
A Spiritual Support System for Ecological Breakdown Beyond Grief

Barbara Monica - 14 November 2019



Introduction

There has never been a time on the planet where the possible ending of humanity's evolutionary path has been so clear to us. While existential crisis is a pattern that emerges in human consciousness, it has often been embedded in myth and belief. 'The End of the World' narrative appears again and again through history. It is quite possible that all through time people carrying a certain visionary capacity have been able to see the eventual outcome.

The last 100 years have increasingly brought existential crisis to the forefront of human consciousness. The first way was through the cold war, nuclear weapons, and policies of 'Mutually Assured Destruction'. Today we stand on a precipice of destruction not only through climate change but a profound ecological collapse.

Those of us who are adult now have the first imprint of growing up in a world where continued human existence was not a guarantee. In the past, our destruction seemed very much bound to decision making capacity of the leaders but our current crisis

shows us we are all participating in the system. Our system may currently still be supporting us, but in the long run it contains the seeds of our own destruction.

Spiritual Support

Through all of existence, humanity has turned to the spiritual, to guide itself through the darkest of places. It seems to be a fundamental aspect of our nature. Over time however, integrated spiritual knowing has become increasingly rare. For much of our history the spiritual path was outsourced to the Shaman, the Priest or whoever would take on the job and their advise would be obeyed. Now, as we descend into chaos, and the religious institutions' betrayal is clear, we find ourselves without the tools to cope, right at the moment when it is most required.

It became clear to me in about 2013 that we were on trajectory of possible human extinction. My own journey with the depth of this existential threat has taken me through incredibly dark valleys. There have been significant times of loss of capacity to live my life. And each new piece has changed me in deep and fundamental ways. The acceleration of change is unprecedented.

While we are still very likely on that trajectory, my own consciousness is completely reordered. I wouldn't say that it has made the scenario easy but I do feel that I am significantly on an even keel. I think there's no escaping making descents into the underworld. What's changed significantly for me is that I feel equipped to make these particular descents and I am able to emerge with with a deepened sense of who I am and with better tools to cope with the realities of our times. I am also able to navigate those dark realms far more expediently than I was able to when I first began digesting this situation.

Some Fundamental Processes

Through my own experience and through communicating with several other teachers and mystics I have identified several processes that seem to emerge for each individual at some point.

THE GRIEF PROCESSES

The Loss of All Human Life - When this process is thoroughly explored we may fundamentally shift what we do with our time here. Like the patient with a terminal diagnosis.

Lost Soul Connections - To each other and to the Wild Realms - when we thoroughly process this we become more willing to take risks in intimacy with humans and all of existence. If we go deeply enough we begin to ever increasingly touch the sacredness of all existence.

Loss of Dreams/The Future - When our future becomes dark we are forced to go ever deeper into ourselves to find what we don't know is there.

THE FEAR PROCESSES

Fear of Death

Fear of violent death

Fear of suffering while alive

The fear and anxiety created through the current circumstance is still somewhat undercover for many people but as the world descends into chaos we will all have to deal with our deepest fears.

THE DESPAIR AND DEATH WISH PROCESSES

The loss of meaning, if we ever had it.

(This especially applies to any activist who believed that a better world was possible and any spiritual seeker who has dedicated significant energy to creating a shift in consciousness as well as everyone who finds what they have occupied their lives with up till now has become pointless)

The spiral into the Death Wish. We commonly hear that the earth would be better off without humans. It's the beginning of the death wish but with those who are deeper in the process suicidal ideation becomes common. This phase facilitates a very deep questioning of the morality around death, something deeply lacking from 'modern western consciousness'.

There are very specific ways of dealing with the polarities of life and death because they are the entry and exit points to this dimension of existence.

THE POWERLESSNESS PROCESSES

It is inevitable that in any crisis we enter into a period of time of powerlessness. In this phase we are particularly dangerous because we are unable to see our power and so spew it out in all sorts of directions without any clear intention. This becomes a major stumbling block in organisations and for individuals.

Spiritual Tools

There are two fundamental spiritual tools that any profound mystical tradition will teach in one way or another. The development of these tools forms the bedrock of being able to navigate change, life and death. While there are hundreds of teachers and healers and coaches out there who can, with a bit of luck, help someone to shift their consciousness or mindset as is currently the in vogue word, these are the tools required to be able to shift your own.

Developing a Witnessing Consciousness

This is the most fundamental spiritual teaching there is. It is found in every deep and perennial system in any place in the world. In some instances it has been a group function that has been handed over to the Spiritual Leader or the Shaman, or to the Monks or Nuns. In general terms humanity has handed over their spiritual evolution to what

eventually became a corrupt power structures. It's time we picked up the reins and began walking through the hallways of light and dark that are the basics of existence.

It is not possible, or perhaps stupid, to begin that navigation without developing a witnessing consciousness. Mindfulness is pretty popular right now and it's just a word for being able to watch the mind without judgement. My sense is watching the mind, at least in the western sense of the mind, is not enough. The Buddhists who have practised mindfulness for a long time consider the mind to be heart/mind.



Ariadne's Thread - The witnessing consciousness is what allows us to navigate the maze of consciousness and meet the 'minotaur'

Over the last while, but very strongly in the last seven years or so, we have begun to see the reemergence of the Divine Feminine. This has allowed the 'emotional realm' the beginnings of some space in mainstream spirituality. It's a relief but we're barely scratching the surface. Emotional overwhelm is likely one of the main spiritual problems of our time. Even if we have friends where downloading is possible, it will be clear to anyone who is in deep waters that we need a lot more than space to talk.

Developing a strong witness is the fundamental of a meditation practise. When we have developed this function we begin to develop the ability walk into and through very difficult emotional waters and find what's useful in them while destroying false beliefs.

Living with Polarity

We live in a world of polarity. It is fundamental to the structure of existence. Due to our personal histories we become polarised. We all grew up believing something about ourselves. Sometimes what we believe is useful but significantly often it is not. Even if it is useful, it is more than likely a polarised belief. A polarised belief is anything that doesn't include its opposite.



The YinYang symbol is perhaps the most well known depiction of both the Unity and Polarity of Existence

So for example the belief that 'I am good' is polarised. It may be significantly helpful in getting someone through the average day where we didn't have to think about these things but it is not true. 'I am bad' is just as much part of who anyone is. So long as we tightly hold onto one side of a polarity and push the other side away we have a polarised consciousness.

When we begin to integrate our missing pieces, our consciousness changes and we become more functional and powerful.

The Spiritual Tools Applied to The Processes

When we apply the spiritual tools to the processes I named above (and any other process that emerges from the reality we are in) we begin to make the best spiritual use of what is current for us in our lives. While I fully support all political and personal action to prevent the deepening of the crisis, the way of Spirit has always been to make use of

what's there for the evolution of consciousness. From a spiritual perspective this is one of the fundamental 'purposes' of these times. We are being forced from the places where we hand our spiritual development over to churches and otherworldly images and take full possession of who we are.

Taking these steps creates a positive feedback loop. As we develop and strengthen our own consciousness, our political and personal actions become more powerful and loving. We learn to navigate the knife edge we are walking on with more poise, balance and depth.

Blessings to you on this journey of our times!

Me

I have more than 20 years of experience in meditation, yoga and the healing arts. I have done a significant spiritual journey and have developed myself in a way that I couldn't have even imagined in my youth. In 2018 I was ordained as a Priestess. It was the official recognition of my ability to transmit the depth of the perennial teachings.

I have successfully worked with a small but loyal group of mostly woman activists in Durban to help build their power, resilience and hearts for several years.