

# Tune in Now!

Heart Thought 14, 1/4/08

by Nicholas de Castella

The first step in Living a Heart Centred Life is learning to 'Tune in'. Tuning in means becoming more aware of what is present - within us. Tuning in is about dropping inside, opening and feeling into ourselves. Dropping thoughts and stories and tuning into our bodily sensations, our emotions and our hearts. It requires us to stop. Stop trying to get somewhere and make something happen. And instead be with what is happening. When we do this we connect with ourselves deeply, promote healing and transformation and gain invaluable information about what is really going on, what we need to do and how to best respond to the moment

We spend an inordinate amount of time focused on the things outside of us. We stay busy with the concerns of the world around us. We work in the world, spend a lot of time thinking about what we are going to do and how we are going to do it, what other people are doing and how they are responding to us.

The more we focus on what is around us the less in touch with ourselves. What we focus on expands. When our attention is on what is around us we become more aware of what's outside and less aware of what is within us.

Many people are constantly scanning their environment, looking for signs of danger. This can have its origins in growing up in a household where there was lots of drama. Maybe we had to scan the environment to see if mum or dad were angry or maybe we had to be on our guard to make sure we did the 'right thing' (not our thing) to get acceptance and approval.

Because our eyes look outwards there is a tendency to look outside of us for the answers to our problems. We often find ourselves trying to modify the outer world so that we can get other people's approval, acceptance, be happy and secure.

The more we look outside, the more remote we become from ourselves and the more empty, lost and confused we become and the more disconnected we feel from others (and they from us) and life.

Nothing outside of us can produce lasting contentment. We live in a transitory world where everything is in a constant state of flux - endless cycles of birth, maturity, death and disintegration. We are constantly getting and losing.

The answers to unhappiness, stress, anxiety and frustrations lies within. Within you is an infinite and abiding calmness, peace, love and perfect wholeness beyond words. We call this our true nature because it is timeless and unchanging. We experience this truth through connecting with our heart.

We have become out of touch with this vast wealth within for two reasons:

Firstly, we have shut down our hearts to survive when the intensity of pain was too great for us to integrate at that time. We have been hurt and shut down on the feelings in order to continue to function. We were born with our hearts more or less fully open. Life force, our emotions, flowed freely through our bodies. We did not judge this as good and that as bad, we just experienced it all as it is. But along comes some painful experiences - of being rejected, abandoned, criticised... and we closed off on the pain of these feelings.

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Secondly, we do not spend enough time going inside and dwelling in our inner experience for long enough to know it as a truth - as our truth. The journey inwards involves facing and resolving our unresolved feelings from the past.

We have not learnt skills to manage our feelings. We live in a culture that teaches us that we should repress and control what we feel and that we will find happiness outside of us - mostly by getting something that is going to 'make' us happy: a loving relationship, new house, pay rise, new job, new CD, foot bath...

## A MAP FOR THE JOURNEY HOME

In our Passionately Alive seminar we take people on a journey through the steps we need to take to tune in and reconnect with the truth of who we are. There are four steps:

### 1. Shift from thinking to feeling

As humans we are either thinking or feeling. It is actually very difficult, if not impossible to both think and feel consciously at the same time. Usually when we are thinking we are not feeling. Take for example when we are sitting at the computer or watching TV. Our attention is focused outside of us and we are usually not very aware of what is happening in our body. Often it is only when we go to stand up do we start feeling our aches and pains from sitting in one position for so long.

It almost goes without saying that we live in a culture that does excessive thinking and not enough feeling.

Thoughts are always removed from the experience of being.

The cognitive world of our thinking mind operates at a distance from the experience of being alive, here on Earth. When we have an experience we interpret, analyse, judge, label, refer it to similar memories and categorise it with our minds. All these things we do in our minds are one step disconnected from the actual, initial experience. The more we live in our heads the less connected to life we feel. Many people live mostly in an abstract fantasy world of their minds. Like a bubble that floats around separate from this earthly reality. This can be OK when we are thinking of something good, but it can be a nightmare if we let our mind run away when we are thinking about scary or angry thoughts. Either way it is dangerous because we can miss out on what is actually happening because we are not present to experience it. Our life can pass without us really experiencing the fullness and richness it has to offer: the fresh air on our face, blue sky overhead, the call of birds and our breath in our body. Long term absence can lead to our our kids can growing up and leaving home before we actually connect with them.

### 2. Tune into your Body

The first port of call when wanting to reconnect is to get out of our heads and feel our body. Our body is here! It is in earthly terms 'real' - it is something that exists that we can feel.

The quantum leap here is to switch our attention from thinking to feeling. When we do this we start to tune into another world. And begin our journey homewards. Who we are is not an idea or a belief, it is something that we can only know through experiencing it. Who we are is something that must be felt.

Our body is part of the unfolding nature of creation. Through our body we can directly experience the life force that animates the universe. Through our body we can feel our connection with all of life.

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The language of the body is sensations. Learning to get in touch again involves learning the vocabulary of the body - hot/cold, warm/cool/ tight/loose, hard/soft. heavy/light and so on... Developing a language to describe bodily sensations is a very useful skill to for developing self awareness which assists us in tuning in and reconnecting.

The breath is an integral part of reconnecting with our feelings because our breathing patterns often reflect our physical states. When we hold our breath, we lock down the flow of feeling. Notice how you are breathing next time you feel stressed or anxious. When we breathe freely it allows the energy to flow freely through our bodies. This assists us to feel our feelings more fully.

### 3. Tune into your Emotions

Once we have connected with our physical sensations we very soon notice that it feels like there is energy flowing through our bodies. This energy is emotion. All emotions are Energy. The purpose of the energy of emotion is to move us into action.

There are three things that are important about emotions:

1. Emotions arise in our interaction with the outside world

For example: We feel joy when we get something we want and sadness when we lose something we want.

2. Emotions are temporary in that when we feel them they disappear

For example: If you are feeling sad and you let yourself have a cry, the sadness goes.

3. Emotions are tiring.

For example: After a big birthday party you feel exhausted.

The four aspects of Emotional intelligence are:

1. Emotional Literacy:

Recognising, understanding and communicating emotions.

2. Emotional Connection:

Opening our heart: connecting with our love current.

Accessing the messages of the heart for inner guidance.

3. Emotional Management:

Healthy containment and expression of emotions.

Developing the capacity to induce peace and happiness.

Using feelings to guide and facilitate reaching our goals.

4. Empathetic Relationship Skills:

Relating to others feelings, needs and concerns appropriately.

### 4. Tuning into Your Heart

The fourth step on the home coming journey involves tuning into feelings that are deeper than emotions.

Throughout the ages, across all of human history, across every culture mankind has always experienced the same things we they have turned our attention inwards: A timeless, expansive and infinite experience of being, not accurately describable with words. Words that are commonly used to attempt to describe such experiences are peace, love, happiness, spaciousness, wholeness and many others.

These are what I call Heart Qualities qualities or essence. They are your essential nature. The deepest truth of your being. They are only experienced in the present moment.

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Like a many sided diamond each word addresses a characteristic of the infinite. When you hear it said that the Muslims have 99 names for Allah or that Hindus have 108 names for God (Shiva) that is what they are referring to.

There are three important aspects that make heart qualities different from emotions

1. Heart qualities are the feelings that arise spontaneously when we turn our attention inside. (Emotions arise in our interaction with the world outside of us).

2. Heart Qualities are Eternal.

Emotions disappear when we feel them. Heart qualities continue to expand and get stronger the more we connect with them. For example if you meditate on peace you will feel more and more peaceful. If you continue to meditate on peace the peace will continue expanding, your life will become more peaceful and those around you will also become more peaceful.

3. Heart Qualities are enlivening

Whilst Emotions are tiring, connecting with Heart qualities is enlivening. For example: When we maintain a sense of inner peace in our day we work efficiently and can achieve much and still feel fresh at the end of the day.

The access to these feelings is most intensely felt through your physical heart. We hear it in our language: she got to the heart of it, he lost heart, she took it to heart, she put her heart into it...

You may have seen those pictures of the "Sacred Heart" of Jesus with light pouring out from his heart. Well it turns out that tuning into our physical heart does allow us access to our spiritual nature. The Institute of Heartmath in America have produced a scientific biofeedback device that can show you how connected and peaceful you are by monitoring the pattern of your physical heart beat.

With this biofeedback device the Institute of Heartmath have shown that centring ourselves in our hearts induces peak functioning: we concentrate and remember better, our immune system functions better, we relate to others better, and we perform at work and in sport better.

Heart Intelligence is...

Heart Intelligence then is our capacity to induce peace, happiness and love in an imperfect (transient) world. And the ability to make decisions and act in ways that are conducive to increasing these qualities in the world.

Living from your heart

Having connected with our heart, the next big step is to start to ask ourselves: 'If I was going to live my life from the deepest part of me (peace, love and happiness) what would that life look like?'. What would I be doing. How would I be responding to others, particularly when I feel hurt by them. What practices would I be using to maintain and deepen my connection with myself and others. (This will be the subject of future Heart Thoughts).

Where to from here: Knowing verses Experiencing

I have now outlined to you the pathway for your journey to reconnecting with your heart

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(and with the truth of who you are). Once we understand this map, we have to take the journey. We have to 'do it' to get it. Just leaving it as an interesting piece of information will not change much of your life. Taking steps along this path will transform your life in ways you can barely imagine.

To be useful heart connecting has to be not just a concept or an idea - it has to be a felt experience - regularly - not just once some time ago or something I will do someday. Daily and momentary we must stop, tune in, open our hearts, again and again, and reconnecting with the wealth inside our hearts.

Use what I have shared with you to tune in, first to your body, then your emotions and then your heart.

The opportunity that is being presented here is immense. I am talking about a radical reconnection of Western Civilisation with our hearts. The urgency is personal, cultural and global. The state of unhappiness and discontentment in our culture, and to a large degree the state of the planet, is a direct result of our state of disconnection. This disconnection has allowed us to make decisions based on short term material gain and ignore the larger scale effects that we have had on our planet.

This situation is calling us home, pressing us to tune in and reconnect.

We can no longer afford to be detached from ourselves, each other or the situation we are in. The Key is connection. Life is very wonderful, beautiful and rich when we connect. It is up to us.

Open your heart and connect today! Breathe into your heart right now! Feel, feel, feel.

I'd love to hear from you how you get on...

Enjoy the ride...

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