

Buddhism, the Tao Te Ching, Hinduism, The Bible, The Quran, Alfred Korzybski, John Grinder, Carmen Bostic-St. Clair, Power Over, Power Against, Power With, Power Greater than Myself

Today, we will *really* dance with words and dance with wisdom. Today, I'm not having a conversation with a guest. Today, I'm going to do something that's called "didactic teaching."

Generally speaking, I don't like didactic teaching, because it's a top-down way of instructing. The downside is that it tends to set itself up as "Truth," but the advantages of it are that it *does* simplify, and it *does* give very specific instructions or directions. That is the reason I am using this today. I don't normally touch it, because I like other forms of education better, such as telling stories, writing poetry, asking questions.

To begin with, let me state a number of caveats about this form of teaching and request that you listen to my words, not as "Truth," but simply as pearls I have experienced, played with, shaped, and reshaped, over and over again out of my 82 ½ years of lived experience. If you find them interesting, would like to try them on, play with them, or explore them, please do. If you are repulsed by them, please throw them away. Today is simply not the right time or place for you to be listening to them; so, move on with your other priorities.

Buddhists says, "Words are fingers pointing at the moon. They are not the moon."

I cannot give you the moon. That is something *you* must discover for yourself, through your own unique efforts and your own unique spiritual path. What I can offer, however, are some guidelines, and point in some directions you may want to explore.

The Tao Te Ching states:

The Tao that can be spoken is not the eternal Tao
The name that can be named is not the eternal name
The nameless is the origin of Heaven and Earth
The named is the mother of myriad things
Thus, constantly without desire, one observes its Essence
Constantly with desire, one observes its manifestations
These two emerge together, but differ in name
The unity is said to be the mystery
Mystery of mysteries, the door to all wonders.

And I may add "the door to all wisdom."

Hinduism speaks of "piercing the veil of illusion." I like to add "Words are illusions, dancing at a masked ball."

Look, not at the words, but at the underlying energy and meaning.

Sri Maharshi taught through presence and silence.

The Bible tells the story of Adam and Eve disobeying God's orders and eating of the Tree of Knowledge. When they did that, they suddenly became aware of their shame, and they were expelled from the Garden of Eden.

Later on, the Bible tells the story of the Tower of Babel. According to Genesis, the Babylonians wanted to make a name for themselves by building a mighty tower with its top in the heavens. God disrupted their work by so confusing the language of the workers that they could no longer understand one another.

We still don't understand one another. Intentional, conscious communication requires a great deal of listening and a great deal of awareness before one speaks.

To complete the story of the Tower of Babel, the people were dispersed over the face of the Earth.

The Quran states, "Evil words are for evil men, and evil men are subjected to evil words. Good words are for good men, and good men are an object of good words. Those good people are declared innocent of what the slanderers say, for them is forgiveness and noble provision."

The bottom line here is that as you listen to the words I speak, keep an open mind, but stay skeptical. Ask questions. Go deeper. While my intentions in speaking are always pure, my words may not have that effect on you, simply because of your own unique conditioning.

Let's take words down a different path. The *first* path was the way a number of major religious traditions have brought a focus on words or concepts or knowledge into our field of awareness. This is a more scientific perspective, this different path.

Alfred Korzybski was a Polish-American independent scholar who developed a field called General Semantics, which he viewed as both distinct from and more encompassing than the field of semantics.

He suggested that human knowledge of the world is limited both by the human nervous system and the languages humans have developed. We're not here talking about Spanish and English and German and Russian. We're talking even within one language about the languages (or worldviews) humans have developed.

Korzybski says that no one can have direct access to what we call reality. The most that we can “know” is that which is filtered through the brain's responses to this flow of sensory data in which we are all immersed and of which we are part. You can even think of it as an “energy” if you want.

Korzybski's best-known dictum is "The map is not the territory." I like to elaborate and perhaps make that a little more specific — take it out of the realm of abstractions and into the realm of very personal direct experience.

The words are not the experience. The menu is not the food you eat. Looking at a map of Florida is not the same as driving up Interstate 75.

Then there are John Grinder and Carmen Bostic St. Clair, who wrote *Whispering in the Wind*, where they developed a concept, very similar to Korzybski's, called "First Access." (John Grinder, by the way, is a co-founder of neuro-linguistic programming.)

This is what they say about “First Access.” As humans, we are limited by what our neurology is able to receive. There are light waves our eyes cannot see, and sound waves our ears cannot hear. What we can "know" develops only within this "First Access," which is that limited flow of sensory data that our neurology can experience and of which we are a part. Then, on top of that flow, we have superimposed our analytic, divisive, categorizing, linguistic structures that help us understand how "things fit together" and can help us enhance our personal worldly power.

What do words do? They're very useful. They certainly allow us to communicate — sort of. They allow us to analyze. They allow us to categorize.

But words almost always separate, divide and categorize. High/low, light/dark, good/evil, right/wrong. There's an occasional exception, like the word "whoosh," which emulates the sound of water rushing. But for the most part, that's what words do. They separate, divide and categorize.

All of us are conditioned into this human-created language. It's a human-created world of words and concepts drawn from experience of this “energetic field” — what our neurology can access.

We're conditioned into this human-created world of words and concepts almost from the moment we were born. This is mommy, that is daddy, that is the dog, that is the cat. Those words are simple to understand, and most of us would agree on what each word means.

Although my mommy is different from your mommy; my daddy is different from your daddy. Whoops! Now we have the same word pointing to a different person. We need to notice that, and we need to clarify that.

All of this is very useful when both speaker and listener understand the same word to point to the same underlying experience. It gets trickier and trickier as we shift into abstract concepts such as truth, love, joy, hope, good, evil, right, and wrong.

What do humans do with words anyway? Here we've got this immense vocabulary, and we all use it all the time without thinking. Sometimes we use words to gain worldly power over others. "Billy, if you don't pick up your toys right now, I'm going to spank you." "If you want to eat and have a bed to sleep in and a roof over your head, you *will do* whatever I demand." This is something I call "power over." It subjugates one person to the control of another.

Sometimes, the person who is on the underside, who is in a "power under" position in this "power over" dynamic rebels and becomes full of rage. They are going to fight back. They use their words in a fight against others. "You are so stupid! How can you possibly believe that?" I call this "power against."

What is wisdom? This is my perspective. Wisdom is being able to stand firmly in your own principles, morals, integrity, authenticity, transparency, and spiritual power, and allow others to walk their own spiritual path and do the same. Your job, to the best of your ability, is to *live* wisdom, *be* wisdom, and *model* wisdom for others to watch and emulate, if they so choose.

When we are in a community with other wise people, together, we can shift into something I call "Power with." Ultimately, this is where our entire planet needs to go.

If you visualize two hands, palms together, fingers pointing upward, that is a wonderful symbol for "Power with." It is also the symbol of prayer in Christianity and Namaste in Hinduism.

How does one shift out of the "power over" and "power against" dynamics into a "Power with" dynamic? Not easily. Most of us don't even know we've been conditioned into these rigid conceptual worldviews. Some of us really like our worldview because we've been born into a comfortable worldly lifestyle, with plenty of money, good education, and worldly honors. We consider ourselves superior to those who have not been so fortunate and perhaps look down on them.

For example, we believe white men are superior to black or indigenous women. A woman's job is to serve her husband, *not* to step into her own potential, purpose and power. That can take the form of becoming a sexual slave, a housekeeper, a cook, and a keeper of the home and hearth in ways that the husband desires.

This is the change that each and every one of us *must* step into and *be* to the best of our ability. We nurture the planet that supports us, and we nurture one another. We strive for excellence in everything we do. We stop reaching for perfection. It is nothing but a figment of the mind to keep you in line and control your conduct.

Be prepared to be attacked, verbally abused, and slandered by the ignorant money interests. Come to terms with your own physical death so you can live whatever time you have been given full out.

This is the spiritual path — the hero's and heroine's journey. It is not easy. In fact, it's darned hard to stand alone in your own unique voice and truth. You *will* go through many Dark Nights of the Soul as you make choice after choice about whether to cave in to the demands of others or whether to stand firm in your own integrity and truth.

You may struggle with your own demons of guilt, terror, and rage, as you slowly release all your human conditioning, face, and learn to trust the mystery of the unknown, and discover, in ways that your mind will never understand, that you are connected to some “Power Greater than Yourself” that will guide and support you each step of the way. This is something you *experience* at a deep and profound level. It is not something you can conceptualize or set as a goal. When the time is right, it will be given to you.

I promised you we'd talk about a semantic solution to what seem like extremely difficult and complex problems. That solution is conscious, intentional conversation, both with self and with others.

Beware of falling into the ignorant, unconscious, human-created traps of "power over" and "power against." You are not fighting *against*. You are standing *for*.

Getting back to words and the dance of words, it's vital to understand what words do and what we humans do with words when we use them unconsciously, and then, learn to use our words consciously and intentionally to co-create the world in which we all, I believe, want to live. Maybe I shouldn't speak for you, but this is the kind of world I want to live in.

By using words, we actually shift into deeper levels of understanding, and then we start playing with words in our own lives using some of the ideas offered or maybe some ideas you have heard elsewhere. Words are a human construct.

What do words do? They separate, divide and categorize, and they tend to prevent us from connecting with one another.

What do we humans unconsciously do with words? We use our words to separate ourselves from others. We are “right” and “good.” The other is “wrong” and “evil.”

We desperately try to enhance our own sense of worldly importance and power by using words to castigate others and make them question their own worth; and then control them and manipulate them into turning over to us their time, energy and money.

One of the paths in the Buddhist eightfold path is right speech. This is an aspect of wisdom.

What is right speech? From my perspective, right speech emerges from present moment awareness of the contexts and content of a worldly dynamic. If the conscious intention of the speaker is to manifest a dynamic harmony, right speech flows effortlessly from both passion and compassion for both self and others.

It *will be different* in each and every context, which is one of the things that makes it so hard to talk about. Each and every context is unique. It must be free, but it must also be very conscious and intentional. Another path in the Buddhist eightfold path is right intention.

Conscious conversations with self are very different from conscious conversations with another. Journaling is a wonderful method or practice for allowing and documenting a conscious conversation with self. It is vital that it be done *without* censorship.

No one else ever has to read what you write unless you choose to share your words. You can stop anytime if it gets too scary. You can burn it when you are done if you desire. Although, if you have a safe place to keep it, I would suggest that you do that, because years later you may want to go back to that "original consciousness time or space place" and look at it from your new perspective of enhanced expanded consciousness.

In journaling, you simply notice the thoughts flying through your mind, and document them by writing them down.

This is Ken Wilber's upper left quadrant work, which is very personal and individual and subjective. If you don't know anything about Ken Wilber, go look up his AQAL diagram. It's very useful.

If you journal, without censorship, I can almost guarantee you will end up with deeper understanding and greater clarity.

A conscious conversation with another must also be undertaken in present moment awareness. What is the need of the other person? What are your own needs and resources at that moment? What is your intention for speaking? For remaining silent and simply listening deeply? Again, the words simply emerge or not.

Be aware of the effect that your own words may have on another person. It may be different from the very pure intention *you* have when you begin to speak.

This is always a shock, because you're putting your own words out there in a way that seems to make sense to you, and the other person recoils. If that happens, you step back and reevaluate. What is your next step? How can you facilitate alignment? Or is the timing simply wrong?

If we want to *choose* to use words to facilitate the co-creation of a peaceful, powerful, prosperous planet, what words generally work best? Here's my own experience:

Personal stories. (Why? Because each of us is owning his or her own experiences and the words we have chosen to manifest them. Stories keep us out of self-righteousness.) Jesus taught using stories or parables.

Another set of words that generally work is **questions**. (Why? They open up our own minds and the minds of others. They offer us a deeper understanding of another person and more clarity around the dynamic going on. They put us in deep listening mode, and again this “beginner’s mind,” which is a mind of inquiry. They keep us out of self-righteousness.) Socrates used questions.

First person singular language. (Why? It keeps us out of generalizations. There are always exceptions to every generalization. It supports us in owning our own experiences and the words we have chosen with which to manifest them. It keeps us out of self-righteousness.)

There are so many other practices — koans, rituals, ceremonies, circle work, ropes courses, mediation, martial arts, and others — all of which must be used with great care and precision to strengthen the spiritual power and skill of each and every one of us, so that together we can emerge as a single unified "Power With" force in this world.

Let's talk a bit about **different ways of structuring all this sensory data**. One way would be **theory**. It's kind of an abstract overview of an entire situation, and it evolves from a study of specific instances of the subject under consideration. It's like looking at a map of the entire planet rather than focusing on one particular home.

It may not be true in every single instance, but it gives us guidelines and structures for understanding the specifics and making decisions that will benefit us all. It is so important that we be benefitting not only ourselves but everyone else, as well as the planet — the Earth that supports us.

I can't overemphasize that. We are all connected and we need to learn from one another, support one another, and support our Earth.

Theory. It may not be true in every instance, but it does give us guidelines and structures for understanding the specifics, and making decisions that will benefit us all. Again — a generalization. There are exceptions, but do no harm. Do whatever you want as long as you are not harming either yourself or other life on the planet. Theory is perhaps true most of the time, but not always.

It's useful to move back and forth from theory to stories, to quotations, to examples, to practices. Each gives a different perspective on the same topic.

Stories are a wonderful way to communicate a deeper meaning without sounding authoritarian. I'm talking about stories with meaning.

Through story — and lots of times it's stories with a real twist at the end that opens up your mind — through story, the reader is invariably drawn into an archetypal pattern that humans have experienced over and over throughout history. The story may culminate in comedy or tragedy, but in either case, it contains a deep life lesson. The reader comes to identify with one role or another and frequently discovers new ways to solve old problems.

Here's another tool. **Learn to ask the right questions.** Sometimes we can solve our challenges by changing the questions we are asking. Asking the wrong questions just sends our minds around in circles. Asking the right questions can refocus our minds and helps us find answers.

I've got to tell a story here about my own personal experience with asking the right questions.

When I had my first amazing consciousness-shifting experience about 50 years ago, I had to get this information out into the world. It was just so amazing! I began talking, but I wasn't *communicating* at all.

The question that arose in my mind and challenged me for about 15 years was, “How can I use analytic, divisive words to communicate a unifying, holistic experience?” I struggled with that question, and it didn't work. It was like a Zen koan. It was like using a screwdriver to hammer a nail. The vehicle simply didn't work for the purpose for which I wanted to use it.

After about 15 years, suddenly, a thought popped into my mind. I don't know where it came from, but I changed one word in that question. I changed the word “communicate” to “facilitate.” So, the question then became, “How can I use analytic, divisive words to *facilitate* a unifying, holistic experience?” Now that was do-able. It put me back in my own power.

But with power comes a lot of responsibility. So, I had to learn to use my words with a great deal of present moment awareness of context and the worldviews and needs of the people involved.

Here are some other really good questions to ask yourself. What do I think? What do I feel? What do I need? What are my choices? What do I need to know? Whom can I trust?

Just a couple of **useful quotations**. This is from the Bhagavad Gita. “O Arjuna, behold in one place the entire universe, both dynamic and static, and also, whatever you wish to see further.”

I don't know who wrote this, but it's very pertinent to the discussion here. “For words divide and rend, but silence is most noble till the end.”