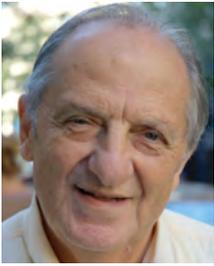


Dr. Gerald Epstein: Enlightenment



**By
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As noted in an earlier column, I received an Enlightening/illuminative experience in 1974 upon my first meeting with the spiritual master and teacher Mme. Colette Aboulker-Muscat. In that event, I became a being of light - a spiritual body of light. The self-identification known as Jerry utterly disappeared. In essence, I started out at the point in my spiritual journey where most everyone is striving to reach after varying degrees of arduous practice. In the twinkling of an eye, as the saying goes, I "got it!"

But, that was only the beginning.

There are usually two conditions to fulfilling any life choice or calling: necessary and sufficient. It is necessary in learning a trade to become acquainted with the principles, components, requirements, and such; then it becomes a matter of continuous practice, honing and sharpening your skills to become a master of that trade. That's the sufficient part.

And I discovered the same is true in the "spiritual trade." After the initial necessary exposures of light, the next 38 years have been devoted to sharpening, refining: learning always to more ably apply the spiritual therapeutics based in Imagination that have grown from the original Enlightenment. There is never an end to "polishing the diamond" of Self while existing here in our time-space world.

What is the place of Imagination in the context of Enlightenment? Imagination is the supreme inner sense organ subsuming our five outward senses. It is an inner light showing the way and shining its luminescence into the storehouse of consciousness housing the macro and microcosmic knowledge of Self here on Earth with its relationship to Divinity in a data form called "Image." Storehouse consciousness is analogous to the internet computing "cloud." Just as the computing cloud is a non-local warehouse of data, storehouse consciousness is also a non-local warehouse of information in the vast virtual reality of invisible reality (aka Divine Consciousness). Through Imagery,

we can access that information just as one might access the cloud with their computer. Thus, Image is the language of invisible reality sent to visible reality to provide all we need to create our existence. This Image reality is an unconditional one, free from the constraints and enslavement of everyday conditioned life (and thought) that makes up time-space reality. Imagery practice aids us to become unconditional, liberated and altogether free. As Enlightened beings, we live as timeless-spaceless beings of light. The Image is the tool to repair the imbalances we create in our physical and emotional bodies here in daily life.

This use of mental Imagery to heal our physical life brings me to another note about Enlightenment. In Western spiritual practice, the vertical reality is the axis of freedom. This is in keeping with many other ancient traditions that recognized the horizontal and vertical planes, with the vertical dimension represented by a sacred world tree that connects heaven and earth. And of course, the Christian cross encapsulates this notion in the arms of the cross as the horizontal life and the stake as the vertical life; the heart of Jesus being the meeting point of these two realities.

In this axis of freedom, we shed our constrictive conditioning in three stages: cleansing, illumination/Enlightenment, union. Mental Imagery practice provides the most powerful tool for self cleansing, de-habituating, and de-conditioning. Thus, cleansing is often the first type of Imagery I teach clinicians to use in dealing with physical, emotional and mental illness. You can find a more thorough discussion in *Healing into Immortality*¹. After cleansing we are ready for the vertical ascent up the ladder of self-mastery (See *Waking Dream Therapy*², the definitive guide for pursuing this direction) Becoming master of ourselves includes exploring other realms of consciousness through the Imagination to unleash our creativity, activate our wills to detach from our "little selves," and curb our passions. At the third stage, we have

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made ourselves ready to leap into uncertainty and the unknown to cross the abyss separating us from our Eternal Source thereby allowing us to become one with the One Mind.

Here is an Imagery exercise from my forthcoming book: *The Encyclopedia for Mental Imagery: Colette Aboulker-Muscat's 2,100 Visualizations for Personal Development, Healing and Self-Knowledge* (ACMI Press, Spring, 2012).

Round Mirror

Note: We breathe in a special way to help direct our attention inward and induce a light relaxation. We start with three rounds of slow breathing where we focus on the out breath and let the in breath take care of itself. Physiologically, this out-in breathing stimulates the parasympathetic nervous system to quiet the body down. After the third round of the "out-in" breaths, you breathe as you normally do, focusing on the Imagery, not the breathing.

Instructions: Sit up, spine straight, in a chair, with your arms in your lap, or on the arms of the chair. Close your eyes and start by breathing out a long, slow exhalation through the mouth, and follow it with a natural, brief inhalation through the nose. Do this breathing technique three (3) times - an exhalation followed by an inhalation - before you begin the Imagery exercise below. Notice there is only one breath out and in between each different Image.

Breathe Out/Breathe In 3 times
(B0/B1x3): See yourself as a



perfectly polished, round mirror.

(BO/B1x1): See the soul of your heart reflected clearly as a sunny orb.

(BO/B1x1): See the soul of your heart reflected clearly as a fountain flowing and outpouring the starry story of creation.

(BO/B1x1): See now in one grain of sand all the heavens.

(BO/B1x1): See in a drop of light all the universe.

(BO/B1x1): See yourself now as round, then as a flying, round bird, soaring from star-to-star singing. What do you experience?

Breathe out once and open your eyes.

Frequency: Do it as you like, when you remember.

Keep on polishing your diamond until there are no blemishes, making room for the Light.

References:

¹ Gerald N. Epstein, *Healing Into Immortality: A New Spiritual Medicine of Healing Stories and Imagery* (New York: ACMI Press, 2010) pp. 89-101

² Gerald N. Epstein, *Waking Dream Therapy: Unlocking the Secrets of Self through Dreams and Imagination*. 1981. Reprint (New York: ACMI Press, 1992). Print.

In addition to training and supervising clinicians through his school, The American Institute for Mental Imagery (AIMI), Dr. Epstein has an adult education center for the general public and maintains a private practice as well. His latest book project is on longevity and immortality through the Imagery process that he has developed along with other techniques and methods of Western spiritual therapeutics. On his website you'll find a list of all his publications, many of them downloadable, as well as many, many Imagery exercises. To date, he has published over 500 Imagery exercises available to the general public. <http://www.drjerryepstein.org>