	<i>White Robed Monks of St. Benedict</i>	<i>Volume 16 Issue 1</i>
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Peace be with you and yours.

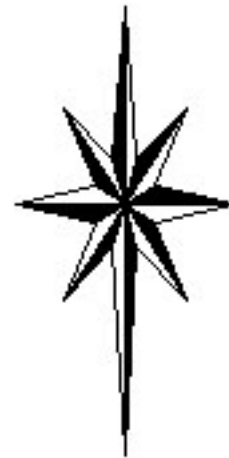
"There is only one true good: to know the true self" ... "Our true self is the ultimate reality of the universe, and if we know the true self we not only unite with the good of humankind in general but also fuse with the essence of the universe and unite with the will of God." (Nishida Kitaro)

What, pray tell, might such statements mean? Benedictine Spirituality is one of many paths to unfolding one's true self. A monk is someone who actively seeks in the intransitive stance, to know and in the transitive sense, to know God.

In order to know (God), Benedict (b. 480 CE) established the monastery as the "school of the Lord's service." His overriding admonition and the first word of the Rule, of St. Benedict is: *Asculpta!* which means "Listen!"

What does it mean to listen? "Listening through your experience of being-in-the-world being obedient, you return to your Father's home. You leave the houses of false belief, delusion; false stories, illusion; and false perception, illusion. You entered these houses because you listened not. Through your will you build the illusion of your ego. Your ego is only but the thought-emotion of who you think you are and are not. " (Prologue Zen Rule of WRMOSB). By listening we learn to get out of our own way. We allay unnecessary pain and suffering for ourselves and others who benefit from our behavior.

Within our practice of Benedictine Spirituality, we learn to listen (not hear



Peace I leave with you;  
my peace I give you.  
(John 14:27)

May the Peace  
of the Christmas Season  
be with you and yours  
now and forevermore!

with our ears) actively to what is being communicated rather than what we think is being communicated. We read the text question as it is asked and answer accordingly rather than the question we thought was asked and answer incorrectly.

In listening we learn to respect ourselves and others. We comply with requests on the other's schedule rather than in our own egoic good time. We realize that we become who we are by the way we relate to others. We respect our monastic

## Abbot's Notes

community: our family, friends, acquaintance, and our brothers and sisters in our Human Family in general. We learn to recognize our narcissistic attitudinal predispositions as our own actual creations and then we are able to let them go.

We recognize God as we may—not in the theologically sound, intellectual way, but in ordinary course of events in our daily lives. With some practice, as we settle more into our true self, we can ponder that space between each and every inhale and exhale and that space between each heart beat. We can then recognize that we are all sharing in the same energy through which we beat our hearts and allow the next inhale until we expire.

In listening we realize peace in mind/heart even if we should be happy or angry, gleeful or sorrowful. Within the space between each heart beat, we are stable as we live our lives moderating our work, pleasure, and leisure activities accordingly.

In listening, we grow in patience as we let go of our passive aggressive behavior. We respond rather than react when we do not get what we think we want. We let be emotionally peo-

ple, things, or events not being the way we think they truly ought to be. People, places, and things can be only as they are in the moment. Whether we like it or not, such is the moment. We are patient with ourselves as we are with others and respond accordingly.

In listening, we learn that our life is active, a prayer and every action *Is* a celebration of that prayer.

And who is listening? Each of us is an amalgam of identities: mother, father, brother, sister, man or woman, male or female, black or white or yellow, red, American or Canadian or Italian or etc., Agnostic or Atheist or Buddhist or Christian or Catholic or Muslim or Other or Protestant—and each identity has its own psychology, personality, hopes, wants and needs. Who is listening? Which identity is listening? Which one is the true self? Obviously, none of them. Some are products of our conditioning; others, of our alleged chosen belief systems.

We may say: “Oh, yeah! This is my true self!” Yet, we resist. Whenever we sense any resistance (anger, shame, blame, withdrawal, worry, depres-

sion, anxiety, etc.) we are experiencing an identity crisis. As we listen to our resistance, we come to appreciate the identity then activated. The more we listen rather than react the more responsive we can be—and come to appreciate our true self.

We do not have to identify our true self because we are that. Conventional reality remains the same. Our perspective changes. We are no longer caught between our conflicting identities. We are no longer confused. We realize we are not only the creators of our own experience but also that which allows the creator to be in its many varied forms.

We just know, using the language of quantum mechanics, that — as is everything else in the universe—we each are only one configuration of collapsed probabilities and possibilities. Said in another language form, we are but the space within which we emerge. We are thus free and have found salvation from the Human Condition.

Who is listening?

Many blessings to you and yours. Peace and Joy!

+Robert OSB

Abbot-Bishop

## Jesus, The Teacher Within

## The BeliefCloset

Laurence Freeman, OSB, (New York: Continuum, 2000), pp. 130-131.

To find God, then, we must lose God—at least our primitive ideas & images of God. Detaching from these familiar images will be painful, individually and for the community of which we are part. It is a deep level of our psyche that is being changed. Even for the nonreligious person there will be the pain of feeling they are losing some kind of familiar & reassuring God. Pain as well as joy accompanies the discovery of the living mystery because the idols we must smash are so emeshed with our images of ourselves.

The sense of separation from God, however, is necessary for spiritual individuation. It is particularly painful & confusing for religious people. Their first sniff of the Kingdom may feel less like a discovery of God than a loss or even a sacrilegious rejection of the God once so securely delivered to them. But through the awful emptiness of absence, God is encountered. Slowly it dawns that losing the image is the prerequisite of finding the original. Losing your way is the very way of seeking God. This truth about the vision of God reveals another law we may not even be aware we are obeying: that to find our true Self we must lose our ego selves. To deepen a relationship we must let go of the other. Absence then imperceptibly transforms into the mystery of presence. At last we realize that the absence of God is only the failure of our powers of understanding to grasp God's real presence.

All we can say accurately about God, according to Thomas Aquinas, is that God is, not what God is. Our relationship with God is therefore akin to the mystery that we are to ourselves. If it

is true that God remains always a mystery to us, it is also true that we are a mystery to ourselves. The mystery is after all, that we even exist, that anything should exist. This wonder is a fundamental human quality and, according to Aristotle, the keystone of philosophy. The wonder of being human is contingent on the wonder of God's mysterium. This mysteriousness of God is the primary Biblical affirmation about God. Despite all the thought and ritual that it has accumulated, the knowable unknowability of God is the linchpin of Christian theology.

"If you can understand it," says St Augustine, "then it is not God. If you were able to understand then you understood something else instead of God. If you were able to understand even partially then you deceived yourself with you own thoughts.

This radical humility (& humor) before the ineffable mystery of God is the foundation of the Christian tradition. From the heart of that tradition there issues an authority that liberates. Its teachers point the way, with a wise unknowing, a learned and humble ignorance, into the Kingdom.

Meditate for 30 Minutes. Remember: Sit down. Sit still and &. Sit relaxed but alert. Silently, interiorly, begin to say a single word. We recommend the prayer-phrase "Maranatha." Recite it as four syllables of equal length. Listen to it as you say it, gently, but continuously. Do not think or imagine anything—spiritual or otherwise. Thoughts and images will likely come, but let them pass. Just keep returning your attention—with humility and simplicity—to saying your word in faith from the beginning to the end of your meditation.

The foundation of our conventional reality (a configuration of possibilities and probabilities) are belief systems. Yet, a belief is but a metaphor we use in conventional reality to umbrella certain electro-chemical activities in our brains. Other electro-chemical activities we may term *thought, hopes, desires, or dreams*. Hence, there are no actual beliefs as such. The lie in every belief is that there *is* a belief and that that belief is *absolutely true* (at least in my case) – itself, yet a belief.

Some beliefs are supportive, others not so much so. How do we change a self-defeating belief? One way is called The BeliefCloset. The human brain stores information (energy packets) via analogies. The BeliefCloset is a most effective analog process in realigning the imaginal realm to enhance one's happiness, satisfaction and realization of goals: personal, social, spiritual, financial, relationship goals.

Two of our priests are BeliefCloset practitioners. A session via the phone or in person takes about one hour. You must be in a quiet, undisturbed place. Cost? Free, yet a (tax deductible) donation would be welcomed.

Once learned you can use it on your own or sit for another session. For more information or to set-up a session, please e-mail:

**bc@wrmosb.org**

Expect a reply within 24 to 48 hours. Thank you.

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**Please visit**

<http://www.wrmosb.org/update>

**Thank you.**

**(New e-mail address, too.)**



  
**Peace and Joy!**

**How to Detach from a Belief—Why?**

How to detach from a belief and experience freedom and peace of mind? Use a centering meditation taught by Tarthang Tulku in his *Hidden Mind of Freedom*:

"Working with thoughts (beliefs) by opening them as they arise can bring many pleasant feelings, which—without attachment—also become our meditation. We can even go into the thoughts that judge other thoughts, and, embracing this judging mind, become united with it."

"By relying on the light of awareness you can see that the difficulties you face are manifestations of your own concepts. Going deeply into your thoughts, you will see how you create your experience, how you alone are the judge who determines heaven and hell, good and bad."

"Whatever experience arises, stay with it, expand it, and heat it up. If you remain within the intense

core of the experience, the meditator unites with thoughts and emotions, and everything dissolves. Then awareness grows powerful and one-pointed. As thoughts and emotions are increasingly included within this field of awareness, they become more useful. Instead of being a cause of frustration or confusion, they become agents of well-being. . . "

And why?

A Native American grandfather was talking to his grandson about how he felt. He said, "I feel as if I have two wolves fighting in my heart. One wolf is the vengeful, angry, violent one. The other wolf is the loving, compassionate one." The grandson asked him, "Which wolf will win the fight in your heart?" The grandfather answered, "The one I feed. (Thank you Michael Butler)

May all beings be happy.  
Amen.

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And thank you. May many blessings be to you and yours now and forevermore. Peace and joy!

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