

An ex-guru's mea culpa

by Stace Barron

As the saying goes, 'We teach best what we must learn most.'

Looking back, as a child I had no idea how to live in what everyone called 'the world.' Born with third-eye psychic access wide open, I could see and experience things invisible to those around me. This was terrifying, as I could sense everyone was covered over by the opposite of how they really felt. As such, I could neither make solid connect to their false presentation nor their deeper realer version. This left me so existentially different than others early on I had to numb myself down to not feel such a deep alienation from my own species.

It was also overwhelmingly terrifying to experience things in that unseen world that felt like they were coming into me, with no one to tell me how to deal with it and help me digest experiences no one around me could validate or with whom I could commiserate. The result of both these realities was that to fit in I had to close off from the outer world of people to maintain my link to the realer world of Spirit within which I somehow knew the world of real matter and people precipitated. This shutout was the first set of defended layers that later inhibited my ability to feel my proper place in the mattered world and my impact on others.

But these dynamics also co-existed with a Yang-based Divine Presence that was so intimately experiencable to me I literally could feel It feel what I felt in all moments. In that way I never had to believe in God, It was right here, right there, right everywhere from the beginning. This was yet another aspect to consciousness impossible to share with others. But It was so natural a Presence and so warmly appreciative of my suffering It allowed me a modicum of stability to my confused existence to at least survive and do my best.

Added to this, like everyone else I was beset by familial toxic conditioning, which in my case involved a bullying and over-willful Yang-based mother who taught me only domination of others ensured I would be safe in an untrustworthy world that would never care about me. Being defended in that way then naturally added to my inability to feel my impact on others. I also had an over-Yinic father that gave me no template for what being a naturally strong male meant, and so contributed to my over-amped Yangism with others as compensation. Add to all that the worldwide social contract we all become conditioned by from families and society that

rewards samenesses and disdains differentnesses. I thus learned to experience my honest spiritual strengths as weaknesses that impeded human efficacy and my compensatory human weaknesses as strengths that impeded spiritual expression. Yet another wound-based dilemma.

Then a nondual-oriented spiritually transformative event in my late thirties added the coup de' gras to any real ability to feel my impact on others. One tragic symptom of this nontransactability is that there isn't enough 'you' left afterward to easily feel 'your' impact on others. Unenlightened people have almost no appreciation that classical nondual enlightenment creates a hidden existential narcissism masked by a trans-egoic state, one in which real and substantive relatedness with unenlightened others is rendered moot. This occurs because any personalized self in relational transaction is conditioned by nondual enlightenment to be experienced and thus specifically defined as illusional and/or unreal.

And lastly, another result of all of these numbing down dynamics and owing to my desperate attempt to keep both my human and spiritual aspects vital and contributive to my life, was a kind of blurred consciousness reality-refraction that disallowed realization of how some of what was personally true for me in any present or past personal moment was distorted.

Later, in over thirty years of teaching to people and facilitating their emotospiritual growth, I always stood for how we are all essentially emotive beings before we are willful, willful beings before we are mental, and mental beings before we express as physical. As ontologically emotive beings in our innate soulfulness as spiritual beings having human experience, we are thus in essence made of Love, a universal emotive dynamism, before we ever take secondarily form as willful beings and tertiarily express as both mentalized and physicalized beings.

But due to all those ways I had to numb myself to survive and thrive, in my personal work with people, I unconsciously embodied Willfulness first, Love second, cognitivity third, and physicality fourth, in direct contradiction to what I taught. This was then the point of the spear of all the reasons that contributed to how I was almost completely unaware of, and so unable to care about, my tough-love impact on people, no matter how many times people reflected to me how too often I was too harsh. I justified that tough-love in that it was only their defenses I was confronting in the attempt to help free their worlds of their soul turbulence. But I never realized no matter how accurate I may have been in what I could see about them that they couldn't, only a nonrelational willful-based narcissistic state would allow for such an expression.

So being embodied in direct contradiction to what I so passionately taught and largely incapable of feeling my impact on others created an insurmountable confusion in students that was subsumed by how they felt the depth of Love I did embody, but could not get clear of how over-Willfulness in my more tough-love expressions of course offset the effects of that Love.

Because even my secondary embodiment of Love was so strong, students were thus trapped inside an unsolvable conflict that expressed as a kind of emotive blackmail, where they didn't want to lose that Love and so were too willing to be subjugatable to my over-Yanged will.

Eventually that willingness ended, and for the last four years I've been emotively, therapeutically, and spiritually processing the remorse I feel for what I had done and its impact on the precious people who trusted me with their hearts, minds, careers, and relationships. That remorse has been almost impossible to bear or adequately describe. Add to that the effects of how my whole world and everything I had built over my entire adult life collapsed, but was the right sanction for what I'd done, however unmindfully. I embraced that rightness for the suffering I caused. And how had that collapse not happened, the sacredness of what I was teaching but not embodying would never have had the chance to be cleansed of what tainted it.

Most former students threw the baby out with the bathwater and assumed what I taught was just as diseased as the way I embodied its contradiction, and never spoke to me again, embodying their very own tough love that they criticized in me coming back to me. I will never unilaterally endeavor to remediate their position, as that would repeat my former error and undermine their own self-authority.

After the collapse, the few who possessed the surety that the teaching itself was sacred and valid but had issues with how I embodied it did not go away, and heartfully asked me about how I held what happened and what I was doing to heal the issues in myself that caused it. It has only been their support that has helped me find my way through the morass, find the root of the issues, and go about trying to heal them these last four years.

But even that support wouldn't have been sufficient had it not been for my beloved wife Brie, who after some months of separation saw the deeper good in both me and the paradigm and helped me recover all the things she loved about me while I did the work necessary to shed over-willful-based toxicities. For that soulful heart-equilibrium she was also exiled from the angry mass and excoriated for being weak and subservient instead of being honored for the enormous courage it took for her to stand against all of them for her love of what was good about the paradigm and me while at the same time demanding what needed to change in me.

With her invaluable help we also identified what needed to be changed in the protocol we developed as a guide to help people find their most emotively authentic version of self. All the years it was being evolved I always thanked students on two continents on an ongoing basis for consciously volunteering to be part of the experiment of a new dharma held technically as a working beta version under constant adaptive remodeling, as it should be with any new process being tested for its sobriety. It was that openness to always re-adapt it as we learned more and

more about what worked and what didn't that Brie and I finally discovered how my Yang-based issues, nondual enlightenment, and ability to see through to the raw depthful soulfulness in people and their capacities that were blocked by wounding blinded me from seeing the key that was missing, which her own Yin-genius finally saw and then found the way to implement.

Thankfully, there are rare people who soberly trust what they personally experience far more than those who trust what they read on the internet. Because of them we've been able to test and anchor the changes in how we now work with people. Together in sessions we've been field-testing Brie's remediation with enough people to find it to be free of the past distortions that over-focused on people's non-sober aspects and under-focused on the sober, my own hidden self-unworth and its compensations setting me up to do that.

But paraphrasing my therapist, who at the end of our first meeting said 'I see a man who no longer wants to hurt anyone, and committed to healing what did,' gave me what I needed to begin to build a foundation for what was necessary to change and heal. He also helped me see only those who allow no doubt into their judgments need to hate and troll, and that it was fruitless to try and convince them otherwise.

So I am an ex-guru in recovery doing his best to be both clean and sober and so serve in this life what I was born to be and do and aid anyone in what they were born to be and do. I needed to acquire the disease of dysfunctional spiritual leadership to acquire its antibodies, and am now able to embody a far more clean and sober teaching aegis. But being in recovery also means Brie and I do all work with people together, as it was she who saw through to what needed to happen to make the healing solution real.

For all these reasons, I must say thank you from the bottom of my heart to those who judge or web-troll Brie and I directly or privately or believe I am unhealable: without them and the collapse that occurred, I would never have had the chance to heal what in me caused people so much pain. How to truly offer and embody 'I am so sorry' can only authentically occur in a face-to-face heart-to-heart encounter, not in any written monologue like this, and certainly never with anyone still in judgmental rage or so attached to their truths they're closed to any other. I thus respect and support wherever anyone needs to be in any moment far too much to ever try to change anyone's mind or ingratiate myself with anyone for their approval. Despite that inability, I still carry pain about how I wish the situation could be ameliorated.

But as Brie has shown me, everyone who does the work to heal deserves a second chance. This applies to both sides of whatever gulfs may be co-created between the hearts of like-hearted souls, as together we passionately seek whatever we feel is worthy enough to be found.