

Guidance - Light from the Vertical Dimension By Munir Peter Reynolds

The nondual teacher Adyashanti notes, “The mind has a hard time accepting that life is whole and complete while also being a mess.” If we are disturbed by the apparent messiness of the world we may look for guidance. Guidance points us back to the truth of our being and the remedy within the innate wholeness of life. Muni rwrites about his journey with spiritual guidance and the truth which requires us to become more and more empty in order to receive it.

Let’s talk about *guidance*. It’s not necessarily a warm and fuzzy subject, No matter what I *seem* to be talking about, that’s my topic.

I’m taking as my text this statement from Adyashanti: “The mind has a hard time accepting that life is whole and complete while also being a mess.”

So he’s saying that *mind* creates our troubles with life. To see life clearly we have to first understand the nature and limitations of mind. *Mind* gives an impression or *illusion* of ourselves as separate entities, living inside of our bodies, traveling through time and space and having good and bad experiences. When things seem to go our way we feel happy and when they don’t we feel bad.

We could call this orientation to life “horizontal” - focusing in time on objects, thoughts, perceptions, sensations, emotions, the world and many other things. We identify as bodies and minds, in a universe made of matter on a spiritual journey, and then we say, “Where is guidance to be found on my path?”

But what we essentially are cannot be found in this horizontal orientation as any object, including the body. We have our being in the *vertical* dimension of life, in awareness, in the I Am. The vertical has been described as the eternal present, or the now. It’s found *here* - that is, the within of you that is revealing this experience we’re having. That’s the “placeless place” where our *knowing of this* is revealed.

I'd like to suggest that opening to guidance is about more and more looking past, or rising above, this horizontal orientation and falling back into the *vertical* alignment with "what is". This can only ever happen in pure awareness, *here* and *now*. Guidance is opening more and more to the limitless, silent, creative intelligence or spirit that we already are, allowing that to inform, to inspire, to lead.

How did I arrive at this?! I thought I would walk you through some of my experiences around spiritual guidance from kindergarten through to my current post doctoral work in having my ass kicked by the universe. I'll describe three things: Muscle Testing, Divination, and Unveiling.

Muscle Testing

When I first came to Montana in 1992 as a newly-minted massage therapist, I attended continuing ed gatherings in Helena and elsewhere. I had a major, life-changing encounter with Guidance at one of these training sessions. I walked into the hall and here was a woman named Joyce doing a demonstration of something called One Brain. A volunteer held her arms out, and Joyce was pressing on the arms and asking a series of yes/no and which-one questions, drawing information out of the client. The look on the client's face showed that something deep was being revealed. My reaction was, "*Wow, what is that?!*"

How does this work? Stress causes muscles to test weak. You can use this fact to find out a lot of information from the body/mind, without even directly consulting the conscious mind of the client. This requires the person doing the testing to be centered and very clear within themselves regarding motives and ethics. The tests when done correctly have been proven to be 100% accurate. The techniques to defuse that stress are many and involve using intention, attention and the power of images as antidotes in the mind.

I ended up taking classes with Joyce, bringing One Brain into my bodywork practice. I spent many hours over 20 years working with clients, identifying individual stressors resident in the body and de-fusing them using a variety

of techniques. All this before doing a hands-on bodywork session on the table.

I learned many things about how stressful events, beliefs, thoughts and karma are stored in the body/mind. Later I switched to a pendulum - another simple muscle test that doesn't need a partner.

Here are a couple of brief examples of how muscle testing has played out: One of my massage clients was experiencing several allergies. We spent some time muscle testing around this and discovered that her house was filled with scented candles, which she loved! She got rid of them, and her allergies went away.

My wife and I used muscle testing to figure out when to visit my 91 year old father back in North Carolina. We picked some dates and spent a week with him doing all of the things one would want to do with the family. Then on the morning we were scheduled to leave he came in from his morning walk in pain and died of an aortic aneurysm.

To me, such experiences demonstrate that:

- Muscle testing taps the inherent wisdom or truth of the body, bypassing the finite mind
- Truth must be fundamental to our real self, regardless of how a given person thinks, acts or believes
- This truth/guidance is not organized in linear time or space

In David Hawkins' book *Power vs Force* the author concludes that if humanity could ever agree that muscle testing offers a 100% accurate way of knowing what is true, it would completely revolutionize our society.

Divination

Oracles have been used for many centuries for guidance. My experience of these was with my dear friend and mentor Richard, who passed away in 2019. We spent a lot of time together over 25 years.

Richard was a true renaissance man, photographer, jazz musician, scholar of many disciplines, a lifelong Taoist and follower of the I Ching. He memorized the entire Wilhelm edition of the I Ching and lived his life by it. Richard was also a highly skilled Tarot reader. I had many readings with him, and got to observe its impact in his life.

Richard called the I Ching a “harsh taskmaster”. The oracle is quite reluctant to advise a person to move in new directions or take on activities unless they come from a very deep alignment. More often the guidance from the I Ching amounted to a challenge to drop any hint or idea of personal gain or attainment. In other words, “Get over it!” We mostly want to add things to our resume, don’t we? Often we do that and realize in hindsight, it wasn’t such a great choice spiritually.

When you live your life according to the guidance from an oracle like this, you find that it has a personality - a flavor. The tones of the I Ching and Tarot differ greatly. As you develop a relationship with them, work with them, oracles will start to “pare you down” to your essential self. You cannot receive guidance if your disposition, your orientation to life is unsuitable. You’re cut off from the vertical dimension.

Truth comes and strips away the superficial in us; it puts us on the path of the *via negativa* - subtraction down to the essence ! We may be too full of ourselves to receive the guidance that is available. Certain guidance that comes our way may even seem to be way “off” or incorrect. We tend to accumulate beliefs, images of ourselves and what we are that are not congruent with the unity from which guidance comes. It may only be in hindsight that we see the truth of the guidance we actually received at the time.

Unveiling

I have had some of my most astonishing spiritual experiences in airports and on aircraft. Why would this be?

First of all, they're *impersonal*. Most everyone is on their devices, self-absorbed in their own world

They're *transient* - Imagine customers in a coffee bar in an airport that completely turns over in less than 10 minutes. In other words, the radical impermanence is accentuated.

Also, "Other Worldly" - Airports are unlike anywhere else, a bardo, a place between places. You can look up in an airport and suddenly wonder, "Where am I?" "Who am I, in this?"

An airport is like a temple or ashram to life as it actually is, where we can contemplate: In the midst of all this transience and activity, what is not changing, not moving? Who am I? This contemplation can strip us down to nothing.

One time I experienced an ecstatic moment at an airline ticket counter when my flight had just been canceled. I was in line with other passengers, most of whom were irate for being inconvenienced. I became aware that I had somehow "slipped under" the whole scene. I was observing it from a warm and somewhat amused detachment. I became aware that I was everyone and everything in the scene. The ticket counter, the frantic agents, the mostly angry passengers. I was completely untouched by anything that seemed to be happening.

I experienced myself as the "I Am" of this scene. I had the insight that the people and I were identical, the same being; we just believed ourselves to be separate, having our own thoughts, experiences etc. My mother-in-Law on her deathbed observed this same thing about her children too. She looked at us and said, "You think you're separate, but you're all just like paper dolls, cut out the same piece of paper."

My point - If the nature of reality is completely impersonal, with a loving intelligence knowing it, then falling back to the witnessing state opens us to the fullness of understanding available. Like the shaman who sheds all

personal identifications and qualities to enter the upper, lower or middle worlds and bring back guidance, when we fall back we become no body, no place, no time no one - we're finding pure awareness, our true being.

So, "The mind has a hard time accepting that life is whole and complete while also being a mess." How can we begin to bring the light of the vertical dimension to our situation?

1. Inquire into the nature of yourself. Who am I essentially? See in meditation that you are not your thoughts, perceptions, sensations. You are the knowing factor of these. When we see ourselves more clearly, that is guidance. Guidance challenges our untested assumptions and beliefs; it calls us back to wholeness through the vertical dimension; it requires us to let go, reframe, contemplate, inquire.
2. Give yourself to silence. Silence is the crucible that strips away everything that is not you, that is caught in the horizontal dimension. Rupert Spira says the world is as it is because virtually no human beings on the planet can sit in silence for more than 15 seconds. Discover the importance of silence to your well-being.
3. Get to know your heart, your organ of wholeness. Let the intimations of the heart reveal what I am talking about. Daily care and feeding of the heart is essential.
4. If you consult your heart, not your mind, you will begin to remember that life is whole and complete and your destiny as infinite intelligence is eternally within that and can never be lost. *You do not die and can never be harmed by anything that ever seems to happen.*

I hope that this talk may shed light on Adyashanti's statement, and this from Hazrat Inayat Khan: "When you stand on this earth and look at life, there is all injustice and chaos everywhere; but when you rise above and look below, it is all just and perfect, and everything appears to be in its proper

place.” We should feel empowered to “rise above” and be of good cheer. Our real self does not mind what happens. We can still disagree with others and give ourselves freely to a better, more loving world.

As we allow and remember the light of our pure being, life just happens and we follow a thread that has wisdom in it, but we know not where it comes from. That is guidance on the path.