

The Kwan Yin Journey



Module 3 Summary – The Emotional Plane

Joy is our Natural State

We really sometimes have trouble with that; it's a cultural thing. Look at some “primitive” societies and they're happier. They don't work as hard; they don't face some of the same things problem that we do. It is a natural state.

We're kind of the exception here. We change that natural state. So, before we get into dealing with all these things, that's one key thing to remember, that joy isn't some place difficult for us to get to and maybe one day we can attain it. It's our natural state. It's we ourselves who change it away from joy.

So one of the ways, a very easy way, it theory easy, to deal with this is simply that--that one out of hell is to stop creating it. If you're being dragged, let go of the rope. It's hard to do because our egos get involved. This is a good way to think of the emotional plane, the astral plane--good, bad, or indifferent, it's our drama.

"If you're going through hell, for God's sakes don't slow down," and we tend to do that, we tend to slow down and wallow in it.

The Role of Drama in Initiation

Ancient Greek theater is dedicated to the god Dionysus—half man, half goat, reflecting our nature as half rational and half passionate.

Greek theater is divided into two main types, comedy and tragedy, and these have nothing to do with happy and sad. It's a different way of carrying a message. The word comedy means loosely "home-song," a song about all of us together, the human condition, problems we all share.

In the sense of Initiation, comedy is about the inexhaustible joy of life invincible. They always end happily because someone or something, in the Greek tragedy it's one of the gods, comes in and solves it for us. There's some piece of information that comes up and sets it up. Somebody else opens the door for us. We're not capable of

getting out of that situation by ourselves; we need outside help--but, that outside help always comes...after a while anyway.

Now, tragedy. Tragedy in Greek is literally "goat-song," a song for the satyr Dionysus. In terms of Initiation, tragedy is about shattering forms and attachment. One of the things that happens when we leave the comfort zone and cross the threshold is that those old forms and those attachments are not simply left behind--they're gone. And the reason they're gone is because they never existed in the first place (but we didn't know that).

The tragedy centers around not everybody, but around a tragic hero who is noble and good, but not perfect, with a tragic flaw--something to which the tragic hero is usually blind.

The tragic hero faces a dilemma, no way for the hero to win. But in the process of addressing that dilemma, in making those choices, in going through this tragedy, something is gained. The hero acquires new knowledge that can be shared with humanity generally. And this happens when the hero is humbled.

In particular, in terms of initiation, what happens here is that this hero has to face his or her own demons. Aristotle talked about one of the most important parts of a tragedy as catharsis, this release of emotions, but not a catharsis in the way "I had a good cry and now I feel better," but really losing this attachment, releasing, taking something that was inside and letting it go.

Our Demons and the Hero's Journey

So the big mystery of these demons, the big mystery of Initiation, is that these demons come from ourselves. As soon as we crossed the threshold, we enter what Campbell calls the Road of Trials, a journey of discovery, and as we cross the threshold, the hero goes inside himself or herself, goes inside to be re-made.

Then we meet the goddess--the first thing that happens on the road of trials is that even though demons come from ourselves, we are not alone. We have allies.

One of the purposes of gratitude is to allow us to accept this grace, instead of saying "No, no I've really got my own way," is to say, "Wow, thank you, okay, yes. I'm willing to accept this help. I am grateful." There's a little bit of humility that comes with this. But that's the first thing, is to recognize that we do have help.

This process of fighting these demons then--it's not so much that it should be something that's scary as it is of understanding that we're discovering our opposite, our own unsuspected self and assimilating it, so instead being half-people, we actually are absorbing all of ourselves, a journey of self discovery.

Just the simple things we done so far, we've found that we've learned a lot about ourselves, and we're starting to become whole selves. What sometimes is a scary part is that everything is fluid and ambiguous and moving, but that's what we want, remember, that we can't change things, we can't grow, until we can change and be fluent. And the only thing that's scared, the only thing that has a reason to be scared, is the ego itself.

The next then we run into, the problems we run into next after the first thrills of getting underway, is that yes, as you correctly identified already, the adventure develops into a journey of darkness and fear. But--this again is coming from inside us. Campbell calls this "the woman as temptress" section, meaning that we spurn the flesh that we've come from. So who are the ogres that are attacking the hero? They are "reflections of the unsolved enigmas of his own humanity," as Campbell puts it.

The other thing that we find out is what are the hero's ideals? "Ideals are symptoms of the grasp we have of life" (Campbell). The point is this, that our conscious views of what life should be do not equal reality. We perfume our faults, and we blame the outside, and as long as we do that we're going to be stuck in darkness and fear. As long as we do that, we're going to be fighting battles. And we're going to be doing that in an ongoing way with no solution ever. So this awareness, this understanding of where am I pointing to the outside, and starting to ask ourselves how was this reflecting the inside, how is this reflecting what's going on with me, is absolute crucial. Absolutely crucial.

Atonement with the Father

We think of mercy and grace as being qualities of the Mother, in the traditional sense, while justice is the traditional role of the Father.

When we're growing up, there's Father and Mother, and the child sees the Father as an outsider, that the bond with Mother has to loosen up before we let this outsider in. And then we grow up in a home, and there are things that happen in our home, and things that happen outside the home, these are the Outsiders, the people we have to be careful of, strangers. And then our community, a comfortable place, and people outside the community are the Outsiders. Or a country, and so forth.

So, the Father is at first the Outside, and is also a bit of the Disciplinarian, so to speak, but there are important reasons for this. When we're children, all this is fine, but when we grow up, one of the childish things that we hang on to is an inappropriate balance between justice and wrath and mercy and grace, because we tend to want "justice for you, mercy for me." It's reflective of our own ego. Just as we're hesitant to accept true justice and wrath for ourselves, we're all hesitant to accept the true mercy and grace that is our natural state.

So one of the first things we want to do, with gratitude, is going back to the daily spiritual practice. A large part of this is not just to identify the process, but now, going one step further, to expect it. That it is OK that we are loved, that we have grace, that it is OK that we have allies, that we not only don't have to, but shouldn't, do this alone.

The Father has the role of preparing us for the outside world. Things we can get away with at home aren't going to fly in the outside world. The Father restrains us not as punishment, but a very appropriate lesson. Hence the term "Initiation." The Father is kind of a gatekeeper in this way--not to exclude, but to make sure that we are ready before we move on.

To divest us of this flawed humanity in us so that we can be representative of the better things inside us is not punishment. It's rather an impersonal cosmic force, how we move from that to mastery.

So at first yes, it's scary. The open soul has to go beyond terror to grasp how the tragedy of ruthlessness is validated in the Majesty of Being. We just are not ready for something like that. But like the tragic hero, the ordeal was borne, and as we get to the other side of it, we have the blissful manifestation of the Boon of the Presence of what we've learned. And I think if you think back--I can think certainly of many--if you think back, you can think of things you went through, though you weren't aware of it in these terms, some very difficult trials, but on the other side of it, things were better. When it was over, you were different. You were better. You came out with new knowledge.

This is the purpose of Initiation. And Atonement, which we usually think of as punishment-- is how we become at one with this process, how we understand the true love that's present, that this is the reality. We want new things; this is the process that brings us to new understanding so that we may have them.

There are only two emotions, love and fear. And so there are only two motivations-- we are either acting out of love, or we are acting out of fear. And it's useful to stop and say "Which am I doing now?" And if I'm acting out of fear, what would have me work out of love?

Facing Emotional Challenges -- Desire and Mirrors

Listen to your Heart—but how?

Our emotions are mirrors of what we're thinking and attracting in each moment. As such, these emotions are useful indicators, a feedback loop showing just where we're stuck and why.

Once we get that we are not our thoughts, we can understand our emotions as the feedback mechanism reflecting our thoughts, but even once we wrap our heads around that concept (ironically trying to understand a larger world than our heads with just our heads), we still are likely to have trouble separating ourselves from our emotions. E-motions—emissions that move us to action (or at least responses)—seem to be much more than that.

We can understand our physical pain, as in placing a hand on a hot stove, is not us, but something we experience as important feedback. The same is true of emotional feelings—they are feedback. But it's damn hard to take an objective view of a difficult emotional time while living through it at the time. Still, to the degree we can recognize that challenging emotions are reflections of poorer quality thoughts, we begin to have the tools to address these tough emotions with better thoughts creating better quality emotions.

Try a heart “meditation.” Forget about the mind; sit quietly with your heart energy, and let it grow calm. Don't think about it or “listen” for messages--just let it be still, and just be. It's a powerful refocusing. Your whole body energy will shift noticeably, and you'll find distance from what had seemed sticky emotional trials.

Keep pursuing better feeling thoughts, and gradually you'll find yourself in a better emotional state.

The Rule of Three

No matter how anxious, sad, or upset, I won't feel this way (or at least not this bad) in three hours (usually two, actually). No matter how worked up over it I am today, and want to rush in to do something, anything, I won't be this worked up in three days. The situation will look very different in just three weeks. And in three months, everything can change. Look back three months, three weeks, three days, three hours. What were the things you were upset about? Where are these now? Trouble is a gypsy—it comes to pass, not to stay.

When you came into being, the thought of You, nothing but you, was held in fully attention, love, and awareness. “You are an original work of beauty, light, love, joy and bliss.” And “the truth is that you are here to learn how to handle love, joy, creativity, and success” (Michael Beckwith). Learn to act like the Loved One you are. Let go of fear and excuses—they are not real. Follow your bliss. It's what you came here to do. Bless us with your path and passion.

This is who you really are. Let painful emotions pass through, not camp out and become identity.

Are you the mirror?

“If your reality is other than what you'd choose then you can be sure that you're living a life of reaction.”

—from the Positive Thoughts blog, positive-thoughts.typepad.com/

If you have trouble accepting for now that the world mirrors your state, consider instead now much you mirror the world; that's really what complaining, excuses, negative projections and so forth are, you reflecting what comes your way—and that's why you're stuck. You aren't moving—just stirring things in circles.

E. James Rohn says, “If you really want to do something, you will find a way. If you don't, you will find an excuse.”

Look at what you can do, not what you can't do. Be proactive, not reactive. Don't be the mirror. Let the world mirror your passion.

One important point—you are not alone in this...and you shouldn't be.

The interaction with others gives more energy and better results than working separately. Let people who can help you come into your life and into your day—and let them help you. Get over the loner thing. Management is the art of getting results from other people. To better manage your life, include other people—and be grateful for them.

Good Feelings Become Manifest

The world mirrors our good feelings too—and most of what we see is indeed what we wanted . . . with the blemishes we cling to as well.

We are programmed to notice the negative aspects of our surroundings. By noticing it first, we can better avoid danger. But those survival instincts can become distorted, and some learn to see the world in continual criticism. Ironically, the world then mirrors their critical mindset, seeming affirming their negative mindset in mere reflection.

We can consciously shift perceptual habits, however, to begin to notice what's going well moment to moment. When we do this, the world mirrors that positive mindset, confirming our observation that all is well.

If we look around ourselves, fully and honestly, we will realize that, despite the longing and frustration we might often feel, we actually are largely living our dream. If it doesn't seem so, remember that we live the *entire* dream, including all its fears and hesitations and cautions.

This, then, is reason to celebrate. That positive emotional vibration will help you continue to manifest what you wish. The parts you find less emotionally exciting, now that you recognize how you are attracting them, can now be changed. Your negative emotions are letting you know the pain of those choices, just as a hand in the fire warns you of that painful choice. Appreciate these feelings!

The Role of Desire

Desire gets a bad rap in some interpretations of Buddha's teachings, but the real issue is attachment. The idea is that desire leads to suffering, so the way to freedom from suffering—and the wheel of karma and rebirth—is to free oneself from desire. But the point is not to have no desires, but rather to stop attaching judgments of “good” and “bad” to what happens. Detachment means detachment from outcomes, not desires.

This is living in the Now. We will still have desires, because we are always growing and expanding. But we can be so busy enjoying all we have in the moment that we are unconcerned about future outcomes, while still enjoying the anticipation of seeing those desires come to fruition. Desire is creative, while attachment is not.

Similarly, karma is not justice, neither reward nor punishment, but fulfillment. Every desire comes to fruition—that's the Law of Karma, even if that takes many lives. And—that desire comes as complete packages, all the things that go with it, anticipated and wanted or not. That's why benefits and retribution seem to chase the actions taken to realize those desires. And that's why the Wheel of Karma holds us life after life. As long as we continue to desire, we continue to expand, and our experience incarnate continues. Once we transcend this state of continual desire, we have nothing more to manifest, and nothing more to learn from it.

This is the importance of living in the Now. When we learn to appreciate where we are and to just be, we become fulfilled in the moment.

The Importance of a spiritual path/daily program

To better focus on a purer form of desires, starting and ending each day with spiritual practice will keep the head clear, and the spiritual connection and certainty will grow stronger and build over time.

Start and end your day with it, for two reasons—first, it will renew you day to day, helping you keep your head clear. But second, anything you practice day to day, everyday, will build, no matter how small the start. To let go of fears and complaining and negative projections and excuses and so on, you'll need strength. A firm and strong connection to your spirituality will see you through.

GETTING UNSTUCK: OVERWHELMED

When we feel overwhelmed, we need to understand that overwhelmed is a feeling, and feelings can be changed by changing our paradigms.

I. The first and most important point is that “overwhelmed” is not a situation. It’s a feeling. You are feeling overwhelmed. Perhaps for good reason--but it’s still a feeling, not an objective reality. And feelings can be changed--if you want to change them. Why “if”? Because often people like to feel overwhelmed, giving them a sense of importance, a work ethic, an identify.

II. Next come three areas commonly ignored, three areas to stop and examine.

1) Stop trying to do everything yourself.

Ego, pride, embarrassment, and probably a few other emotions commonly stand in the way of this simple and frankly obvious point. Stop going it alone.

2) Stop trying to control everything.

Let it go. Life will become so much easier, and run so much more smoothly, when you simply allow it to do so.

3) Stop taking on too much.

If you’re feeling overwhelmed because you have too much to do, you’re taking on too many things. It makes no sense to daily plan what can’t possibly happen and then beat yourself up for not accomplishing what had no chance of getting down from the start. If you’re doing too many things, do fewer things.

III. And finally, there’s a difference between time management and getting unstuck from what we’re managing.

First, time management. Probably at the top of the list is Stephen Covey’s book First Things First. Covey suggests turning first not to the clock, but to the compass, that is, not to juggling minutes, but considering principles. Where do you want to go? What are your objectives? What is important to you in this life? Those are your organizing principles. Thus, your “big rocks” get placed first, then medium rocks, then smaller rocks, then pebbles, then sand. But don’t let a sandstorm keep you from getting to the big rocks. The important things--like relationships, or your children, or someone who needs help--take precedence.

Tim Ferriss, in *The Four Hour Work Week*, challenges multiple assumptions about how we construct our work and our time, noting that much of our structured time is wasted. Take the Pareto Principle seriously: 80% of our results come from 20% of our activities. Invest time in isolating that 20%, and cut or minimize the 80%.

Ferriss points out that this need not mean expanding your 20% (though you may well want to do so)--lateral moves can also be satisfying. What if you could make the same income you do now, even doing the same thing, but in half the time? The remainder could be spent doing things you love, rather than reinvesting in work pursuits.

And that's key--live the life you want to live, rather than get caught up in merely managing the details of what life presents. Alex Baisley, of the Big Dream Program (bigdreamprogram.com), is a genius at challenging people to construct their lives around five principles ("Juicy Realizations," he calls them), considering them as an ecosystem, where all five are required:

What if your Big Dreams were essential to what you do, and not some distant possibility?

Who do you want in your life?

What if you enjoy your work, but the people you're serving just aren't the kind of people who jazz you up?

Who are your tribe? Who would you love to have with you?

What fires up your energy, renews you?

Rethink income as a series of projects. It breaks things down into manageable parts/projects, and it moves the typical assumptions about jobs/employment to considering a "living" as a combination of income streams.

IV. A LOT of successful business people run not one, but a few businesses. They get this principle, and the same is true on a smaller scale. Let's say you love to write, but your pieces are only netting you \$1,000 a month. Hmm. Not a living, for sure. But that's one project. What if another project--music, theater, organic apples--nets another \$12,000 a year? Five such small projects could bring in \$60,000 just doing things you love to do anyway. Or even one such project, on top of your current work, once you rethink your current work to reduce your time commitment there.

Go project by project, and don't get overwhelmed about getting unstuck from being overwhelmed. The point is simply that you have a wealth of options. Do the ones you want, pass on the ones you don't want, and come up with a wealth of your own.

Learn to say no, and learn to say yes.

Saying no to things and people as you choose need not be a conflict. As a first step, simply stop saying yes to these things.

Say YES to the things you want to do, the person you want to be, the life you want to live, the people you want with you, the time to pursue and enjoy all these things, and the time to allow yourself to grow into the person you have always been meant to be.

LETTING GO OF RESENTMENTS

Resentments are about ego. A resentment does nothing to the other person. The person you resent doesn't even know what you're thinking right now. Stop.

Remember--the cost of resentments is high, and with no benefit beyond the delusion of the ego. You'll feel so much lighter when you're not carrying those around.

Anger

Anger is useless except as a red flag—when we're angry, we're wrong.

The first 30 seconds of anger can be an important emergency response, to alert us to a serious problem. Anything after that is what anger is really about—fear and ego.

Anger does not show that we are in control—it demonstrates that we have lost control, of ourselves and of the situation.

Nor does righteous anger work. If you've got an excellent, important point, you should be able to make it calmly and rationally. To the degree you can't is the degree to which it's not as good a point as you imagine.

In the absence of a true and immediate danger, then, take anger for the sign it is—a sign we are covering another emotion. As it's not love...that leaves fear.

Don't neglect obvious things—if you're tired or hungry, for example. If you're feeling alone, call somebody and chat. Don't tell yourself you're above these things—these are basics we all need.

Learn to let go. It's the only true control—control of one's self.

Honesty, Forgiveness, Ego, Teams, and Healing

"In every person who comes near you look for what is good and strong; honor that; try to imitate it, and your faults will drop off like dead leaves when their time comes." – John Rushkin (1819-1900)

To feel better takes one more paradigm shift: forgiveness and self-honesty are the keys to relieving the pain.

First, let's be real—when negative things happen, we need time to work through them. Take time to heal. At the same time, though, as long as we hold on to our anger and withhold forgiveness, we are clinging to the pain.

Forgiveness of others is also a prerequisite for something crucial for healing—

forgiving ourselves. Whenever we cling to pain, it's always for reasons of ego.

Here's where honesty enters the picture in a major way. To heal, we really have to take the focus off others and put it on ourselves. That's the only way to watch what is truly happening, and then we can start to heal the things in ourselves that need it—not cure other people from their transgressions.

This acceptance of imperfect people, including oneself, is the key to being “right-sized.” We are each not the center of the universe, but one person among many, part of a group. When we can see our part in interactions, we can start to see our role in daily life. All are part of this team—none better than the others. Forgive others. Love them. And forgive and love yourself. They, and you, are just that special.

Love, let go, and at the end of the day, say thank you.

Let go and heal.

Release Emotional Pain

We are vibration; to let go of any emotional pain or difficulty, simply release it.

Our experience of a material world is simply the interaction of these vibrations.

Somehow, though, that understanding gets immediately clouded when applied to emotion. We see emotions as inevitable storms, not as conscious choices. But just as we tune into the desired frequencies on the radio dial, we tune into the frequencies and vibration emotionally that we choose.

When we don't see that we're choosing, we mistakenly identify with passing storms, thereby hanging on to them, preventing them from simply passing through quickly. If someone throws us a ball, we don't cling to the ball and start to identify with it. We toss it back, or even just let it whiz right by. The same is true of emotions.

This is even worse when the emotions arise from within. Trying to battle emotions is as ridiculous and as pointless as trying to battle that ball. But we do—or try to do it. And it never works.

Instead of being dragged – let go of the rope.

Release Attachment to Ego:

What if life was happening not “to” us, but for us? What if we never took anything personally, no matter what? What if we were so busy noticing and appreciating life

that we had no need to bring anything extra created from our reactions and projections? What if we just saw things for what they are, without interpretation?

We wonder why we aren't creating the lives we truly desire, but we're so busy creating the lives our egos insist on seeing that it takes all our time and energy and manifestation. *We are* getting what we're sending out. We just are so wrapped up in our egos that we live in the vibration of stuck ego.

Our emotions are the early warning system. Learn to watch them as giveaways for the quality of our thoughts. If you aren't having good emotions, you aren't having good thoughts. If you're loving your emotions, you're having perfect thoughts.

Release attachment to ego, and life automatically flows better—and our emotions reflect this happiness.

So this brings us to this week's homework.

Here's what I'd like you to do. Take a look at last week's assignment, when we wrote down the things that were bugging us and so forth, and, just as I described earlier, consider: Do you notice any patterns (as far as your involvement)? Where do the same kind of things come up repeatedly? And then, after you find your patterns, ask yourself: In your tragedy, what are your tragic flaws? These are things to which you're otherwise blind, but if we really look at the reality, we can say, "Wait...I'm seeing some things I'm not usually aware of that's getting in my way." So that's the first part. Notice your patterns, and ask yourself, what are your tragic flaws. Now if you can't see them--this is why last week I suggested you share this with somebody you feel comfortable with. Once you share this and explain it to somebody else, you will notice more, and if you don't, they will. So other people can really help with this.

And that's the next part of the homework--don't fight your demons alone.

Who are your allies? Really give this some careful thought. Not just your inner qualities-- you know, "I have these strengths." Strengths are good, but that's not what I'm talking about here. Go ahead and put those down, but those inner qualities, those strengths we have, just help us to deal with things. They don't change anything. We need somebody outside of us, outer allies, to help us change. This is one of the key benefits of a relationship, any kind of relationship, with anyone, is that we have an extra set of eyes. That other person will see things that you cannot see, or don't want to see, or both. So--where do you have patterns, what are your tragic flaws, who your allies? If we fight these demons alone, were going to get the same results. We've been fighting them alone a long time. So who are your allies. We don't understand if we just look from the inside; we need outer things.

If you don't have allies, recruit them--from bringing in your friends with what you're

trying to do, to talking it out with friends, the Facebook group. In the case of in a severe problem sometimes people have, calling in appropriate professionals, bringing in appropriate coaches. I've recently hired and I talk to regularly some business coaches because they can see things that I can't see and have ideas that I just don't think of. I need help with these things. So these are things you can recruit. You could refute fellow travelers right in the Facebook group (that's largely what it is) as allies on this journey. But ideally, fellow travelers should be people who would be there before, been where you are going. In the case of The Kwan Yin Journey, that would be me. But it's kind of the difference between, for example--if a college student has a problem, nine times out of ten the college student will ask another college student who doesn't know any better the answer to the question, versus something like, from my personal experience, why does AA work so well? It's because you go talk to other people who understand what it's like to be an alcoholic, and who have the experience of getting sober. So instead of saying "You guys does don't understand," there's a bunch of people who will say that we've heard enough of your bullshit--we understand just fine. Those are real allies saying things that nobody else in our lives can get away with. So fellow travelers, as they are indeed--travelers who've been someplace.

Ask for help includes spiritual help, okay? Literal spiritual help if you're comfortable with that at this point, but if you're not, the daily spiritual practice, what is the truth, that part from you. Coming back to that truth is a part of getting help. That's part of your resources, that's part of having allies, even if it's not in any way a traditional spiritual path, because that focusing on the part of truth as you yourself have defined it keeps you from being delusional. It keeps us from believing our own stories, which we tend to do. So look for patterns, find the tragic flaws, who your allies, inner but especially outer allies, and recruit them if you don't have them. Really give some thought to this. Include your daily spiritual practice as part of your help. Then when you do look at all this, you know, atonement does have its original meaning, as well as at-one-ment. If you want to be at one, you do have to atone. The odds are, once you really start looking at this carefully, you'll realize where there are places where you messed up, and you wronged somebody, and you really in a sense owe them some amends.

Here's where we want to get our ego out of the way and accept the humility to go and make that right to the extent that we need to do that. It's not a question of whether the other person deserves it--this is for you. To the extent that we hang onto that is the extent that we will be held away from ever resolving that. Now, this isn't something to do this week--this is something to put on the agenda. Go slow. Don't run off and do that by yourself. Do it with help. Do it during its own spiritual time. And that spiritual time will come by itself. I'm not going to go find some college girlfriend that I inadvertently wronged at this point in life; however, I run into her in Dunkin' Donuts, OK, maybe it's time for a conversation. Those sorts of the things. So just really be open to that. Find those patterns, what are your tragic flaws, who

your allies, include your daily spiritual practice. Bring gratitude and the goddess with you, accept mercy and grace. You are deserving of that--well, none of us are, but you are as deserving as anyone. And moving from that arrogance to a practice of humility. Making amends where we owe the, not expecting anything back, just simply for our own good, moving past those inner demons in to at-one-ment.