

Alchemy & Energy: Coaching Mind, Body, Spirit *by Ace Wagner*

The mind can be hijacked, that is, the unrealized 'self' can fall prey to habituated thinking, leaving the mind dulled as is reflected in an fMRI where a boring lecture, one designed to "tell" us the way it is does not light up the brain, rather than one that engages, questions, invites involvement and excites, energizes engaged reaction. This simple piece of scientific evidence can catapult a good coach into action. The human mind is simply vulnerable and the choice architecture is often underappreciated, under realized.

I lived a thirty-year work experience as an executive in the construction materials industry. This was not terribly consistent with my degree major in philosophy, but it paid the bills. My father often asked "What are you going to do with a Philosophy Degree?" I told him I would one day open a philosophy shop. Unclear on how I might capitalize the entity, I took a job selling construction materials for the family firm. A year later he left me and this world. Focus, focus, focus on the business for survival was my only choice. It wasn't until an astrologer, who nailed my being, my essence in a short one-hour review of my chart, that I began to think anew. When she asked sitting 3,000 miles away, "What again is it you do for work?" I told her and she simply sighed and said, "Well that's not terribly consistent with your chart, even antithetical, tell me more."

What I was used to, what formed my identity was put in question, and that very question was welcoming to me, perhaps like an ancient song of invitation to a different way of viewing myself. Astrology was unknown to me, but the wisdom and science, accepted widely or not, caused me to place a belief in what one might consider to be new information, but perhaps it simply harkened an internal knowing, a higher Self. How is it I could so quickly resonate with a person and message seemingly disparate from my "self" concept earned over time?

Wind back thirty years as I sat in Philosophy 101 where Friar McBriar enlivened a sense of Self through his teaching of the ancient philosophers and so masterfully made their prior work come alive in that classroom. The oft repeated directive to "Know Thyself" embedded in so many of the teachings from the origins of philosophical thought (pursuit of wisdom, wisdom being not knowledge but the knowing of one's true Self) reveals the same message in what came to be known as New Age Thinking from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The search for the true Self is the very nature of the human undertaking. I was introduced to a heightened sense of Self through the discovery offered by my undergraduate philosophy degree. To understand where we are going we need a sense of where we are, known as contrast. I could distinguish between the beer and pretzel level of my collegiate life and the ecstatic sense of Knowing enthused by my first professor.

The key coaching point here is the "knowing" between a self and the Self that remembers and lives out the ancient song within. To distinguish between an authentic sense of being and the inauthentic lived experience is the goal of any coaching opportunity. To coach is to "lift up" whether one is coaching a sports team or a banking executive. To expect the "more" from those we coach. The "more" is to enliven the essence or spirit within, which is what happens whenever two or more are gathered in a genuine dialog. My context for the use of the word "spirit" is to convey the notion of "energy" where exuberance and potential become outcomes of the dialectic process. Spirit for me is not the least bit "religious," but by all measure a representative of the quantum mechanics on which the universe is constructed. Coaches should be enthusiastic by charting robust dialog that leads the client toward a higher understanding of themselves. Whenever the self finds this inspiration the higher Self is invoked.

Note two key words of the prior paragraph. Would you not agree the coaching process, if simply put, is one of the conveyance of inspiration and the hope the client feels inspired by their own self revelations? To “inspire” is to convey spirit, energy, higher thinking. When the coach shows up for the conversation with the client exuding a sense of enthusiasm, again an energy is relayed. Enthusiasm derives from en-Theo or “of God.” We have words in our language to convey the extension of my higher Self communicating, inviting your higher Self to emerge.

The astrological chart and many ensuing tools of Self-discovery helped me exit the patterns of my old work-life, leave a high paying career and even ownership of the company I oversaw to become a coach. How did that happen? Before I left my own employ, I signed up for a coach training course. The instructor happened to leave his career to become a coach. He shared many scientific resources from his neuroscientific background, his writing and various readings. He enlivened me once again, to be who I truly am and to both serve others and serve myself in that service to others.

It became clear my new job as a coach was to hold a mirror to the client, a compassionate mirror of inquiry now that I had learned that quality **questions** evoke a response from three regions of the brain. Aha, the Socratic method artfully employed in the process of Self-discovery. What more could I want in my life but to be the tool of the inquiry, the process, the extension of my own spirit in the hopes of lifting others to their best next decision in life? I was enthused. Here I began to recognize my dream of living out the Philosophy 101 level of excitement I had once loved so dearly. That dream was a Truth and Truth belies understanding the Self. We can be easily distracted, we are human. But this Truth is eternal, a gift from the eternal to the eternal. Alas, we perhaps but forget our origin. Or may have our higher essence hijacked by what seems to be a habit, but is none other than a repeat choice to dismiss or otherwise avoid that eternal knowing. It is said, and I have come to believe, there are but only two emotions, Love and Fear. All other emotions are subsets, variations on these two themes. With this thought the coach, once engaged, is not only brought forth to extend from this, their higher Self, but to welcome others to join with them. The coach elicits a “potential” in the client creating a mirror neuronal exchange that facilitate a change of mindset. New Age Thought is not the origin of this concept, but yet another reminder of this immutable principle.

Drifting from our higher Self does not mean we no longer have it, just that we have failed to recall. As we get lost in the ruminations of our past we fail to remember. If we envision a future based on the awkward remembrances of a past full of angst, that future is easily infected, as repeat behaviors start to look like habits, trapping us in a cycle of unrealized potential. The only escape is to accept the present, to revel in that present. Truth resides here and knows nothing of a past or a future that can't be fully experienced from the higher Self or Truth within.

In the most simplistic of metaphorical recollections think of Dorothy, told perhaps by her newfound coach, to tap her shoes in order to return to the present. Think of Steve Jobs who asked those who attended his funeral to read to the autobiography of Pramahansa Yogananda, a way-shower sent to America in the early to middle of the last century to help us realize Truth within and trust it. He was trained by the yogi's of India. Their teachings were introduced by Pramahansa, as was yoga as a medium for getting in touch with the higher Self, yet the beauty and depth of metaphysical awakening of these yogi's has not been fully appreciated by the Western world. Or just think of your client, whose “aha moment” was as inspiring and exciting to you as it seemed to be to them.

In the last group discussion, we were asked to consider that the self is the totality of all of life's experiences, not simply the so-called and elusive ‘Higher Self’, Truth espoused by the philosophical New Age Thought. The argument presented suggested we are not solely the higher Self promoted by the provocateurs of such thinking. I think I understand the distinction purported, that is, that there is both a higher Self and a beer and pretzel self, both of which combine to make us who we are.

Can't deny that. But once we know the difference and we can see the delta of experience between the two, we begin to see there is really only one true Self. In other words, it is in experiencing both that we begin to see the difference between the two. It is in contrast that we become "aware." The inner knowing revealed seems to provide a glimpse of another reality. The New Age Thought I ascribe to emanates from the ancient thought, that there is but One Power, One Presence, One Reality. The absence of this Thought is of my own doing. Perhaps the ability to see both is the human predicament. Our challenge as coaches and human beings is to practice, practice, practice to build the neuropathways of the True Self and form these Thoughts as our valued rituals naturally followed by the actions of our days. As we coach others, so too do we coach ourselves in this practice of higher-level thought.

Does the party subjected to the victimization of his/her captors, who ultimately sides with, empathizes with these brutal oppressors, the classic Stockholm syndrome candidate, do they forever enjoin with the underpinnings of the movement once they are released? Opening paragraph here suggests our minds can be easily hijacked. Experience in my life serves as evidence of a thought process not fulfilling, falling into a routine of existence where the light within was dimmed. Coach training helped foster new neuro connections in me. Recognizing one's limitations via a coaching engagement is critical to the liberation of the mind toward the development of a New Life Story.

Resources for Further Discussions:

-[Your Brain on Art](#), by Susan Magsamen/Ivy Ross (need an update on Krueger like neuro science training, read this!! Massive coaching aid.)

- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Blph_2RSBno (exhausted from the normal political discourse and seek a higher plane of thought, give this a watch, extraordinary and draws on all themes above)

-Podcast "Know Thyself" hosts Marianne Williamson a few weeks back https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AQzKagUJGvI&list=PLcdXvEekPv1GRqbjVf41TrYQhjHRO1_q&index=4 (here's a woman raised in a Jewish tradition helping us recognize a consciousness epitomized by Jesus, very much a presentation in search of the True Self.

If you can immerse yourself in any or all of these resources prior to our discussion it will enrich the group dialog.