

ITC Conference 2010 *"Making Theosophy a Living Power in the World"*
August 12-15 The Hague The Netherlands

Leslie Royce **lecture**

A P O C K E T F U L L O F R E M E D I E S

Nature's most potent remedies are simple. But while not everyone may need such remedies, for those of us who might, they are useful and always right at hand. And, isn't that the best kind of medicine?

In the beginning, while enthusiastically studying Theosophy, I was treating it like very expensive luggage - proud to be in possession of it, full of admiration, awe-struck even, but carrying Theosophy with me, not using it. Thus when a situation aroused my personal likes and dislikes, I could put the luggage down, do what I chose to do and then pick it back up again. That realization was so embarrassing that something had to be done - either cure or flee. But how to cure? How to begin practicing Theosophy, using the wisdom that surrounded me?

Epictetus wrote "...man has every power we attribute to a god but man fails to realize it means that he is a god, a divine being who is to use those powers to benefit life."

Reviewing the teachings, it was clear that as a Spiritual Being, a Thinker, I had the power of choice, to move toward the higher, my true essence, or to continue living in the lower, my acquired nature. Indeed, that all of my powers of will, choice, thought, feeling, memory and imagination were the very tools that belonged to me as an enduring Ego, and that were meant for the purpose of learning through experience as well as impressing lower life in its upward evolution. Applying the teachings was critical, but how?

In work or play, in sport, we prepare ourselves by constant practice: - a lawyer checks code-books; a musician practices even if he or she is a concert pianist; a prima ballerina works daily at the barre. Practice is a natural part of development. But where to start?

A janitor acquaintance gave me a mantram that has served well since that moment. He merely asked, "How are you?" and I replied, "I am having a terrible day." He looked shocked and said, "I am surprised; I thought you knew, you make the day, the day don't make you."

You make the day! What tools might help one remember how to make the day well, how to do it properly, how to live Theosophy, not just admire it. H.P.B. wrote

“...every person who draws the breath of life affects the mental and moral atmosphere of the world, and helps to color the day for those about him. Those who do not help to elevate the thoughts and lives of others must of necessity either paralyze them by indifference, or actively drag them down.”

So I began looking for ways to carry reminders with me - books and pamphlets and notes, in my pockets, in my purse, in my brief-case; but, too often, I would be reviewing this material after the event. I needed something to help me prevent my normal reaction, my quick slide into my previously accepted behavior.

So, before heading out on a day that seemed to promise some difficulties, I would gather together particular note cards with quotes from the philosophy and poets and thinkers whose words filled me with hope and courage, with reminders, thus providing a remedy against whatever condition was likely to come. There would be no searching for answers, just turning to the remedy needed. After all, isn't an ounce of prevention worth a pound of cure?

If any of you wish, we have prepared a hand-out with all of the quotes we are using.

For example, note cards on ANGER. At work, you may have to deal with someone who seems to go out of their way to irritate you; reviewing anger cards on your way to work, on your break, just before dealing with that someone, could allow you to take a higher position. Certainly it will allow you to consider the result to you of your anger.

ANGER:

...devoted students often fail. They have waited for a particular hour or day to try their strength, and when the hour came they had none. If it was anger they had resolved to conquer, instead of trying to conquer it at an offered opportunity they ran away from the chance so as to escape the trial...

W.Q. Judge

ANGER:

Anger - an acid that can do more harm to the vessel in which it is stored than to anything on which it is poured.

Seneca

ANGER:

It is not that I do not get angry. I do not give vent to anger.... How I find it possible to control it would be a useless question, for it is a habit that everyone must cultivate and must succeed in forming by constant practice.

Gandhi

ANGER:

He who taught that men should "resist not evil" desired them only to forget themselves. ... By resistance he meant complaint, anger and objection to or against the inevitable, disagreeable or sorrowful things of life, that come to self...

W.Q. Judge

ANGER:

He who angers you, controls you.

Elizabeth Kenny

ANGER:

There is no such thing as having what is called "righteous anger" in this study and escaping these inevitable consequences. Whether your "rights" have been unjustly and flagrantly invaded or not does not matter.

W.Q. Judge

ANGER:

Holding on to anger is like grasping a hot coal with the intent of throwing it at someone else; you are the one who gets burned.

Gautama Buddha

FEAR:

I would never let the least fear or despair come before me, but if I cannot see the road, nor the goal for the fog, I would simply sit down and wait.

W.Q. Judge

FEAR:

Evil is often the result of over-anxiety, and men are always trying to do too much; they are not content to leave well enough alone, to do always just what the occasion demands and no more...

H.P. Blavatsky

FEAR:

'When you come to the end of everything you know,
And are faced with the darkness of the unknown,
Faith is knowing one of two things will happen.
Either there will be something solid for you to stand on,
Or you will be taught how to fly.'

Barbara J. Winter

FEAR:

The enemy is fear. We think it is hate; but, it is fear.

Gandhi

FEAR:

Fear is the same thing as frigidity on the earth, and always proceeds by the process of freezing.

W.Q. Judge

FEAR:

To control and conquer, through the Higher, the lower self. To purify himself inwardly and morally; to fear no one, and nought, save the tribunal of his own conscience.

H.P. Blavatsky

FEAR:

If the duty grows hard, or you faint by the way, be not discouraged, fearful or weary of the world. Remember that "Thou may'st look for silence in tumult, solitude in company, light in darkness, forgetfulness in pressures, vigor in despondency, courage in fear, resistance in temptation, peace in war, and quiet in tribulation."

W.Q. Judge

DIFFICULTIES:

1. See things as they are, not how you want them to be
2. See Souls, not friends, enemies, strangers, relatives
3. DO WHAT YOU CAN WITH WHAT YOU HAVE NOW with a subtle mixture of enthusiasm and indifference.

Theosophical Movement Magazine

DIFFICULTIES:

Permit not sluggish sleep to close your waking eye
Till that with judgment deep, your daily deeds you try.
He that his sins in consequence keeps when to quiet he goes
More desperate is than he that sleeps amidst his mortal foes.

Elizabeth Goudge

DIFFICULTIES:

'Discipline is learnt in the school of adversity.'

Gandhi

DIFFICULTIES:

'Don't be afraid of opposition. Remember, a kite rises against, not with, the wind.'

Hamilton Mabie

DIFFICULTIES:

Defects, not being valuable, are not important; their absence is... If we were

refurnishing a house, we would not be thinking of the old furniture, but of the new.
Robert Crosbie

DIFFICULTIES:

“Ah, but a man's reach should exceed his grasp, or what's a heaven for?”

Robert Browning

DIFFICULTIES:

The difference between school and life? In school, you're taught a lesson and then given a test. In life, you're given a test that teaches you a lesson.”

Tom Bodett

DIFFICULTIES:

‘Above the human consciousness, as below, there are no problems, no two sides to anything. Only man is troubled by the duality which he sees in matter because he has not yet arrived at a final choice in either direction.’

Theosophy Magazine

OTHERS:

ANGER:

Resentment is like drinking poison and waiting for the other person to die.

Cindy Clabough

OTHERS:

Beware then, of an uncharitable spirit, for it will rise up like a hungry wolf in your path, and devour the better qualities of your nature which have been springing into life.

A Mahatma

OTHERS:

‘Those who are good he greets with good,

And greets the bad the same;

For thus is goodness understood

By those who know its name.’

Lao Tzu Tao Te Ching

OTHERS:

Suppose someone irritates us. We should try to find some phrase that will come to mind when we are with the person, that will help us to be conscious of the possibility of irritation before it arises.

Theosophical Movement Magazine

OTHERS:

...a great mutual toleration and charity for each other's shortcomings, ungrudging mutual help in the search for truths in every department of nature - moral and physical. And this ethical standard must be unflinchingly applied to daily life.

A Mahatma

OTHERS:

It is more important to understand the ground of your own behavior than to understand the motives of another.

Dag Hammarskjold

IMPATIENCE:

Nothing is gained, but a good deal is lost, by impatience — not only strength, but also sight and intuition. So decide nothing hastily. Wait; make no set plan.

W.Q. Judge

IMPATIENCE:

How poor are they who have not patience! What wound did ever heal but by degrees.

Shakespeare

IMPATIENCE:

Try for patience in all the very smallest things of life every day, and you will find it growing very soon, and with it will come greater strength and influence on and for others, as well as greater and clearer help from the inner side of things.'

W.Q. Judge

Another idea of something you can carry with you is a talisman.

For example, if you are naturally, karmically, impatient, carrying an acorn in your pocket can remind you of the slow, orderly process that nature uses to bring forth anything. Actually an acorn can represent the nature of the soul itself for the acorn contains within it, invisible to all, the future oak tree; it is all in that one small seed. And that one acorn contains enough future oak trees to cover the face of the entire earth since the future tree has thousands and thousands of acorns which can become trees that have thousands and thousands of acorns, which....

Obviously, there are unlimited possibilities for creating remedies as the need and the experience of each of us is so different. But the goal is the same, no matter the remedy - to serve as an ounce of prevention which is, we have been told, worth a pound of cure.