time offer ourselves in trust to the universal energies of light. As we accept the reality of change in our lives, we open ourselves to the opportunity for transformation.

Forced change is most often an unwelcome guest. Yet many times, these moments are just what we need to shift us into seeing life differently. Illness, death, loss of jobs, and loss of ourselves through substance abuse are a few of the many wake-up calls we are given to alert us to what is truly important in our lives. “Wei-chi” is the Chinese word for crisis. There are two characters in the word, one meaning danger, the other opportunity. Underlying every crisis is an opportunity for growth and a new way of being in the world.

Based on the experiences of his ministry, Pastor Wayne Muller, shares in his article, *Questions that Matter: Stories of Courage and Grace*, that “something happens in a moment of suffering, something that can be quite precious—a moment that simultaneously breaks us down and also breaks us open.” We may not understand or like what’s happening to us, yet these moments of seeming chaos are actually opportunities for us to see that there is a new way out. Transition points lead us to the fork in the road where we are able to choose a new way of being in the world. Will we choose the well-worn road, trudging along in the same old habits, partners in stagnation, or will we instead take the courageous step and venture out into the new territory of acceptance? Think of all the adventurers we admire who have done just this. This is the choice of the spiritual warrior. Will it be your choice?

### **Dancing Lesson For Your Soul ~ Gratitude Practice**

Imagine yourself standing on a mountaintop watching your life going from a higher perspective. Notice that there is something you are presently struggling with. As you watch from above, ask yourself, “what lessons can I learn from this difficulty? What gifts can come from my present suffering?” Let your imagination flow and journal your responses. If you are honest with yourself, you will most likely discover that with every experience you have; you learn, grow, and gain strength. Each of your life experiences holds a gift. Perhaps you will gain a new sense of respect for yourself or others, learn tolerance or increase your level of patience. As you learn to see with new eyes it is quite likely that new possibilities you had never even considered will magically appear. I hope you enjoy the view from above.

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