

Daily Meditation 11-11-24

Veterans' Day, 2024

Good morning.

Today we are meditating on Veterans Day, 2024, and I tell a few stories in my daily meditation, about relatives who served in the Civil War and in the Second World War. And I invite you to do your own remembering of your relatives and what they sacrificed in order to defend their country and the promise of democracy within it.

I also cited a very fine person I know, who talked about his friend who is a convicted felon and went to jail twice for it, and was not allowed to vote in this election. However, the person who won the election has been convicted of 34 felonies. It is a little peculiar, isn't it, that someone who served his time in that way, made up for his moral debt to society, cannot even vote, but someone who has not served any time, they've been convicted not once, not twice, not three times, but 34 times of felonies, is now the president of the United States.

I'd like to share some more insights from this friend of mine, the friend to the felon. Because he was speaking from his heart to me this week, and he was very disturbed. He said that the worst part for him, is the moral perspective that he's come to believe because of this election: that the world, which seeks to do good, it is losing. People are selfish, that white supremacy does reign, that we live in a morally degenerate world and society, and the country says yes to moral depravity, lying, and forgetting the chaos during the pandemic and how over a million people died in America.

There's a madness in the world, a lack of moral education. The majority of people are currently not good people. Goodness is something that has to be taught. Instead, we're busy teaching consumerism. Not good, but consumerism. He sees Trump as morally depraved, and Putin the same. The media is out to make money, not to make people good.

All this adds up to the complete opposite of what he's been dedicating his life to do. So he's lost a lot of sleep since November 5th. He wants to bring love into the world, but it seems so sad. He feels so alone. His work seems isolated.

He said, *I don't trust people who voted for Trump. You can't tell me that that was a choice for the good. That because prices are too high, that is a choice for the good. There is so little moral character going on. Though no one is 100% evil, he says, there's a spectrum of evil, but the majority have gone over that spectrum from good to some real evil.*

The facts are that inflation is down, and facts are facts. We have to be honest with self, and honest with society. We need good moral character, and it's more important than how high the prices are.

People do make choices. Voters made choices for Hitler in 1930s Germany. We have to quit pretending that there are not morally bankrupt people. We cannot sugarcoat it. People can transform. This is a kind of hell, to live with this kind of lying. Hell is pervasive. Most people are on the spectrum of evil and good, but there are more lies and hatred and violence that are rising now in America.

We're living in a morally bankrupt society, and education is based on the accumulation of wealth, nothing else, really. That is the morality behind our education. People need to be morally developed. This is what education should be doing, developing character, human character. Instead, there's this moral poverty that is spreading, and a failed society emerges from a morally poor society.

How do we develop our moral character? The darkness of humanity is worse than I thought, he said, and educational systems did this. I can't believe that these people are good people. If they have children and grandchildren, what are they leaving behind for their children or grandchildren? How do we transform education?

He met a woman who said that she voted for Trump because she likes money. "Trump will get me more money and more tax breaks."

The core issue, he says, is about ethics. How do we transform, and get people to transform? How do we raise ethical standards? These are the core issues behind all the other reasons people give for voting the way they do.

So these are some of the things that affected him, as a response to the election this week. And he is very good person, and he sacrificed a lot to commit to a better world.

So we can't pretend that what happened on November 5th is a good thing. But we can work to lessen its impact, to stand up to its implications, to study more deeply the various motivations, and the various messages that people were sending by voting the way they did.

And by holding it up to those people we respect and admire on Veterans Day, who stood for democracy, not for authoritarianism or autocracy or plutocracy or oligarchy. And perhaps that dance between the two wings of American history and American politics, can bring some third thing into existence: a deeper, more fruitful version of democracy, that is not based on an ethics of consumerism, but an ethics of caring and service, joy and justice and building of community, not dividing it.

Thank you. We'll see you next week.