

The Inner Radiance

Barcelona Oktober 2008

I observe again and again – in therapy sessions as well as in daily life situations – that people who sit in front of me all of a sudden start to shine, to glow. This happens from one moment to the next, and you can see it in their face, but also in their whole body: there is such an incredible wakefulness, and with the wakefulness there is joy, a pure, undisturbed joy.

The whole thing does *not* look as if the person were surrounded by this glow, but as if it radiates from within: an inner shining, which becomes visible on the outside.

I guess, you know what I am talking about. Everybody has noticed such a thing, even if they do not notice it consciously. I have, in the last years, developed antennas for this and perceive it, as soon as it appears.

There are very few people who have this rather permanently. There are others who have it almost never. And then there are those, with whom it suddenly flashes up, stays for a while and then is gone again.

When it is there, it is - for the other (or others) who are also there – almost always very pleasant. It is somehow contagious, you join into the joy, it is nice to have somebody like this in front of you.

I have tried to find out how it happens and whether you can fabricate it.

To start with the second question: there are many who try to fabricate it. The inner shining makes everybody attractive, even if they are not a beauty. And if you want to sell something, a new product, a political conviction, or God (like some American TV preachers), then it seems a good thing, if you shine from within. And, of course, many of us want to be *nice people*, so they might even try to radiate, but, as you all know, this does not work. Or, if you are grumpy in the morning and you try not to be: maybe you can become *bearable*, but not shiny.

In the case of selling something (whatever), there are many people who fall for the *attempts to radiate*, but that is not due to the shining of the salesman, it is due to their own greed, their greed to buy, their greed for a convincing opinion, their greed for God.

I don't think you can switch on the shining. You can do several things to facilitate its possible appearance at some possible time, but you can't produce it. The reason for this is that fabricating does not match with the nature, the essence, of shining, it is opposed to it.

Most of you certainly know the famous part of Mandela's inauguration speech, where he says that, if we want to have peace on earth, we have to confront ourselves with our deepest fear. And what is our deepest fear? No, he says, it is not to be insufficient, to fail, to shipwreck, to make mistakes. This is a horror for most of us, but worse, much worse, is our fear *to show our best*.

That is correct, I myself have seen it many times, with myself and with others. People in therapy find it sometimes not easy to talk about their dark sides, but they find it in general incomparably more difficult to speak about something wonderful, something outstanding in themselves. Let alone to do, to express something outspokenly beautiful in the session.

This is strange and it makes you think, but it is so. I will say more to it.

Let us first make some music together. By *music* I mean simply *sounds*, which

come up in you and which – just the way they are – bring up joy in you.

This is more difficult for the one than for the other. I would like to invite you to allow these sounds in you in a way so that they come out as *beautiful sounds*. Beauty is something different for each of us, I don't suggest some sort of holy music, but a music, where each of you allow their most beautiful sounds, no matter how musically gifted you are or not.

Here already some of you - those who have learned to consider themselves as not musical - might direct their fear towards failure, and not towards their most wonderful. I don't want to explain, but you will notice yourself that this is an error. The beauty of a sound does not depend on the degree of my musicality, but on the fact how much I give myself permission to enjoy ME. The joy disappears at the moment when I start to compare myself. When I try to make *better music than others*, the beauty of my art diminishes immediately.

Just go and start. Do not try to fabricate the music. Let it simply happen in and out of you. And notice whether you enjoy your sounds, whether you enjoy *your self*. This is essential.

....

I would like to say it again and in a somehow different way. To do your best is one thing. It is legitimate, you were educated, even urged to do your best, this is accepted by society. At the same time it has not yet become acceptable at all to feel and show deep joy when you have done your best, this is still forbidden for a lot of people. You may express your joy for the achievements of others, but for yourself it is much more difficult.

This is an incredibly important distinction, I can't even say how important I find it. Because, if, in our civilisation, we are expected to deliver brilliant achievements, but are, at the same time, asked to appear „cool“ about them, we create a sort of dangerous schizophrenia in us, which is certainly the cause for many illnesses. Stress and burn out do not appear because of too much work, but because of not enough joy about me and my work.

And the thing is, of course, that nobody will openly forbid us to express joy about our achievements (in some areas like football this becomes even more and more popular, and people in front of their TV cry when they see how the player who has scored a goal throws himself into outrageous body postures), but we have it in ourselves. We know, if we boast, *if we find ourselves delicious*, others will look funny at us.

In the healing arts, we speak about several aspects of the heart chakra. One regards the immune system in general, another is the capability of regenerating cells, a further one is the force in us to shape our physical form in all its details. However, the most important and the most healing one is certainly the *aspect of self love*.

A lot has been said and written about loving yourself, and we all work on it and struggle with it. We all know that I cannot love somebody else, if I do not love myself. But what is it, really, this love of self, how does it feel? *Does it feel?*

Loving myself is not, when I stand in front of the mirror in the morning and say seven times: „I love myself more and more, each day a bit more.“ Loving myself in its mature form is, neither, to imagine holding myself like a little child in my arms and tell myself: „I love you, I love you, I love you...“ This may be an essential step, since many adults still keep their inner child out, but what I want to say, is, these all are still *exercises*. And as long as I exercise, there is still effort, and you have to ask yourself,

who is it, who exercises? Who is it, who tries to love? *Can one try to love?*

Joy is something you cannot exercise. It is perhaps the most important part of self-love. And the joy about yourself is certainly the most healing aspect of the fourth chakra.

So, I hope, I can get this across to you: what we are working at is not simply expressing joy, that's an aspect of the second and fifth chakra. You might be able to quite passionately express joy in this or that situation, you might have a quite lively character and not find it difficult at all to be jolly and have good fun and share this with other people. However, the joy element in self-love is a very subtle feeling, and the one has not necessarily much to do with the other. A passionate, boisterous person might find it very difficult to allow a gentle, tender joy towards herself.

In terms of an „inner body posture“ (so to speak) this gentle joy for yourself presupposes a total and direct turning of the torso: to face your vis-à-vis completely, to say truly yes to what is in front of you (not half turn away). This can only take place when you are in a comfortable, warm, and loving peace with yourself and with the way you are in the world. Inside and outside come together.

The expression of joy may differ considerably from „tribe to tribe“, from culture to culture. This inner joy for yourself, however, is quite another story.

But now, why do many of us find it so difficult to feel joy for and about themselves?

A woman in her thirties came into therapy the other day and told me – her face filled with bitterness and like an old rock – that she had been chosen as the only one amongst hundreds of candidates for a leading job in a well known world wide organisation. She told it with the same amount of joy as if she had told me that her whole family just died in a fire catastrophe. I directed her attention to this – not in order to point out the discrepancy between content and expression, but because I consider the refusal to express joy about your own achievements as pathogenic – and she (that was somehow astonishing) started to blush. She lowered her head and became silent for a while.

Finally she came back and said: „I know. And I feel ashamed in a double way. First, I feel ashamed to talk about my success, and second, I am embarrassed that I cannot show my joy.“

This touched me quite a bit, and I asked her: „Would you like to be able to?“ She blushed even more, nodded and said: „Yes.“

„Then why don't you see, what happens“, I suggested, „when you want to express this joy somehow in a physical way.“ (I am a body psychotherapist.)

She collapsed completely. I said: „Perhaps like children do it. Turn around in circles. Or jump up and down. Or do a little danse.“

She stayed silent. Then, after a while, she lifted her head, looked me steadily into the eye and said: „Never ever.“

It became evident that expressing this kind of joy was really and with no doubt the worst and most dangerous, forbidden thing in the world for her.

I don't think she is an exception. We certainly can sometimes and in a spontaneous way experience joy about ourselves and even show it. But at the moment when consciousness enters the scene and we become „self-conscious“, the whole thing becomes difficult. The prohibition does obviously not lie in ourselves, I mean, in our essence, our original being, but *in what we think about it*, what we have learned to think about it.

Now we know all that the church has certainly played a predominant role in this

and still plays it. Passages from the Bible like „Pride comes before a fall“ are the base for many proverbs (which I do not know so well in English, but you all know them in your own mother language). They all say: be modest, hold back your self enthusiasm, *do not shine*. It goes as far as reaching into superstitious beliefs, where you better won't say anything good about yourself, lest you be punished in a very, very memorable way.

This we all know, and we know, too, that the church is not going to foster the joy of self, because a joyful human being does not tend to be a too obedient human being. But still, two things remain to be astounding:

- first, that the church – in this essential aspect of humanness – could go so far into the opposite polarity of what Jesus taught that the basic message was actually destroyed
- and, second, that we, or most of us, who do know about this clerical violation of the teachings of Jesus, *still*, at the moment where we become self conscious, suppress, prohibit, criticise what is the most beautiful in us, what heals and strengthens us.

I would like to ask you to make a movement with your arm and your hand, a movement „*as it could not be more beautiful*“. Take all the time in the world, do it more than once, if you want. Pay attention that you express *as much beauty as possible* in your movement, and be aware at the same time, whether you can allow yourself to feel joy about your expression, about your own beauty.

See simply what happens and what kind of thoughts and feelings come up in you.

If it was beautiful, please don't say, it was beautiful because the surroundings here and the people allowed and fostered it. Rather say, if I can do it here, I can do it elsewhere.

Many years ago, we did something similar in a group. I had invited the participants to go, one by one, into the middle and do nothing else but to express beauty with their body for a few moments.

You can't imagine (or perhaps you can), how hesitant and heavy they all became with this. Nobody wanted to go into the middle, they started to discuss it, became even a bit nasty with each other („Why don't *you* go!“), asked themselves in some sort of intellectual manner, what could be the meaning and the deeper sense of „such an exercise“, if one could not do more productive things etc. One man even said that he had not paid his money on order to make a fool of himself. What came up, was a really aggressive atmosphere.

Now this happened at a time, when people still brought their little children into groups. There were 7 or 8 children present in the room – age 4 to 6. In the beginning, they had played in a corner, but when they noticed the tension which had built up over there with the grown ups, they had come closer, and now, they stood around us and listened. By and by, they got it that the point was to go into the middle and do something „beautiful“ there. It dawned on them what kind of absurd theater the grown ups made around a thing which only could create fun and happiness for anybody who would indulge into it. And as the adults would not stop to make such a fuss around it, the small ones started more than eagerly to squeeze themselves into the middle. They became more and more loud and boisterous, screamed „I want to be first, I want to go“, and then, all of a sudden, there was no stopping anymore, they all stormed into the middle and started to perform the funniest and most incredible ballet- and pantomime pieces and had the time of their life with it.

When the adults saw the children, most of them *understood* all of a sudden, and they also understood what they had denied themselves and what profound arguments

they had used in order not to have fun. And so they started cautiously to mix with the children and to slowly give up their fear and shame.

It became quite a spectacle in the end – the other day, I heard that some of them still talk about it.

So, once more the question: why do most of us find this so difficult? The reason can only be that – since this joy about ourselves, about our creativity, is our most precious potential – that we have been deeply hurt again and again, when we showed it; so now, we refuse and hold it back from the world. Hurt by a grey morality of false humility, hurt by grown ups who had been hurt themselves, hurt by prohibitions, punishments, ridicule, humiliation.

So many times, I have seen in my life, how a damaged, joyless adult forced his own desolation onto a small child. To observe something like this with your senses right awake is a very upsetting and sad thing.

To allow the joy about yourself *and show it* is certainly one of the most difficult things that we face in our times. I want to say it again and again: I believe that it is this joy, more than anything else, which allows us to shine. You cannot fabricate it. If you *try to be positive*, it will be phony. But you can start to principally ask yourself the question: What is it actually that I mainly repress in myself? So often, we think that we repress our dark sides, our negativity, our obnoxiousness (and we certainly do), but more than anything else we repress our joy, our radiance, because we are so afraid of showing it. And then we might think: oh...joy...this is not a really important feeling, it is something like an additional thing, a luxury, nice to have it, but if you don't have it, the world does not end.

As I said, this is probably a very profound error. Perhaps joy is the most precious and healing quality in us, which can turn our whole life around.

If, in any way, you want to go about this, start to observe yourself, when you are talking to somebody (not when you are meditating), if you allow your inner shining at this very moment...and if not, what would this be like, how could you even start to imagine that you, in a concrete moment like this one now, would not suppress it? What is it that is in the way? But don't get too busy, then, analysing it, stay in touch with all the possibilities which are waiting in you in order to lift you up, to love being alive, to heal you.

To end, I will play a little music, and I want to invite you to just forget as much as you can about all things that you *should* do or not do, all the prohibitions, taboos, all the narrow minded morality that you've been taught, but also all the expectations and efforts, with which you still bombard yourself - and just let yourself be moved by the music in the most pleasant way possible. See if there is a little spark of joy in you, joy about your being here, about your own movements, about the way you are, when you live and express yourself in the field of these sounds. And if there isn't, don't try to fabricate it, just be with the music and let your body respond to it in which ever way it wants. Simply don't forget that the light is in you, whether you like it or not.