

# Living Spring

Christa

Lesson March 2017

## **Joy or Joy?**

Once again, I am pondering a dilemma that many people share in: not being able to discern between Joy and Fun. Occasion for such pondering is *constantly* given by the conversations I have with guests and residents at Living Spring

Aside from the fact that my intense joy and gratitude comes from recognizing that no one could or possibly have to add to the energy present on the land - IT SIMPLY IS. Every one of us, however, has to do the inner "work" that leads to liberation. Are you surprised if I say that only experience and self-disciplined awareness will bring about knowingness and transformation, and thus, eventually, lead to liberation?

Neither philosophy nor thinking, nor the reading of books can help us to get there without experience joining such an undertaking. But you know experience can only be gained through IMPLEMENTATION and ACTION.

## **But why *do we* have such a hard time discerning?**

Most of all because we fail or don't want to but need to recognize our compulsion to constantly self- create our own happiness - and fail to see that we experience again and again that that kind of happiness and joy never last. Instead, such compulsion, and effort, requires to constantly self-create such happiness - as long as we continue on that same track.

Do you ever ask yourself the question: "What are the means by which I try to overcome my inner sense of lacking joy?"

So many people - young and older - I see walking around with their cell phones, small talking, listening to music, playing, watching movies, googling etc.

Does this bring joy? Is that JOY?

## **Or how would it be if those cell phones would disappear?**

Perhaps for one day? For a few days? Or for a whole week? And woe, if for a whole month?

What remains? What if electricity fails and the telephone connections are out of order? Or no car

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where there is no public transportation, and no bicycle? Does one then speak more to one's neighbors, with family members that are present, or with the woman behind the cash register in the nearby grocery store, or with the person who shovels the snow before you go to work in the morning?

## **A few days ago I saw an ad in a paper, a promise:**

*We lead you to the website for your shopping addiction.* It sounded like fun, the addiction, as though they were talking about dark chocolate or gelato. I wouldn't be surprised if people answered to that with great enthusiasm, the wanted result by those who created the ad. But addiction is a well-known diagnosis for a disease, a sickness, an uncontrollable compulsion, unhealthy. No one would doubt that diagnosis concerning drugs, alcohol or smoking. But shopping? And yet many people actually suffer from a shopping addiction, some are aware and seek treatment or wish to end the dependency and its consequences.

Of course, life in the world - and please take note that I am not saying life on earth - is tempting! The dynamic of the world is money-making requiring those who pay for things they don't need but which give them momentary satisfaction.

Of course, having money is not the problem. It makes possible implementing ideas, allowing to express creatively, get what is needed, and sharing what is needed - so it is not about having money in itself, but about MAKING MONEY and the constant DESIRE TO HAVE things not needed.

Years ago I became aware of my own addiction; how I "found" things in the local thrift stores that brightened my eyes: beautiful and of good quality - silver, Riedel glasses, Rosenthal china, linens, brand-name clothing, silks and cashmere - perhaps rather expensive in other stores - and I always found reasons to buy them. And sometimes it was good - because that way I could create a good household for many people, have good quality cloths and shoes for a minimum of cost.

But often, these things ended up on a shelf, in a closet or in a cabinet and stayed there until I finally packed them up again. When I noticed this, I started to make a change: I seriously asked myself every time I wanted to get something whether I really needed the item or whether I just

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wanted to have it. When I didn't need it and it only appeared to be just a really good bargain, I told myself: "someone else will also like it".

Now, when merchandise "jumps" at me the moment I enter a store and even before I reach the aisle where I find what I came for, I find this very brief reminder helpful.

You see: I know something of the fun and joy that do not last; I also know something about their consequences that become a burden in time. But I also no longer desire to live with such burden.

**My joy is great, however, when "things" *come* to me.**

A good example may be when beloved my rain jacket literally fell apart. I badly wanted to replace it with a Gore-Tex. When I checked on the internet I soon stopped looking after I saw the prices and just let it go. Months later I was in a thrift store and I remembered my need for a rain jacket. I heard: ***look in the men's section*** - and there, lo and behold - was a Gore-Tex women's jacket, my size, for 9 Dollars, practically new. What a joy!

That joy remained - about the jacket, too, yes - but much more about the way it came into my hands. Every time I wear this jacket now, this joy is there.

**So: what is the difference between the joy that is short-lived and perishable and the joy that remains?**

I leave it to you

*I am certain you know the difference. Whether you live accordingly is a different question altogether.*

Warm greetings from the Oasis Living Spring

*Christa*