

Healing a Closed Heart

Let me share with you the story of how I discovered my heart was closed. In the early 80's, after years of reading metaphysical books and pursuing all types of psychic studies a friend told me about an American teacher who taught healing in Germany. I happened to be there because I was consulting for an American company in Berlin. Healing was not in my vocabulary at that time, nor was it a common practice among my metaphysical friends (difficult to imagine that was only 20 years ago)! But my life wasn't going the way I had planned and I felt I needed to make some changes. I couldn't have told you what kind of changes and I certainly wasn't consciously prepared to "let go" of what I had. I signed up for the "healing" course, not having a clue about what it really meant. I felt the urge so strongly to take the course though, that I made monthly trips to Berlin from Paris where I was living.

The first day of the workshop Lynn had us visualize white light coming up from the earth into the body. As I imagined the light entering my heart I felt emotion rise up from a deep, unknown place inside me. I cried uncontrollably for quite a while and finally asked Lynn "what happened"? He told me not to worry about it - the answer would come to me. That night, in a dream, I saw my father and the profound sadness his leaving created in me. I felt so vulnerable and at the same time grateful that I discovered something about myself that had been hidden for many years. It became the first of many heart openings that would change the way I experienced myself, my family, everything in my world.

Shutting down the heart is the physical, emotional and spiritual response to trauma. There are very few people on the planet who have escaped the kind of trauma that closes our hearts. For me, I shut down the day my father left in an alcoholic rage. From that moment on, I steered myself against the hurt I felt without knowing it. Three years later I gave up a child for adoption and went through the entire experience without shedding a tear. I told myself that it was for the child's good and was applauded by the powers that be for my "courage" in handling the adoption so "maturely". In the intervening years I managed by sheer force of will to live the life I thought I wanted, and by my own and society's standards it was a good one. I had married a man that I loved, had two wonderful children and lived a prosperous life. I sensed something was missing but couldn't put my finger on it. I truly didn't understand what I had done. The heart is an obedient servant. Tell it to shut down and it will. Tell yourself not to feel and you won't. Spirit was knocking on my door but I was barely home to answer it. Being home meant being in my body and that meant feeling the pain that I had been carrying for a long time. Instead, I chose to move. I lived in Paris, Berlin, Amsterdam, and 50 other places in the span of 20 years.

Some will hear the messages from Spirit and act on them, others will ignore the empty space in their chest. I received a strong message one morning I couldn't ignore. I woke up on my daughter's 21st birthday, the daughter I had given up for adoption, knowing in every fiber of my being that I had to find her. I won't go into the details of my search for her but I did find her and it changed my life. I realized the choices I had made over many years were based on guilt, fear and for the most part, with a closed heart. A short time after finding my daughter my marriage faltered, my children grew up and left home and the life I had been living had no more meaning for me. I was seeking solace the day I showed up at the healing course.

We all have the capacity to open our hearts. In my case, the opening took me by surprise but I put myself into the course because I felt a pull to "heal". Opening the heart requires intention and determination even if you don't know what is necessary or what it is called. You know when you feel congestion in your chest. Or that your lungs and throat ache. These body signals are messages from the Higher Self that there is repressed emotion that needs healing. Maybe you've been so tuned out that you don't feel your body. Maybe, like many people I've worked with, you feel nothing. No passion, no love, just a dull gray blanket of fog that continually hangs over you. And if your Higher Self can't reach you through the body because you aren't grounded enough, It will try other ways. I truly believe now that if a person is ready to hear the truth, any stranger walking down the street could tell us, if only we would listen. When we aren't taking good physical care of ourselves, when we sit alone at home watching television or playing computer games night after night, when we eat, drink or drug ourselves excessively those are messages that our hearts are closed. There are numerous manifestations of a closed heart and we only have to survey our physical lives to notice where we are not loving ourselves and the people around us.

How the Higher Self opens the heart:

As I mentioned above, the body receives the signals that the Higher Self sends. But only if we are quiet enough to sense them. By relaxing the mind and ego the Higher Self can help us feel the blocked energy in our hearts. Quietening the demands of the mind can be a struggle at first because we believe we are our minds. We get absorbed in the distractions that the mind puts in front of us. The mind/ego fears quiet because it knows that something important might come up. But there are many tools available to aid us now: guided meditation, visualization, meditation tapes, drumming, music, deep breathing, focus on relaxing various parts of the body, etc. Give your mind something to do, some focus that allows your Spirit to come through. It works. Some people have the ability to "see" what this blockage looks like with the inner eye. It may appear like a sword piercing the heart or a cold, lifeless organ that vaguely resembles a heart. A plate of armor is a very common image as well as a split down the middle of the heart.

For those who can sense energy moving through their bodies, notice if the energy stops in the area of the chest or the middle of the back. With a question to your Higher Self, you can begin to access what is causing the armoring, the lifeless image or the pain. We created the armor to protect ourselves and we can get strong enough and vulnerable enough to take it off. Does that seem like a contradiction - strong, yet vulnerable? I am speaking of spiritual strength, the kind you receive from the Higher Self. Even if you can't sense the strength when it comes in, you can be assured that your Higher Self will provide whatever you ask for. Vulnerability feels quite strange for a while. We spend many years trying to be invulnerable to the powerful feelings we sense but don't express. I've heard people say that they believe they will die from the feelings or that they will never go away. I won't gloss over the discomfort involved in opening the heart. But remember that it only lasts minutes or hours versus spending years of your life blocked from love, passion, fulfilling work and physical health. For a moment, suspend doubt and let yourself believe you are not alone.

After you've asked for the strength and assumed it is there, be courageous enough to ask the Higher Self what is causing your heart to shut down. The Higher Self will show you whatever you can handle. At first it may just be a fleeting image of the house where you grew up or

someone you loved. As you grow stronger, spiritually stronger, the images become more refined and a lost memory appears. Ask that the Light be shined on any image that isn't clear. Light is direct healing energy from the Source and will clarify anything you ask. As the memory comes into focus and you see yourself in the perfection you are and always have been, allow yourself the emotional release that rises up. Tears connected to that conscious awareness of your true self will move you forward. They are part of the healing process that corrects the imbalance of misguided and mistaken beliefs. You have, at that moment of release, engaged your heart and mind in breaking through the wall of ironic detachment and emotional distance.

I wish I could say that one heart opening changes our lives completely and forever. But I imagine we are hardwired to make changes slowly over time. The heart chakra is in some ways like its physical counterpart. We have to exercise it in order for our capacity for love and spiritual well-being to grow. The Higher Self presents the opportunities whenever we are ready - i.e. being strong enough, bold enough and sometimes, just plain tired of repeating the same dumb mistakes over and over again.

I've noticed over the years how my heart has changed and grown since that first session in Germany. Like most people, I had numerous shadow areas covering my heart, not the least of which was the tremendous guilt I felt about giving a child up for adoption. Even after finding my daughter and healing the sadness around my father I still punished myself for my perceived misdeeds in the form of financial problems and loss of love. It took many healing sessions before I felt "strong" enough to handle seeing the image of the 17 year old walking the hospital floors unable to hold her newborn baby because she knew she was giving her away. To finally forgive and have compassion for myself opened my heart another notch. Does it ever end? Is there ever a completion? I don't believe so. Once in a while my Higher Self sends me a dose of overwhelming love and understanding while I'm sitting quietly in the morning looking at the sunrise. Sometimes I remember that I asked for it the night before. And I'm very grateful that my heart has expanded enough that I can accept the tears without resistance.