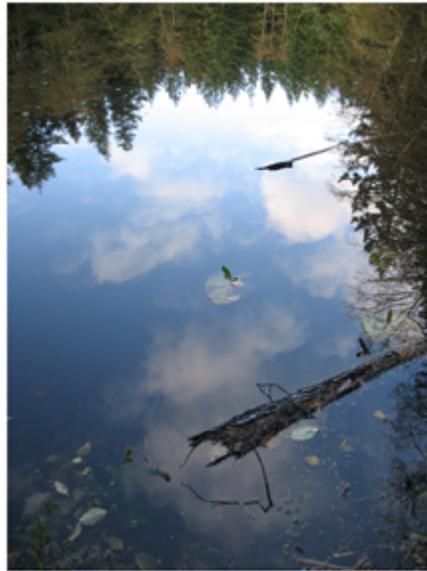


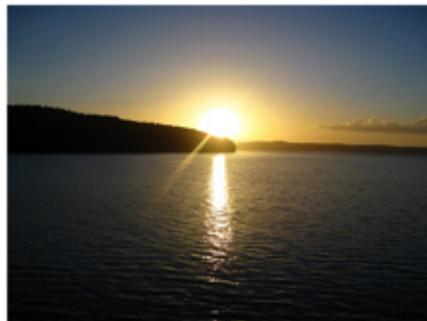
Pesencing Issue 10 Personal Presencing Part II - the Gifts of Presencing

Presence - the Lost Quality: Deeply imbedded in Japanese culture, deep in the religious traditions of the past, lies probably, the greatest power for the full enjoyment of our time on this Earth. This quality, this lost way of being, is reflected all around us by nature, by our loved ones, by the special occurrences in every moment, and by our own bodies. We have gone to sleep and are dreaming a false dream - a dream of a world decaying, a world losing the qualities that assure the continuation of life. Our species is dreaming a nightmare of sadness, hatred, and fear. We feel disconnected from one another, disconnected from other species, and disconnected from life itself. This lost quality is readily available, and can be restored any moment - How about right now?



Presence available in any moment: We can move from the domination of time **Chronos**, which run our lives, to the experience of no-time **Kairos** in which all the qualities of life become available to us now. Perhaps it seems surprising that this lost quality requires no preparation, no college degrees, no training in specialties, and no management skills. And yet by choosing to acquire this lost quality we can achieve more than we ever dreamed, more than we can imagine, and success beyond measure.

And this quality costs nothing, does not require physical prowess or personal merit. It is by coming fully into this moment that we can experience this quality. Notice it right now as I am speaking with you. Notice that you can embrace this moment. It is like passing under the *torii*. On one side we dream of fear and pain. On the other side we feel happiness and love. The ancients knew of this experience. The ancient teachings of all religious traditions tell us that we can awaken from the dream of separation.



Presencing: is the choice to *awaken* from the bad dream. We have all had moments of awakening. We can recall the feelings of playfulness and wholeness that we've experienced. All of us hunger for the playfulness of children; all of us hunger for the curiosity we used to feel; all of us hunger for the times we experienced that were not driven by the clock. Presencing is a personal choice! Others can help us experience presence - the loving stare of a baby reflects our own innocence, the laughter of children, the purring of a kitten, the tail wagging and licking of a dog. These are all signs of appreciation and life's joys.

What about right now? Presence only occurs now. When we learn to presence it is like passing through an infinite number of *torii*. Because we can choose to presence any moment, it doesn't matter how often we get caught up in thoughts, habits, or automatic responses like anger or sadness.



Torii

The Gifts of Presence

Love: When we practice presence, we become aware that a different kind of love is arising in our lives - not the love of ballads and troubadours, but a deeper love that can be experienced anywhere and with anyone. It is a love that is fundamental to our nature. It is a love that lies deep inside of us - that seems to come with the gift of life itself. Perhaps it is the greatest gift of creation, because it is the origin of creation. It is the life force itself, as fundamental as gravity, which exists everywhere and within everything.

This plenum of love is a deep continuous presence. When we presence we can feel this love pulling us towards our destiny. When we presence our fears we can feel the comfort of this love even as we go where we fear to go. No conquering of fear is necessary, just a willingness to reach for the hands of love that draw us forth, that support us and comfort us, like new borne babes. And as we presence with this love we become expressions, mirrors, of this love for the world. And we are mirrored back - seeing our own true identity for the first time, feeling the warmth and assurance of all life.



Grace: Grace is usually described as a confluence of good and happy events, as if the whole universe is blessing us. When Confucius drew the oracle of Grace, it is said that he was sad because he knew that grace would not last. Grace seems to magically appear in our lives at times - like a perfect day at work, like a perfect wedding or family gathering. Some consider grace a reward for good living, for being a good person, or doing good works. But grace is available anytime we presence.

Like love, grace is working deeply beneath the surface of our lives. When we feel grace we realize that there are two lives: the life that is lived in time, and the life that is eternal - no time. While we are living in bodies we get the opportunity to live both lives. When we realize that grace is available through presencing we can bring perfect days to ourselves, and those around us. What would it be like if your friends, family or clients, saw you as a fountain of grace and love, and as someone who honors them?



Gratitude: Gratitude is a gift of presence - it is a feeling of expansiveness that embraces another in light and joy. It is a gift that gives as much to the giver as to the receiver. When we are grateful we become full of grace. We become larger, we become softer, and we become more open, loving, and playful. Presence produces feelings of gratefulness (great fullness) - a fullness that is more satisfying than any meal. In presencing we choose to accept gratefulness and pass it on to others. Gratitude is different from giving thanks. It is different because it fills us with joyous feelings. Gratitude has no sense of obligation or debt and is not just a response to a good deed done by another.

The gratitude of presence comes upon us in moments of freedom, in moments of love, and in those moments when we realize that our very lives are a precious gift. The gratitude of presence is like the story of Hotei (laughing Buddha). He asked for what he wanted, could not be denied because he was so

happy, and was a source of happiness to others. Hotei, in his bigness, would carry in his hemp bag, the gifts he had received to village or family compound. He would then spread them out for others to receive. He was continually happy because he was continually grateful.

Surely professional persons can be like Hotei, because they receive so many gifts from this world. Perhaps we can change the formula of business: "Through presencing I get what I truly want for which I'm truly grateful. I'm grateful enough to pass it on - the giving is an expression of my gratitude. And thus I am rewarded many times over.



Jack and friend in Yamanashi

True identity: How do we know who we are? We know our history, our names, our gender, our friends, family and our environment. But can we truly say we know who we are? We may be very important persons to others but inside we realize that that importance is a product of circumstances. We all feel that there is something beckoning us from inside that says: "There is more to life than this." We have a yearning inside to be held in the fullness of the arms of Life Itself - we long to be whole... a yearning to take our skills and abilities to another level.... a yearning and a feeling of incompleteness... and that feeling is with us always - even after a truly good time.

When we practice presence we get glimmerings, flashes of knowing our true identity. When we presence we look into the bronze mirror (*masumi*) of life. We start to see reflections of ourselves as we truly are. There are individuals who reflect our true identity back to us. In presence we realize that there is nothing to hide and nothing to hide from. Like Hotei's belly, we realize that we are much happier when we have nothing to hide - and thus we become mirrors of presence for others to find their true identity. There is nothing to conceal, nothing to be ashamed of... Look into Hotei's face. He is presencing you as you truly are. He has no judgments of you; he cares only for who you are as a possessor of life. He is truly a bronze mirror. Can you be Hotei for others? Can you be that trusting of presence? Can you help others - your employees, associates, students, clients find their own true identity? Can you give them the gift of mirroring, of listening, of appreciating who they are?



the decorative back of a masumi

Joy: Eckhart Tolle, author of [The Power of Now](#), speaks about the "joy body," as opposed to the "pain body." He says that by merely choosing acceptance of what is happening right now, by saying: "Yes," we

enter a different realm and we feel the differences in our bodies - and as such our bodies change. It is as if we are living with pain because we are continuously saying: "No." Think about it - Why don't we say: "Yes" to life?

We experience many bad things and we seem to be happy some of the time, angry some of the time, sad some of the time. And the pain is there constantly as a reminder under the surface that things are not as we would like them to be. The practice of presence is a way of saying: "Yes" to what is. By doing so, we are moving into joy. What if we are the only ones holding ourselves in bondage to fear and pain? What if we hold the key, *presencing*, which allows us to release ourselves from this bondage at any time? With the use of this key we can become openly appreciative of life, because we love the world that we are creating through presence.



Clarity: Another gift of presence is clarity. How many times have we searched for clear understanding by accumulating knowledge? The pursuits of science are based upon the pursuit of *truth*. But the longer we search the more we know that truth based upon knowledge does not give us understanding. Understanding, which means to "stand under" is a bodily felt experience - like the Zen archer (*kyudo*) who feels when to release the arrow by becoming empty of thought. The release is a feeling of clarity, a bodily experience on a pathway of presencing, a moment of clarity that brightens the arrow's path to the target and brightens our mind. This bodily felt experience cannot be generated by knowledge.

We can study and take apart any aspect of the archer's experience but we cannot understand the moment of brightness. It is a presenced moment that brings the brightness and clarity - a moment when everything is linked. Decision-making can also be a moment of brightness and clarity.



Zen archer (kyudo)

Meaning: Another gift of presence is finding a sense of meaning. When we presence this instant we bring the point and sharp edge of the sword (*tsurugi*) that points to this instant and cuts through our absorptions with past and future. The sword of NOW connects us with all ages, with all life, with all destinies, with all creation. Thus in this moment, and this moment only, we find meaning, a meaning that is anchored in eternity rather than personal history and cultural circumstances.

This meaning can come upon us at any time. We recognize it because it gives us feelings that we have only felt in special moments. We can discern the meaning without ever fully understanding the source of the meaning. We shift to an awareness of the connection of all of life. When we feel that connection, we start living days of connection and flow. Everything coheres; everything has meaning. We start our days by looking into the bronze mirror of presence so that we can continually be witnesses and co-discoverers of meaning. Like clarity, meaning is a feeling, not something that happens merely through the accumulation of knowledge.



tsurugi Sword

Purpose: When we align our sense of purpose with presence we are given all the gifts of presence. Things in our lives seem to fall into place without effort. The source of our lives starts to become more and more apparent. It takes time and experience of material living to come to the realization that nothing in the material world gives a sense of purpose. We live lives of achievement and failure, of running for trains and the fullness of a good meal, of sleepiness and sex, of caring for others and competing to defeat others.

The Buddha left the material life because he realized that even with everything the material life can give us, suffering and loss lay hidden beneath the surface of material reward. He searched for a way that would take us beyond the suffering and loss. What he discovered is that we need to go into suffering in order to move beyond it. When he sat through his own suffering he discovered that: all the so-called goods in life produce suffering because we cling to them; all the so-called bad occurrences in life cause suffering because we try to avoid them. Through simple presencing, by saying: "Yes," to what is, he realized that purpose is interwoven in being; it is the essence of the gift of life.



Co-creativity: The greatest gift of presence is probably the most familiar to professionals. In essence the personal creativity, excellence, and realization of dreams required of us as practitioners in professions, are mini courses for the roles we can play when we let presence be our guide. We can presence, no matter how successful we are, no matter how many times we fail or make mistakes. When we presence and start to experience all of the signs and gifts of presence, we start to realize that we are aligning with the universe itself. Our knowledge, our personal abilities, our creativity are multiplied many times over when we work with the flow of life rather than creating our own personal kingdoms of power and material rewards. We are already doing great things with our creativity. If we bring presence into every aspect of our lives, we will discover two of life's great hidden secrets: life itself is eternal, and we are collectively creating the world we are experiencing. We have created this world and we can discover a world filled with the gifts of presence by putting our creative skills to the service of life and eternity.



Images by Andy Goldsworthy

This Newsletter originated from my Japanese course, "personal presencing". Until we, as creative persons, practice presence ourselves, the world will continue to reflect our fears, our smallness, and acquisitiveness. We are all children because we have not awakened to the true gifts of this life. We are deceiving ourselves that more of the same non-presencing approach to life will somehow give us the freedom, joy, love and safety we desire.

The professional community, starting with its leaders, can turn from using it's creativity and knowledge to produce a world that is dying, to co-creating a world in which everything is brightened with the consciousness of living presence. By becoming co-creative *with* life we will start to understand what we have never understood: the source of all life awaits our awakening. We can then use all of our skills and creativity to truly share this world together. The seven lucky gods (*shichifukujin*) of Japanese tradition can represent aspects of our own creativity. They are not outside but inside of each of us.



The seven lucky gods (*shichifukujin*)