

## 6. Death and Life

Death is an inseparable part of life. All living things die. Every thing changes. All phenomenal existence is impermanent. Anicca. (Thanks Buddha!) Death is life energy being released to change form. Death is natural and inevitable. There is nothing wrong with death. Death is just the other side of the life coin.

Yet, most of us are freaked out by death. Death is scary. It makes us uncomfortable. We fear the unknown, and no mind really knows what happens after death. When we approach death, we often treat it as if it would be a failure, somehow. We're often willing to bankrupt ourselves and our families with expensive medical treatments to try to cheat death, though we never can and never will. Sometimes, we can buy time, sometimes by extending suffering, but death is inevitable for life.

We've made our fear of death, unwillingness to face death, and shock and discomfort when we meet death worse by insulating ourselves from it. For most of our existence, we encountered death regularly. We lived in close tribal communities, where we knew and cared about people of all ages. Some died. Actually, all died. Naturally. Of course, they did. Of course, we do. That's life. We experienced that together and supported each other through it. We killed for our food, so we knew death in that context. We lived in natural ecosystems, which death is a natural part of, so we encountered it regularly there.

Today, many of us live in fragmented societies and relative isolation. We typically do not live with our older people or experience it when those outside our close families die. Most are not in natural environments, so we do not experience death as a natural part of life. Most are not part of producing food, so we do not experience death as part of that. We live in a culture that promotes fear, including fear of death. Some of our religions teach fear of death, as risk for an eternity of torturous suffering.

We hide death away in old-folks' homes, hospitals, morgues, mortuaries and cemeteries.

Denial of death doesn't work. Fear of death is a disservice. To stop fearing death, we need to treat it as the inextricable part of life that it is, face it throughout our lives, know it and resist others' efforts to make us fear it. We need to trust the universe, the same universe that created the incredibly beautiful planet we live on, the miraculous and complex life support systems that sustain us, and the astounding diversity of life we have here. If it can do all of that, shouldn't we trust it to handle death in a good way?

When we encounter death, it teaches an invaluable lesson: our chance to live is when we're alive, now. Live now! Feel, grow, make love, experience, express, be love, create, share love, eat, make life, care, know beauty, share, contribute, appreciate, have fun, help others, play, raise consciousness, do, evolve! We're here now. We're alive. Let's go for it! Let's make this good! Let's show others how important they are to us while we can. Express love! Why do we cheat ourselves of this important lesson, inevitably failing at cheating our own deaths, and too often failing to live life fully?

What is really scary is the idea we may squander the lives we have been given, without living them fully. Some of us need deadlines for motivation. Death is a literal dead-line that motivates us to live fully. Whatever we want to do, do it now! However we want to be, be that way now! Whatever we need to communicate, communicate that now! Whatever we want to experience, experience that now! Whatever we want to create, create it now! Death is a pep talk, and we all need that from time to time.

Hiding from death allows us to become insensitive to it, until we encounter it in our personal lives, where we are traumatized by it. For most of us, death is an abstraction. That's why we can be unmoved

by the deaths of millions of others far away, and shaken to our core when someone we personally know and love dies. We are all us. All of our deaths matter, because all of our lives matter. All of our deaths are OK, if we take our opportunities to live fully. Nature will replace us for the good of all with others, so let's not interfere with its ability to do that. If we knew nature and death better, we'd know that.

It's not just our own lives that are important and sacred. All life is important and sacred and deserves the opportunity to live fully. That includes other species, other forms of life.

We take life as food to live. That's OK, necessary and natural, as long as we do so with respect for that other life and its place and importance in natural life support systems. It's not OK to cheat other beings of their opportunity to have healthy, fulfilling, natural lives, just so we can live or make money. It's not OK to constrain life to disrespectful, torturous and unnatural food growing gulags where it suffers and never gets to experience natural life. If we're going to take the life energy of others to sustain our lives, we need to show respect for that by doing what we can to allow those others to live well.

There is nothing wrong with natural death after a full and rewarding life. There is something wrong when we do not allow ourselves or others to live full, free and rewarding lives. Let's stop insulating ourselves from death, by living closer to it in our communities, natural environments and food systems. We need to know death to appreciate life. We need to show respect for life, when we take life and when we encounter death. Live, and let live!

Ultimate truth, which most of us have lost connection to and deep knowing of, because we are lost in our heads, is: that which fears death is our ego, and our ego is invented. We make it up in our minds to give ourselves identity, along with the stories and models we invent to try to make sense of experience and sensory inputs. All of that is make believe. It is all conceived and lives in our heads, as abstraction. When we stop thinking, to just be present and feel deeply, we can open to ultimate energetic reality, and other knowing, direct knowledge experienced with the entirety of our energetic being.

There is no such thing as separation. We are all parts and expressions of infinite being energy, much greater than ourselves, which exists throughout time and space. That will continue when we are no longer in our passing bodies, and so will we, as that being, which is what we are. There is no end of life, just our unique expression of it. All expressions of life are unique, all parts of one vast energetic being. It will always be. There is nothing to fear. That doesn't make sense in many of our invented models and make-believe worlds, but it is true. We are much greater than the shells we occupy. We'll flower again.

We, the egos and inventions of our heads, are not in control of it, never have been, and never will be. We have little conscious control of the actions of our energetic particles, atoms, cells, organs, systems and bodies. Something much greater than us operates all that. Surrender and just let it be. No fear!

That which dies is only an abstract and make-believe fiction of our minds, and temporary housing. Death is not ultimately important, just a fleeting phenomenon of inevitable change, which is beautiful. We, eternal being energy, can know that, deeply and personally, and if we do fear of death dissolves, and we are free to be, express, create, enjoy, appreciate and love. Be free! Surrender fear of death!