

This Powerful Ally Is Also Our Biggest Fear...

Posted by [Nick Polizzi](#)

The great Lao Tzu of the Zhou Dynasty (1046-256 BCE) once said,

“If you realize that all things change, there is nothing you will try to hold on to. If you are not afraid of dying, there is nothing you cannot achieve.”

If you were to rank the most prominent human fears, the fear of death would most likely come in at number one – with public speaking just behind it. This is a very delicate topic, but it is something we all experience and it’s time we said hello to the elephant in the room.

Whether you’re studying the ancient Bon traditions of Tibetan Buddhism, the mystics of India, or the shamanic practices of the Americas, the act of overcoming our fear of death is seen as a doorway to higher realms of consciousness. The gist of it is that resisting our own mortality prevents us from truly living, and can hinder inner and outer healing.

Where I grew up, we didn’t talk much about death – unless, of course, somebody died. Even then, it felt like most of the processing around the event was done alone, behind closed doors. We spent much more time “mourning the loss” than we did contemplating with awe, the incredible unknown that every sentient being experiences.

To many, the idea of discarding our fear of death might seem absurd. After all, isn’t it tied into the survival instincts that help keep us alive?

A shaman might encourage you to examine this thought construct a little further. *Can you identify what it is that you think death is? If not, can you identify what life is? In fact, who and what exactly are you?*

A few years ago, I witnessed the passing of an amazing man named Garry Thompson, who had come to the Peruvian Amazon after being diagnosed with late-stage neuro-endocrine cancer. We sat with him in his final moments and for many hours afterward into the night.

The following day, a local shaman shared these words of wisdom to both honor Garry and challenge the rest of us to fully integrate the experience:

“Wherever there is life, there is death – and we cannot hide from it. Death is a process that is necessary for life to exist. Western societies have demonized it out of fear and ignorance. But why? Is there truly something to be afraid of? People spend so much time running from death that they never truly live.”

Why do we do it to ourselves? What are we really afraid of? Does it stem from a deep remorse at not having lived as authentically as our hearts know we could? Is it that we can’t take not knowing what will happen when this particular channel of perception shuts off?

I once heard a renowned surgeon exclaim that the average American patient fears death to such a degree that a bad diagnosis can be more life threatening than the illness itself. When disease strikes, we jump ahead and drown ourselves in the implications of what this could mean to our lifestyle, our relationships, and ultimately our own survival.

“The fear of death proves mortal, and sets people on methods to save their lives, which infallibly destroy them.” Joseph Addison, English Poet (1672-1719)

This isn't how it has to be. In fact, native medicine is a prime example of what is possible when we overcome our fear of death and the unknown.

In one Amazonian lineage, medicine men are taught when they are apprentices that diseases are “mothers” who become pregnant with us in order to teach much needed spiritual lessons. In this ancient understanding, when a patient embraces their illness instead of “fighting” against it, the illness / mother rebirths them back into the world anew. Through this process, valuable information is unlocked that not only heals the body, but also opens new pathways of perception.

On the other hand, if the patient is unable to learn the inherent lesson, they are delivered lovingly into the next life, where new lessons can be experienced.

Now, this belief can be taken literally or simply viewed as fascinating local mythology, but one thing is for sure – it creates a mindset of peaceful surrender to the unknown. This is something that most great wisdom schools hold as a golden principle.

Perhaps the reason that shamanism and indigenous medicine are spreading so quickly nowadays is because they boil down to a few simple truths that resonate within all of us. The most powerful of these may be the understanding that neither life nor death should be feared.

In a world that is increasingly hard to decipher, it can be useful to hone in on the phenomena that we know are unquestionably true. One thing is guaranteed in this life – there will be an end to our physical incarnation. By surrendering to the impermanence of our reality, a doorway to liberation can be accessed.

“The fear of death follows from the fear of life. A man who lives fully is prepared to die at any time.”

-Mark Twain

In honor of all the loved ones who have passed this year, may their transition unlock something deeper within us.

Stay curious,

Nick Polizzi
Director, The Sacred Science

The Truth about cancer presented and made by Ty Bollinger , for if your are interested in prevention and healing cancer. Mr. Ty is on a mission and this the beginning of a revolutionary Light on Cancer.

<http://thetruthaboutcancer.com/spring15/episode1/>

<http://thetruthaboutcancer.com/spring15/episode2>

<http://thetruthaboutcancer.com/spring15/episode3/>

<http://thetruthaboutcancer.com/spring15/episode4/>