

Daily Meditation 09-10-22

Joy + Justice = Compassion

Good morning.

In today's meditation, we reflect on the meaning of joy and justice together, and how compassion is joy and justice together. And this is important information, because very often we can become extremely serious about injustice and our work, and understandably so.

So all the more reason to provide some healing by providing a reminder of the need for a balance between joy and justice and between understanding that justice is a quest to render Joy possible to level the playing field, so that joy is more available to everyone.

Let me share with you a few teachings, and these are found in Chapter Three of my book on *The Reinvention of Work*, the chapter being called "Exploring Our Inner Work, Work as Enchantment." And the word enchantment for our work comes from Meister Eckhart. This is about the via positiva in our work.

So Studs Terkel, in his classic work, his classic book, *Working*, where he interviews many, many different workers, says this. He says this work is about his search for daily meaning as well as daily bread, for recognition as well as cash, for astonishment rather than torpor. In short, for a sort of life, rather than a Monday through Friday sort of dying.

So this is a way of talking about bringing the via positiva into our work.

The Tao te Ching says "In work, do what you enjoy"... in work, do what you enjoy. This is a universal teaching found in religious traditions around the world. The Bhagavad Gita says, "They all attain perfection when they find joy in their work." Not only is it to attain perfection to find joy in your work. But you have to find it, you may have to work at it. It's not always at the surface. It lies deeper where meaning lies, where our values lie, and what we bring to our work.

Thomas Aquinas says "always rejoice in the good work that you do." So again, there's this consensus.

Here's a powerful story from Studs Terkel's book on working. And it comes from a fireman who used to work in a bank...a Brooklyn firefighter who began his adult life as a work as a banker and then turned to firefighting. Says he, speaking of himself:

The firemen, you actually see them produce. You see them put out a fire. You see them come out with babies in their hands. You see them give mouth to mouth when a guy's dying. You can't get around that shit. That's real. To me, that's what I want to be. I worked in a bank, you know, it's just paper. It's not real, nine to five and all that. You're looking at numbers. But I can look back and say, I helped put out a fire. I helped save somebody. It shows something I did on this earth.

It shows something I did on this earth. That work is very often the gift we give back for the blessing that our lives are. In that context, joy and justice, blend. And together, they make up compassion. And our work becomes a work of compassion.

Thank you. We'll see you tomorrow.