

SPIRITUAL RESISTANCE

The invisible barrier

If someone were to tell you that you were deliberately avoiding or resisting change your first reaction would probably be indignation. "What do you mean I'm avoiding? I'm doing everything I know how to do!" **But the truth is we do resist, and, for good reason.** I'm not talking about conscious or deliberate resistance, the kind that we are all familiar with. You know the kind - oops, I forgot to set the alarm last night and slept right through that boring meeting. There's another kind of resistance that is more creative, subtler, and ultimately, more damaging. In this chapter we are going to look at our resistance to change, why we have it, how to recognize it and most of all, how to remove it.

What is resistance?

Between you and your true self there is an invisible barrier. Think of this invisible barrier as a huge wall that we create to block out feeling. Just as the population of a medieval village constructed a wall to protect themselves from invaders we construct barriers to protect ourselves from feeling. Why would we do that? At some time in our past we have all experienced an emotional blow. The trauma could have been as severe as molestation or abandonment or something less severe but still very painful. Many of us have experienced rejection by a parent or feeling in some way diminished by a teacher, a sibling, a close friend. Whether intended or not, someone in our past created a negative belief about ourselves and it stayed with us. At that moment, usually in childhood, we made a decision to separate ourselves from the pain.

Though the decision was sometimes made with our conscious agreement, very often it was a strong "feeling" decision. "That will never happen to me again!" Every cell in our body wanted to shut down, escape, seek out the nearest exit. We didn't have the resources to physically escape the trauma. Obviously, packing our belongings and moving to another place was not an option for most of us. So instead we created the illusion of protection by making a decision not to feel. That strong desire not to feel the pain became a barrier of resistance, a protective wall. The resistance to feeling then became so well integrated into our personalities that we don't even know it's there. We know that something is wrong. Our life is not working out the way we had hoped. We don't get the love we want, our career aspirations go unfulfilled, we suffer from fatigue, stress and disease of all kinds. Until we begin to work on ourselves we are not aware that we have created the resistance. We've locked ourselves up and don't even realize it.

Why don't we want to see ourselves?

I can hear what some of you are saying. Well, if that's the case, then let's just break open that lock and see what's inside. What are we afraid of? How hard can it be? We all know people who pride themselves on their courage. They set goals for themselves to conquer their fears. They'll jump out of airplanes, ski down the face of mountains, risk life and limb to push through barriers of fear. But ask these same people to journey inside themselves to unmask their hidden truths and the wall of resistance becomes enormous. Even those whose life's work is helping others to change have difficulty facing their own inner fears. I met a wonderful psychotherapist some years ago who was very successful in her field. We decided to exchange sessions, as we were curious about each other's work. I became her "client" first and

found her to be very gifted. She helped me to see some things about myself that I hadn't before. When her turn to be "client" came I encountered a kind of resistance I didn't expect. We had reached a point in the session where she realized she had erected a barrier to feeling something she didn't want to feel. She told me she was stopping the session, that she would rather die than look at what was behind that resistance. This is someone who is seriously committed to her client's healing and growth.

The truth is we'd rather not feel the pain. We made a decision to separate from the part of us that hurt and we strongly resist anything that tries to make us feel it again. We're afraid those people who hurt us were right, that there is something wrong with us. We were not worth hanging around for. We were too skinny, fat, ugly, stupid, slow, sickly - you name it - for them to love us. Most of my clients have told me at some point during our work together that they're afraid of what they're going to see or feel, that there will be something evil or very dark inside or that there will be nothing at all. If we were truly honest with ourselves the answer to the question of why we don't see ourselves is that we really don't want to know.

How do we recognize the resistance?

Resistance appears in many forms, as many as there are individuals creating it. The Higher Self will help you to sense your own resistance once you are fully present in your body. When I first started my practice I didn't know about resistance. As I mentioned earlier, I'd had years of practice leading people on inner journeys and being witness to the fabulous experiences they had. But after these journeys people returned to their normal lives, somewhat expanded in their vision of the universe but still limited in their view of themselves. I wanted to see change, real growth and I felt frustrated that the work I was doing wasn't helping people to make those shifts in their everyday lives.

ASKING is the key to working with the Higher Self.

I always trusted the Higher Self to guide me through the healing process with my clients. I knew to ask my Higher Self to be present and to work with my client's Higher Self. I also knew to ask for guidance and to be an open channel for healing. While many of my clients had wonderful breakthroughs in a session or two, inevitably, the breakthroughs would stop. The client would experience some kind of a block in the messages that were coming through. Many times the block didn't even seem like a block, but a very convincing break in the session. Sometimes the client would fall asleep, or tell me the session wasn't working and open their eyes. They would complain about the outside noise or the inside rumblings of their stomachs.

Sometimes they would be flying at lightening speed through clouds or immersed in a deep dense fog. It didn't occur to me that all the "walls", fog banks, feeling sick, trips to the bathroom, boredom, mind chattering and countless other distractions were forms of resistance. Since I'm not easily dissuaded I continued to try various techniques, convinced that there was a key to getting through what I called resistance. One day I was working with a woman who kept reaching the same obstacle over and over during our sessions together. I decided to just ASK that the obstacle be removed, that her Higher Self clear whatever was in her way of understanding. To my astonishment, the client actually felt something lift and in a very short time saw a memory

emerge that helped her to begin her healing. That was my first lesson in helping clients to overcome resistance to their own healing.

Another form of resistance that really had me stymied at the beginning was when my clients would see or feel nothing, just total darkness. I'd ask them to describe what was going on and they would tell me nothing. I would have to terminate the session even though I knew in an intuitive way that there had to be something there. I kept asking my Higher Self for guidance and the thought came to me during a particularly frustrating session that I could just ask that the client be taken under the blackness. After a few quiet moments important memories began to emerge. It worked! Even blackness, nothingness is a form of resistance.

Since resistance comes in so many forms it is not unusual to mistake the resistance for a much more elevated motive. As an example, I work with many therapists and healers and they have a very special kind of resistance. It has to do with taking responsibility for the healing and caring of the world. It goes like this: after their Higher Self puts them in their body they begin to see all the pain, suffering and injustice in the world and how much there is for them to do. You can imagine how taken I was at the beginning. I was very impressed with their sense of social responsibility. But being the detective I am I couldn't resist the temptation to ask the Higher Self to take them under that feeling of responsibility. I probably mentioned that I don't like to leave any stone unturned! Another surprise awaited me. All kinds of sad memories were hidden beneath that responsibility burden. Feeling burdened with other's pain can be just another form of resistance.

This is not true of all those in the field of personal growth but I have seen many cases and most especially, my own. Some years ago I was giving a weekend seminar to a group of healers. We knew each other fairly well and had done other seminars together. The purpose of the weekend was to advance their knowledge of working with the Higher Self. As always in my training seminars I ask people to practice with each other so that they benefit both from the experience in helping others and in healing parts of themselves. As the weekend progressed petty grievances began to emerge and I felt quite justified in taking my group to task for their behavior. Some of the participants got angry with me. They felt I was out of line. I, on the other hand, believed that it was my job to heal the healers. By the end of the weekend some of the people had experienced incredible realizations about themselves and their own inner journey. But the few who were angry stayed that way and I was left with a terrible feeling of failure when the weekend was over. Fortunately, my husband knew quite a bit about my work and how to take me through a session. I resisted at first, thinking that he wouldn't be able to do the session well and, that there was nothing to work on anyway. Despite my less than willing ego, I did finally agree to look at myself. To say that I was surprised by the outcome would be an understatement. The Higher Self showed me clearly that my taking responsibility for other's healing was my way of avoiding responsibility for my own! It had been a lifetime pattern for me. I had grown up in a large family and was the oldest child. My own needs came after everyone else's and I had a lot of resistance to looking at those needs. **Healer, heal thyself!**

Not only do people's career choices define their unique types of resistance but, often, outer character traits do so as well. I have a client who has a self-proclaimed "goofy" exterior. I've met him in social situations and he gives the impression of being a wayward clown.

When we started working together and getting down to feelings he would often see images of a circus. Heâ€™d spend lots of time going through the fun house, watching clowns, and describing the animal tamers. I finally asked his Higher Self to take him under the circus pictures and there was a little boy hiding from his brutal father. The circus and his clownish exterior were created to cover up his feelings of abuse and rejection.

Another character trait that comes through as resistance is humility. I was recently working with a very lovely woman who belittled herself at every opportunity. As we progressed into a relaxed state she kept saying over and over that she didnâ€™t think she could do this work. She didnâ€™t trust herself or her intuition. She was sure everyone else could do it but she couldnâ€™t. I asked her Higher Self to take her through the insecurity she felt to the other side. Memories of being humiliated flooded back and we were able to get in touch with why she berated herself so often. Her humility was a creation to cover up the much more disturbing feelings of anger and sadness.

As I mentioned earlier, I am living in France, the country of Cartesian philosophy. The French really pride themselves on their intellectual acuity and itâ€™s often quite a challenge to work with them, getting them out of their heads and into their hearts. Their particular brand of resistance has to do with intellectualism. They get bored, cynical, and sure that nothing will come of the session. Thank goodness, the Higher Self works whether we believe in It or not. By asking the Higher Self to "strengthen" the client and then to remove the resistance, the intellectual feels strong enough internally to move through the resistance/cynicism cycle and see whatâ€™s really going on. Once again, we can cover deep hurt with amazing kinds of creative resistance, including developing apparent "virtues" or talents that the outer world values highly.

A young man came to me feeling very depressed and suicidal. I noticed that he dressed very well despite the fact that he didnâ€™t have a job nor had he ever had one. He had grown up in a very well to do family but with little stability or love. He was willing to accept money from them and couldnâ€™t get himself started in a career. He was becoming very despondent about his situation. I started the session, invoked his Higher Self and as we moved through some of the more obvious kinds of resistance we came to a place of enormous frustration for him. He called it mediocrity and told me that, as far as he was concerned, mediocrity was the worst fear he had. It meant death to him. I asked his Higher Self to take him under the "mediocrity" and he discovered a beautiful golden light that was washing over him. Beneath the light was the little boy who felt rejected and dismissed by his pre-occupied parents. Over the years he had created for himself what he considered to be a very mediocre life, lacking in direction or meaning. Mediocrity was his form of resistance.

I know many of you who are reading this have been involved in the "new age movement" for a long time. Youâ€™ve may have been exposed to past life regressions and learning to channel. I believe in both pursuits to help us understand who we are, to get the overall picture. But let me reiterate here about resistance and its many forms. Iâ€™ve had the experience of working with many people who will see images of past lives or go into a channeling mode. Iâ€™ve even had clients "channel" for me while I was working with them. Itâ€™s a great temptation to receive information from a guide through someone else, but if you are trying to help heal a trauma channeling and focusing on past life images can be another distraction or form of resistance, the

unique myths that each of us creates about ourselves to cover up the real self. Now that you're aware of what to look for we can move on to:

How to Release Resistance

You've probably noticed in the foregoing paragraphs on resistance that I often refer to asking the Higher Self to GO UNDER the resistance to release it. The Higher Self has taught me to use a special, very structured vocabulary. From my earlier training in hypnosis and guided imagery I realized how important it is to engender trust with the client, to stay as pure and neutral as possible in the language I use with them. I also learned how powerful the imagination is in this work. There are no time or space limitations so the client can "do" absolutely anything that is required to solve a problem. If there is an image of a wall, the client can take it down by himself or with the help of his Higher Self. We can go over, under, through any obstacle. We can ASK to be lifted, carried, led or accompanied during difficult passages. And if the object of resistance is so formidable that we can't imagine moving it or moving through it ourselves we can ask our Higher Selves to blow it up, dig it up or tear it down. All these words help the client to move past the resistance, whether it shows up as a wall, a plate of armor, blackness, fear, frustration, or a chattering mind. Everything is experienced as real, just like in a dream.

Whatever obstacle is blocking the client's path the Higher Self will present an image that the person can relate to. Through the person's own description of what he/she is experiencing we are guided to formulate just the right words to help them break through. As an example, many clients see an image of a dark tunnel during their sessions with me. They often don't know what to do and feel fearful. I ask the Higher Self to walk them through the tunnel or even carry them through the tunnel to the other side. By walking or carrying them the client feels safe and those words fit with what they are seeing. When I ask that the client be "taken to the other side" I use that phrase because early on the Higher Self taught me that there always is another side to fear. Whether you find yourself standing on a precipice, feeling despair, a terrible sense of loneliness, or dropping down into a dark well there is always a deeper, more benign place to go when fear shows up.

Before you make a dash to try and unblock all that you have created not to feel, let me explain that it is not always as easy as that. The Higher Self will remove all that we ask to be removed, but it may take some time to feel strong enough to let go, to surrender to the feeling. Remember that we have many layers of resistance and our ego wants to be in control, to protect us from feeling hurt by any means possible. It will throw up all kinds of barriers to healing. But we do want to grow, our soul demands growth. So we'll create for ourselves the opportunities that will help us to do just that. We will replay those painful episodes in our past over and over again until they become so uncomfortable that we will do anything to change. A woman that I worked with recently had never had any experience with personal development and knew nothing about her Higher Self. She was in a very abusive situation and could barely explain the problem between heaving sobs. In that first session together she was able to let go enough to be able to see an image of herself as a ten year old child being belittled and rejected by her mother. This memory was the first of several painful memories of abusive experiences she suffered as a child. The reason we were able to reach that memory in the first session is because she didn't fully comprehend what was about to happen. Rather, her ego didn't understand.

The second session is often very different. If the client doesn't break the appointment or arrive late, there is usually a wall of very strong resistance to feeling during the session. The ego has been alerted and will fight to keep the client from feeling the pain again. This is the place where asking the Higher Self for STRENGTH is so important. The Higher Self will give us whatever we ask for as long as it is in our best interest. In responding to the request for strength here's an example of how the Higher Self will help. One of the most favored types of avoidance I've encountered is when the client leaves his/her body. When the going gets tough many clients suddenly find themselves flying above the earth, floating through clouds and gazing down on everything from a distance. This is not a conscious decision on their part. On a deep level they don't want to be present to feel the pain. And it was a difficult form of resistance to recognize when I first started practicing. Ok, Higher Self, what do I do now? The answer came to ASK for strength for my client to bring them back to earth. Almost immediately the clients will actually have an image of themselves coming down to earth, sometimes floating gently and sometimes very quickly, depending on how ready they are to feel. They'll often arrive in a beautiful and serene landscape, seeing themselves surrounded by trees and flowers, or maybe even sitting on a mountaintop. In any case they are ON THE GROUND. I know then that the client is in his/her body and can begin the healing process.

Asking the Higher Self to strengthen and to take us through the barriers of resistance works. Remember that the Higher Self will help us even if we don't believe. Some of the most spectacular results have come to people who think I'm doing some kind of mumbo jumbo by invoking and working with the Higher Self.

Because resistance is so creative and difficult to recognize, though, taking yourself through the healing process can be a formidable challenge. I consider myself a resistance specialist since I've worked with hundreds of people. Obviously, I've seen all kinds and it takes some really unusual forms to fool me now. But let me tell you about my own recent bout of resistance and maybe this example will push you into asking for help from someone who understands the power of the Higher Self.

I've wanted to do a book for years. I finally got up the courage to send out query letters to see if a publisher would be interested. I received a very kind reply from Findhorn and a request for a sample chapter. After the initial elation (several hours worth) it dawned on me that I would actually have to write the chapter. I told myself that it was no problem, I could do it. My friends told me I could do it. I wrote to Findhorn and told them I'd have it within a week. Within 24 hours of agreeing to send a sample chapter I had invited several good friends in California to come and stay at my apartment in France, spending several weeks being tour guide and social director. When they left I immediately called a friend in the South and made plans to visit her and help her out with some problem she was having. To top it all off my computer did what computers do when energy is blocked - it conveniently died! That's not all. Since I had to have another computer I naturally had to go to California to buy it (Don't ask!). This whole process took almost three months and all the while I was feeling very irresponsible. Did I recognize all the distractions and dramas as resistance? The answer is NO. Fortunately, a very good friend gently suggested that I should have a session and look at my own resistance to success. You wouldn't be reading this book if I hadn't asked someone to do

a session with me. Iâ€™d be trekking in the Himalayas or painting my apartment, anything but writing about resistance!

If youâ€™ve been working on yourself and aware of your own inner landscape you may be able to practice taking yourself through a session and break through the resistance to feeling. The important point is to be able to be present in your body and sense the obstacles to feeling. No matter what that obstacle is you can be sure it is self-created and with the help of your Higher Self it can be released.

The first step is always relaxation. By using the methods in the previous chapter on relaxation you create the space for your Higher Self to enter and more importantly, communicate with you.

Call in your Higher Self and ask for a healing journey. Be patient with yourself and observe what is going on inside. Notice how you are feeling, what images are coming, what you are sensing. By keeping in mind that everything you are observing is a message from your Higher Self you will be less inclined to fool yourself when resistance shows up. When you feel frustrated because you are seeing or feeling nothing, for example, remember that is the **RESISTANCE**.

Ask for strength and healing energy! As you begin to sense the resistance the only way to release it is to be strong enough to let it go. Your Higher Self will give you that strength.

Ask to be able to sense the resistance. Here is a sample dialogue with a client to help you formulate the question.

Me: How are you feeling?

Client: OK.

Me: Whatâ€™s going on?

Client: Iâ€™m getting annoyed at the noise outside. Maybe we should do this another time.

Me: Iâ€™m going to ask your Higher Self to take you under the noise and distractions to see whatâ€™s there.

Client: (in a short time) I can see some shadows but itâ€™s not really clear.

Me: Iâ€™ll ask your Higher Self for strength for you so that you can see more clearly.

Client: Those shadows are people I know. Thatâ€™s my grandmother and mother.

Me: What are they doing?

Client: That was the day my father left.

I've kept this example purposefully short because I'm trying to emphasize the simplicity of the process, particularly just the asking for help. The results could come immediately or take several sessions to have the clarity that is expressed here. If the clarity doesn't come right away, more strength is required. Be patient with yourself or whomever you are working with. If the memory doesn't emerge right away the person isn't ready to look at it. It's not a question of doing it right or better, it's only a question of feeling strong enough.

I hope this helps you to understand what resistance is, why we create it and how to release it. Though breaking through resistance is a key component in the healing process, our work is not yet complete. The Higher Self has a lot more to teach us about the structure of healing and how we finally become the person we want to be.