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PREMIUM



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# Great Expectations

The pulverizing constriction of expectation closes in on you the minute you fail to fulfill an expectation. A child is not born with expectations of itself. We learn to expect things from ourselves when other people (whose love we desire)



expect things of us and only demonstrate love when we live up to those expectations. Internalizing and beating ourselves up in order to live up to those expectations is less painful than losing their approval or being beaten up by them in order to live up to those expectations.

I am currently a person who holds high expectations of myself. This is one

reason why I continually succeed at things. On the other hand, it is also the reason for much of my unhappiness. Yesterday was one of the worst days I've had in years. It was one of those days where like a curse; painful events just kept coming and coming and coming.



The events of

yesterday triggered me into that familiar feeling of incoming boundary violation where my home could not be a safe place for me and the intensity of the experience caused a stream of energetic momentum that got out from underneath me. And right after I got done trying to integrate the feeling of unsafety caused by that experience, I looked out the window to find a deer that had been hit by a car and had subsequently sought refuge in my backyard. It was a trigger on so many levels for me, given my childhood experience that I went into a state of dissociation. Her back leg was broken in five places. I went outside to talk to her and to sing to her as she bled out into the snow. I had a profound communion with her during the time I was trying to provide support. The other members of the intentional community scrambled to try to find any organization that could help her. But wildlife rehab in our state doesn't rehabilitate deer and no veterinarian would entertain the idea of helping. We were left with the decision to let her suffer and ultimately die or call a police officer that is trained to shoot lethally injured animals. When the officer came, it spooked the deer who managed

to run off to a far enough distance that he could no longer take a shot due to the laws of vicinity that apply to neighborhoods. I will let my fellow vegan animal lovers who have also suffered from abuse in their own childhoods imagine what that experience was like to go through emotionally.

Having spent a day in that vibrational set point, I ended up having post-traumatic nightmares with sleep paralysis again. In my dreams, I was being physically ripped apart by an invisible force



while everyone else in the dream was oblivious to it. I was screaming at the tops of my lungs but no one could hear me screaming. No sound came out of my vocal cords, just the strained sounding whisper of silenced screaming. Apparently however, I was actually screaming. Ale ended up talking and cuddling me out of the dream. The entire experience of the day and night was like being back in those fragile years just after escaping, when I was grappling daily with complex post traumatic disorder.

Upon waking, I felt like I had failed. I felt like I had taken a massive step backwards. I was upset. Knowing about what creates upset, I began to examine the expectations I hold of myself. Firstly, I had the expectation that I shouldn't be upset. This led to a conversation with Ale about the expectations we have of each other. That led to a string of realizations and suddenly I could consciously feel the pressure of all of the expectations other people hold for me as well as all the expectations I hold for myself. The pressure was strong enough that I could only hear my racing heartbeat through the emotional pain of it. I made a study of the flavor of the

condition, like a sommelier tasting spoiled wine.



In some ways, I think I have chosen the best career on the face of the earth. In other ways, I think I have chosen the worst career on the face of the earth.

Expectations is one of the areas that makes me feel I have chosen the worst career on earth... or shall I say, the worst career on earth chose me? Either way, I do not know a career on earth where there is more of an expectation of total perfection than this one. Think about it for a minute... Ask yourself, what do you expect of a Spiritual Leader? I will start a list to give you an idea of the things that are commonly expected...

1. That they always know what is right to do and that they always do exactly that, so they never make a mistake
2. That they do not feel negative emotion because they never see the world through a temporal, limited or painful perspective
3. That they never react, especially never get angry
4. That they do not have triggers because they have transcended the past
5. That they are omniscient, so they know everything about everyone and everything and never truly feel the pain of things not going the way that they want or expect and can always see the future and make decisions accordingly
6. That they could make a relationship work with anyone
7. That they are unconditionally loving towards everyone, even those who hate them
8. That they have all the answers to everything in every situation
9. That they can suspend the laws of physical reality and thus quite literally perform miracles, walk on water and turn water into wine
10. That they will always act in other people's best interest and never in their own

11. That they have no temporal or material desires
12. That they renounce money and all personal gain
13. That they never take things personally and are never effected by what other people do and say (a perfect sounding board)
14. That they are always in the present moment
15. That they have no attachment to anything
16. That they have so much control over the mind that they live in a state of peace in all situations, absent of fear
17. That they have completely mastered the art of deliberate creation in the form of manifestation so their reality is exactly how they want it to be at all times

Spiritual leaders are the projection of the disowned divinity in oneself. Essentially, they are expected to be super human. Look over that list and see if you can feel the kind of pressure that comes along with that expectation. These expectations have been a real problem in the past with relationships I've had. When people hold these expectations of me and I do not live up to them, they feel betrayed, disillusioned, disappointed, lost and often hateful. This is in fact the very reason that one of the members of my spiritual community left years ago to turn into one of my principal haters. And in relationships, men have fallen in love with me for the idea of being with a spiritual goddess who is perfect in every way, only to find that they are in a relationship with a real woman.



Some years ago, I came up with a name for this condition. I call it the "Santa Claus Complex". As a spiritual leader, people project onto you a

fictional perfect ideal... essentially a fantasy like Santa Claus. This is what they expect of you. And when they discover Santa Claus isn't real according to their expectations, they become disillusioned to the degree that they turn

against you. Of all the spiritual leaders alive today, I paint the least amount of illusions about myself. I give people the least occasion to idolize me as perfect. I write blogs like this one, exposing my humanity to the world. I urge people to see that this does not make me worse at my role, instead it makes me better. We all have this humanity; it's just that it has been considered career suicide to do what I am doing by exposing it instead of keeping it concealed behind the velvet curtain.

I looked over this list of expectations and realized that the most painful aspect of being in my position is not that other people expect these things of me. The most painful aspect is that despite my authenticity and teachings around embracing ones' humanity, these are actually expectations I have internalized and expect of myself.

This morning, I was feeling terrible about myself because I failed to not react to the situation yesterday. I failed to not take much of the day's events personally. I failed to not add painful meaning to the experiences. I

failed to hold a transcendental perspective. I failed to perform a physical miracle. I failed to stay in the present moment. I failed to have no attachments. I failed to be able to rationalize my way out of the way I felt. I failed to create the reality I wanted for the day, and the list goes on. I realized that in that very moment, I was perpetuating cruelty towards myself. Expectations can be a form of cruelty.

This got me to thinking. What I experience in terms of expectations is just a



magnified version of what so many people who find their way to spiritual practice experience... Cruel expectations of themselves. This acceptable vs. unacceptable standard we hold ourselves to is the substance behind spiritual bypassing.



I'm just going to come right out and say it, spiritual bypassing is the cancer of the spiritual world. It is a disease that has run rampant in both religious and non-religious circles. Spiritual bypassing is the act of using spiritual beliefs to avoid facing or healing one's painful feelings,

unresolved wounds and unmet needs. It is a state of avoidance. Because it is a state of avoidance, it is a state of resistance. I personally, consider spiritual bypassing to be the shadow side of spirituality.

The spiritual beliefs of any spiritual tradition, be it Christian, Hindu, Buddhist, New Age, Islamic, or even Self Help, can provide ample justification for living in a state of inauthenticity. They can all provide justification for avoiding the unwanted aspects of one's own feelings and state of being in favor of what is considered to be "a more enlightened state". Even the non-affiliated and unanimously beloved saying "keep calm and carry on" is in fact a glorification of spiritual bypassing.

Some examples of spiritual bypassing include anger-phobia, exaggerated detachment, emotional numbing and repression, blind or overly tolerant compassion, weak or too porous boundaries, using cognitive reasoning to escape emotional feelings. Debilitating judgment about one's negativity or shadow side, devaluation of the personal relative to the spiritual, avoidance of physical day to day life, delusions of having arrived at a higher level of being and my personal least favorite, overemphasis of and attachment to the positive to the degree that there is a high level of resistance to anything negative.

Every religious



practice propagates its fair share of spiritual bypassing. For example, Catholic confession, which is expected to just wash away sin and effortlessly alter someone's negative behavior. Buddhist premature transcendence, which is to act as if one is above and beyond the messiness of life's drama, when the truth is, one is not. Christian unconditional love, which is to espouse love that is false. It is to say, "I love them" when in truth, one harbors prejudice and resistance to them and only wishes they could learn to love them.



Meditation is also frequently used as a form of spiritual bypassing. It is used to avoid uncomfortable feelings and unresolved life situations. For those in denial about their personal feelings or wounds, meditation practice can reinforce a tendency toward detachment, disengagement, or interpersonal distance. Spiritual drugs can be a form of spiritual bypassing. The use of spiritual drugs can be a tool to avoid getting ones' hands dirty in the work of resolving emotional issues. It is easier to spend time in an altered state of consciousness than to spent time facing the pain of one's current state of consciousness. And in the spiritual community, no form of spiritual bypassing has become such a widespread disease as "positive focus". Here is a prime example of positive focus spiritual bypassing; person A is really struggling with grief because their romantic relationship just ended. Person B feels incredibly uncomfortable about the fact that they are suffering and so, they wish to help the person A avoid those painful feelings. Person B tells person A that she creates her own reality and that she should therefore just quit thinking about what she is thinking about and "be positive" instead. Not only does this condemn the thoughts, which are being thought by person A (and therefore shame them), it also requires them to do something that they are not actually capable of doing. It requires them to jump from a purely negative thought to a purely positive thought; and that cannot be done. It is too far of a vibrational gap to jump. The result is, Person A feels shamed and powerless to their own thoughts. They feel as if

where they are, is not ok.

There is  
a big



difference between being authentically positive and forcing positivity in order to try to avoid negativity. In today's world, we have little tolerance for working through our pain. We much prefer instantaneous solutions that involve numbing out pain. Low and behold, **Spirituality itself has become it's own avoidance strategy.** When we turn away from our pain or away from "wherever we are", we abandon ourselves. We resist the very thing we are trying to avoid and so, we guarantee that it will come up in our realities again; only it will come back bigger next time.

**Authenticity is the highest state of being for the spiritual practitioner. In fact in the years to come, authenticity will become the replacement for enlightenment as the true goal of spiritual practice.** When we use spirituality to whitewash over our issues and try to avoid them, we use the goal of spiritual transcendence to try to rise above the raw and messy and real side of human life before we have fully faced and made peace with it. This can be seen as premature and false spiritual transcendence. It is one of the major pit falls or occupational hazards of walking the path of spirituality.

Spiritual



bypassing isn't just an annoying facet of spirituality. It is in fact very dangerous. Why is spiritual bypassing dangerous? It is dangerous because it sets up a major division between the temporal self and the divine self. It creates a definable split between where one really is and where one thinks they should be. It enables us to lie to ourselves and delude ourselves and live our lives through the projection of a false self. We cannot heal unless we are willing to admit to where we are and who we are. Spiritual bypassing is like breaking your leg, but being unwilling to admit to it, putting a band-aid over the compound fracture and trying to continue forward anyway. You can easily see how much harm would come to someone physically if they did that. That is exactly the same amount of emotional damage we do to ourselves when we use spirituality to bypass the truth of our emotional self. We need to take time to face and move through and heal our emotional pain in the same way that we need to take time to face the fact that our leg is broken, re-set the bone and spend time healing the leg before we are truly able to move forward.

Spiritual bypassing also leads to a one-sided form of spirituality where one aspect of life is elevated at the expense of its opposite. For example, objective truth (being valued more) is used to invalidate subjective truth. Non-physical is valued over form, 5d is valued and 3d is devalued. Transcendence is valued over physical embodiment, and detachment is valued over feeling. This behavior of valuing one side of polarity over the other gives rise to extremely damaging experiences. For example, one might, try to practice emotional detachment from others by suppressing one's need for love and becoming independently self loving, but this only drives the need to be loved by others underground, so that it often becomes unconsciously acted out in covert and manipulative ways instead.



Being a good spiritual person can become a substitute identity that covers up and defends

against an underlying deficient identity. The spiritual idea we have of ourselves is used to whitewash over the truth of our true concept of ourselves, which is that we feel badly about ourselves. We feel that we are not good enough. We feel that we are innately bad. Then, although we may be practicing diligently, our spiritual practice can be used in the service of denial and defense. And when spiritual practice is used to bypass our real-life human issues, our spirituality becomes compartmentalized. Our spiritual life and practice remains separate and un-integrated with our day-to-day life and our overall functioning. We feel like we have split personality disorder. We can never truly become the embodiment of the higher self, because we are still thinking of our lower self as our lower self, or as our unwanted self. Our spiritual practice cannot ever fully penetrate our life and make us feel good if we are using spiritual principals to avoid ourselves or avoid pain.

Ask yourself these questions:

Are you avoiding the fact that you feel like you are deficient and not good enough or bad by creating a “persona” of a spiritually transcendent person?

Do you use spiritual beliefs to avoid your pain or problems?

Do you feel like the spiritual you is different than the embodied you?

Do you use spirituality to justify an insecurity within yourself?

Do you use spirituality to avoid looking at things in your reality that you would rather think didn't exist?

Now I'm about to make a bold statement, most of us alive today struggle with spiritual bypassing. Do you want to know how to know if you struggle with spiritual bypassing? You struggle with spiritual bypassing if you espouse, “I create my own reality” and then you worry. You struggle with spiritual bypassing if you espouse unconditional love and feel emotional resistance to someone. You struggle with spiritual bypassing



if you espouse the idea that the universe is benevolent and good but then demonstrate distrust for others or the world at large. You struggle with spiritual bypassing if you espouse loving kindness and then berate yourself. If there is any kind of split within you between spiritual principal and the actuality of how you feel or act, then you struggle with spiritual bypassing. And if you struggle with spiritual bypassing, the order of the day is authenticity.



We are not just physical beings waking up to our spiritual essence; we are also spiritual beings waking up to our physicality. Physical life is not clean. It is messy. Physical

life is a life of contrast. It is an experience that involves both what is wanted and what is unwanted. Spirituality is not an excuse to run away from physical life. The soul is not a justification to deny the human side of ourselves. Spiritual principals are not an excuse to avoid the unhealed aspects of your psyche and your pain. Spiritual principals are not meant to serve as a justification to support your defenses.

In order to avoid the trap of spiritual bypassing, we need to be brave enough to admit to how we feel, what we want and don't want, what we like and don't like. We need to be willing to risk admitting to where we are and who we are, even if we think that where we are and who we are isn't good or ok. If we want to avoid the pitfall of spiritual bypassing, we must express and allow our emotions, wounds, traumas and pain to surface healthily and with compassion. Make a conscious effort to allow instead of suppress your emotions and not judge them when they arise. We often turn to bypassing

to cope with our internal pain and suffering. Examples include addictions to food, drink, drugs, shopping, sex, work, focusing on others and diverting attention away from yourself etc. **Make peace with being uncomfortable.** If you are numbing yourself inside out this energy lingers and creates a breeding ground for other issues to arise and manifest. Get down to the root of your problems. The journey through life is not always one of bliss. And you haven't gotten life wrong if you are not in perfect bliss. Sometimes the path through life leads you to breakdowns where you are curled up on the floor in tears.

In order to avoid the trap of spiritual bypassing, we need to apply what we learn to our life. Spiritual and Self help information is



relatively **abstract**. Attending workshops, talks, reading books, going to yoga and meditation classes, etc. are good tools. However, tools are of no use if they aren't used. Take **action** by **applying** what you are learning from these modalities consistently. Integrate them into your life daily. If these ideas remain abstract and merely intellectualized, they aren't going to help you to create long lasting and permanent change.

If we are to avoid the trap of bypassing, we need to let go of the idea that something must be terribly, "wrong," or dysfunctional about us if we have problems of negative beliefs or negative feelings or negative thoughts.

Everyone has personal, “struggles,” to work through. I mean EVERYONE. When we judge our problems or feelings or negative-ness as wrong, we suddenly have a motive for spiritual bypassing. We make where we are “not ok”. We want to be good and right but we can only achieve that goodness or rightness by being inauthentic. We put on a false façade because of it.

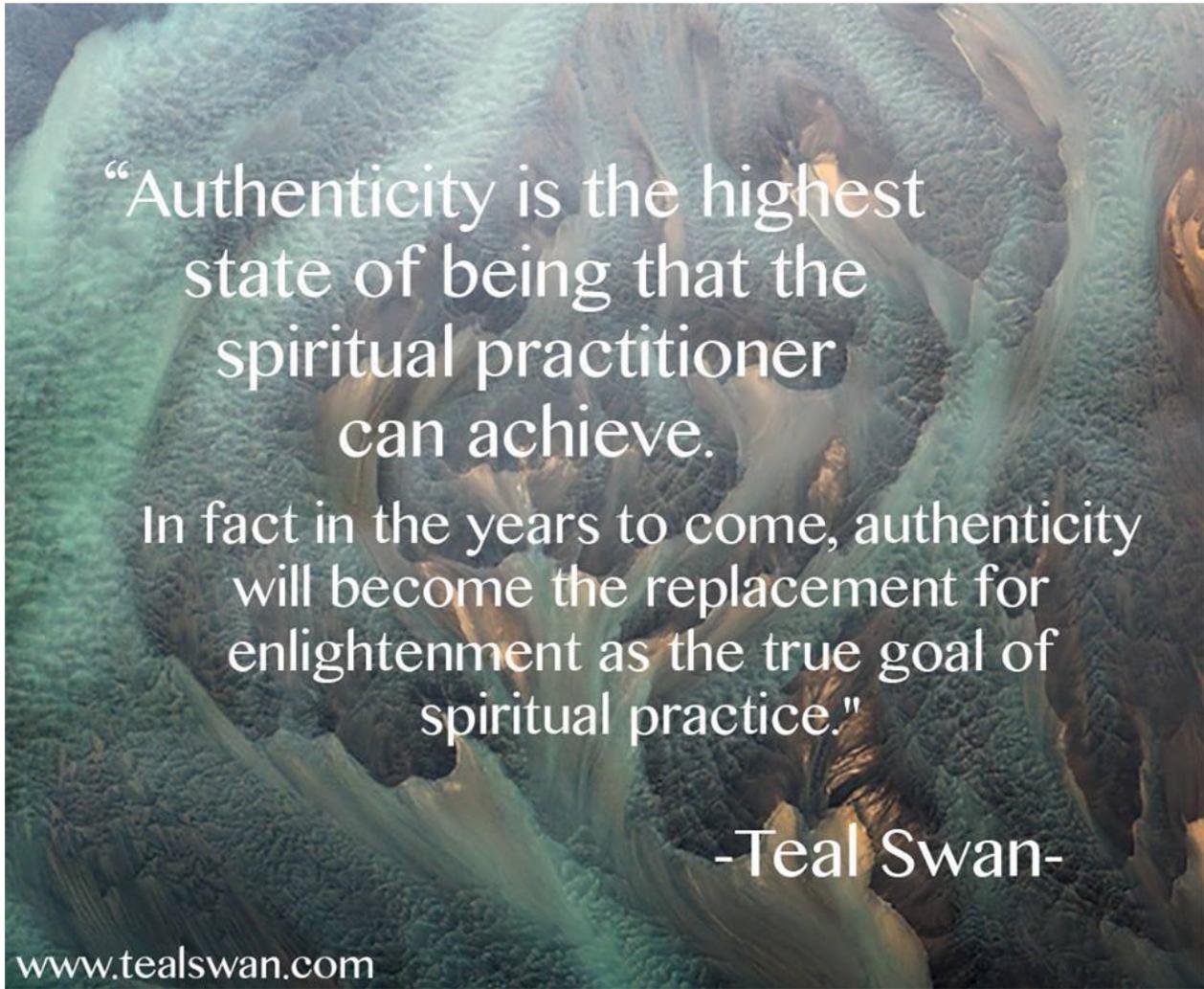


You cannot avoid your pain because you cannot avoid yourself. Anything you try to avoid will haunt you. It will return again and again until it is so large that you cannot avoid it. The thing about spiritual practice, is that we turn to it because we are in pain and we want to feel better. But then all too

often, we wind up using spiritual practice as a substitute for facing our psychological and emotional issues. When we do this, our spiritual progression is halted. We cannot move forward on our path of spirituality by lying to ourselves any more than we can reach our destination on a map, if we are unwilling to admit to where we are first. For this reason, true spirituality must incorporate the practice of shadow work and if we want to progress, we must face our psychological and emotional wounds. If you want to feel better and enjoy your life more, dare to face your pain. Dare to be... Authentic.

What do you expect of me?

What do you expect of yourself?





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Posted May 3, 2017 · [Report](#)

I thank Universe for having you in my life)

I really had expectations of you, and I still have some

I love so much to explore a real human in you, just like me!:(

beautiful human being

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