

LISTENING

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By Michael Lewin

“Who speaks, sows; who listens, reaps.”

Argentine Proverb

✖ One product of an over active, busy life is the tendency that we can habitualize to not listen fully and completely to others around us. Being a writer, I discipline myself to listen. I try to follow the course of conversations – what others are saying – or not saying – plus my own thoughts and speech, recording mentally what’s been said and perhaps, if relevant, transcribing it later into note form which may contribute material for possible future articles or essays. I understand this is not always the best way to proceed in terms of cultivating a good basis for a mutually sharing act but unfortunately this is an aspect of my writing life which I carry out in order to gather up material. A methodology that attempts to capture something special or significant in my everyday lived life and share it, in written form later....

But whatever the merits or otherwise of this practice one thing is for sure – paying attention is a vital part of our spiritual growth. By developing this art, this way of being we can start to access a deeper level within us that allows something of potential specialness to be received from many sources.

Listening has multiple layers to its form, there is

listening to others (what they say and do expressed in many manifest ways, both explicit and implicit, verbal and non-verbal), listening to the world around us (what it is suggesting to us, especially in terms of the presentation of calls to action) and finally there is listening to our inner selves (the depths of our being which may be trying to articulate something important and significant for our consideration). All three aspects are valuable and therefore cannot really be accurately prioritized. In one sense they are all part of a greater whole – of being present, of being in full attendance. And through this act of non-judgemental openness and receptivity we learn, we grow, we are enlarged as individuals and who of us can turn our backs on this precious gift?

“ To learn through listening, practice it naively and actively. Naively means that you listen openly, ready to learn something, as opposed to listening defensively, ready to rebut. Listening actively means you acknowledge what you heard and act accordingly. “ **Betsy Sanders**

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