

Affirm the Reality of Our Own Greatness

[Neville Goddard 1951 lecture series]

In the creation of a new way of life, we must begin at the beginning, with our own individual regeneration. The formation of organizations, political bodies, religious bodies, social bodies is not enough. The trouble we see goes deeper than we perceive. The essential revolution must happen within ourselves. Everything depends on our attitude towards ourselves – that which we will not affirm within ourselves can never develop in our world. This is the religion by which we live, for religion begins in subjective experiences, like charity, it begins at home. "Be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind" is the ancient formula, and there is no other.

Everything depends upon man's attitude toward himself. That which he cannot or will not claim as true of himself can never evolve in his world. Man is constantly looking about his world and asking, "What's to be done? What will happen?" when he should ask himself, "Who am I? What is my concept of myself?" If we wish to see the world as a finer, greater place, we must affirm the reality of a finer, greater being within ourselves. It is the ultimate purpose of my teaching to point the road to this consummation. I am trying to show you how the inner man must readjust himself – what must be the new premise of his life, in order that he may lose his soul on the level he now knows and find it again on the high level he seeks.

It is impossible for man to see other than the contents of his own consciousness, for nothing has existence for us save through the consciousness we have of it. The ideal man is always seeking a new incarnation, but unless we, ourselves, offer him human parentage, he is incapable of birth. We are the means whereby the redemption of nature from the law of cruelty is to be affected. The great purpose of consciousness is to affect this redemption. If we decline the burden and point to natural law as giving us conclusive proof that redemption of the world by imaginative love is something that can never come about, we simply nullify the purpose of our lives through want of faith. We reject the means, the only means whereby this process of redemption must be affected.

The only test of religion worth making is whether it is trueborn – whether it springs from the deepest conviction of the individual, whether it is the fruit of inner experience. No religion is worthy of a man unless it gives him a deep and abiding sense that all is well, quite irrespective of what happens to him personally. The methods of mental and of spiritual knowledge are entirely different, for we know a thing mentally by looking at it from the outside, by comparing it with other things by analyzing and defining it.

Whitehead has defined religion as that which a man does with his solitude. I should like to add; I believe it is what a man is in his solitude. In our solitude we are driven to subjective experience. It is, then, that we should imagine ourselves to be the ideal man we desire to see embodied in the world. If, in our solitude, we experience in our imagination what we would experience in reality had we achieved our goal, we will, in time, become transformed into the image of our ideal. "Be renewed in the spirit of your mind – put on the new man – speak every man truth with his neighbor." The process of making a "Fact of being a fact of consciousness" is by the "renewing of our mind."

We are told to change our thinking, but we can't change our thought unless we change our ideas. Our thoughts are the natural outpouring of our ideas, and our innermost ideas are the man himself. The end of longing is always to be – not to do. Be still and know, "I am that which I desire." Strive always after being. External reforms are useless if your heart is not reformed. Heaven is entered not by curbing our passions; but rather by cultivating our virtues. An old idea is not quickly forgotten. It is crowded out by new ideas. It disappears when a wholly new and absorbing idea occupies our attention. Old habits of thinking and feeling – like dead oak leaves – hang on till they are pushed off by new ones. Creativeness is basically a deeper receptiveness, a keener susceptibility. The future dream must become a present fact in the mind of anyone who would alter his life. Every great out-picturing is preceded by a period of profound absorption. When that absorption is filled with our highest ideal, -- when we become that ideal – then we see it manifest in our world and we realize that the present does not recede into the past, but advances into the future. This is essentially how we change our future. A "now" which is "elsewhere" has for us no absolute meaning. We only recognize "now" when it is at the same time "here." When we feel ourselves into the desired state "here" and "now" we have truly changed our future. It is this "Changing Your Future" which I hope to explain to you fully next Sunday morning when I am speaking for Dr. Bailes at 10:30 at the Fox Wilshire Theater on Wilshire Boulevard near La Cienega. It is my purpose to stir you to a higher concept of yourself and to explain so clearly the method by which you can achieve this concept that each one of you will leave the service on Sunday morning a transformed being.

Discouraged people are sorely in need of the inspiration of great principles. We must get back to first principles if we are to speak with a voice that will kindle the imagination and rouse the spirit. Again, I must repeat, in the creation of a new way of life, we must begin at the very beginning with our own individual regeneration. Man's chief delusion is his conviction that he can do anything. Everyone thinks he can do – everyone wants to do, and all ask, "What to do?" What to do? It is impossible to do anything. One must be. It is hard for us to accept the fact that "We, of ourselves, do nothing." It is especially difficult because it is the truth, and the truth are always difficult for man to accept. But, actually, nobody can do anything. Everything happens – all that befalls man – all that is done by him – all that comes from him – all this happens, and it happens in exactly the same way that rain falls -- as a result of a change in the temperature in the higher regions of the atmosphere. This is a challenge to us all. What concept are we holding of ourselves in the higher regions of our soul?

Everything depends upon man's attitude towards himself. That which he will not affirm as true within himself can never develop in his world. A change of concept of self is the right adjustment – the new relationship between the surface and the depth of man. Deepening is, in principle, always possible, for the ultimate depth lives in everyone, and it is only a question of becoming conscious of it. Life demands of us the willingness to die and to be born again. This is not meant that we die in the flesh. We die in the spirit of the old man to become the new man, then we see the new man in the flesh. "Subjection to the will of God" is an old phrase for it and there is, I believe, no new one that is better. In that self-committal to the ideal we desire to express; all conflict is dispersed, and we are transformed into the image of the ideal in whom we rest. We are told that the man without a wedding garment reaches the Kingdom by cleverly pretending. He does not believe internally what he practices externally. He appears good, kind, charitable. He uses the right words, but inwardly he believes nothing. Coming into the strong light of those far more conscious than himself, he ceases to deceive. A wedding garment signifies a desire for union. He has no desire to unite with what he teaches, even if what he teaches is the truth. Therefore, he has no wedding garment. When we are united with the truth, then we will put off the old nature and be renewed in the spirit of our mind.

Truth will strip the clever pretenders of their false aristocracy. Truth, in its turn, will be conquered and governed by the aristocracy of goodness, the only unconquerable thing in the world.