

THE CRUCIBLE OF AWAKENING

Issue 50 June 2009

SURRENDER (Summer 2008)

*Can't fight this perpetual perishing any more
Don't need things to be like they were before
My face has enough lines to be a roadmap
And my body is clearly more than just a soul-trap*

*Can't right this sinking ship
Don't need a longer-floating trip
My hands no longer obediently bail
Avoiding death is the surest way to fail*

*Can't relight these worn-out candles
Don't even want to retread my sandals
My heart keeps seeing endless emptiness
Once again breaking open to hold just this*

*Can't ignite what's gone to ashes
Don't even want to redo my crashes
My dying flesh brightens as it ages
Freedom keeps on singing in its cages*

*Can't fight this endless dying any more
Don't feel so hungry for what I wanted before
My hands reach out then return
The circle at last able to freely burn*

*It is by this that we've been haunted
This is what we've secretly wanted
And it is to this that we must bow
Deeply fully and exactly now*

WHAT AM I TAKING FROM YOU?

A while ago I watched a film called “Instinct,” in which Anthony Hopkins plays Ethan Powell, an apparently insane anthropologist guilty of murder. Cuba Gooding, Jr. plays Theo Calder, a psychiatrist ambitiously trying to “get through” to Powell. At one point, as Calder sticks to his rational guns, continuing to keep himself tidily removed from Powell’s world, Powell seizes him (they’re in a windowless room without any guards), puts duct tape over his mouth, and holds him in a position where he could easily kill him. Calder is obviously very frightened, and clearly in great danger.

Powell puts a pencil and piece of paper on the table before Calder, saying, “Now, this will be a very simple test. Pass or fail, life or death... Now, you write on this paper what I have taken from you — *what you are losing.*”

Calder quickly writes: “My control.”

Says Powell: “Wrong. You never had control. You only thought you had it.”

Powell gives Calder another chance. He writes: “My freedom.”

Wrong answer again.

Calder is right at the edge, starting to really get that he’s in a life-and-death situation. ”In the middle of the night,” says Powell, “when you wake up sweating, with your heart pounding, what is it that has you all tied up, tied up in little knots ?”

“I used to be you,” adds Powell. “Okay, one last chance.” And it’s clear that he really means it. “Last try,” he says. “Get it right.”

Calder writes: “My illusions.”

Right answer.

He didn't really have control or freedom in his everyday life (but thought that he did). So how could he actually lose them? But while just a moment away from being killed — so existentially vivid a moment — he realized that he was, to whatever degree, starting to lose his illusions. About what? All kinds of things, especially those that he'd taken as givens — like him being the sane one, and Powell the less-than-sane one.

For our illusions to give up the ghost, we have to be in a position where we can actually see them for what they are, and this is ordinarily a far from easy undertaking. Most of the time, our eyes only really open when we are right at the edge of...

Big moments. Extraordinarily alive moments, simultaneously dreamlike and hyperreal, moments when we are profoundly present.

But what's just as amazing as the appearance of such moments is our not letting our seemingly less spectacular moments be equally alive or significant. When we deny our moments their true size, we only shrink ourselves, withdrawing from authentic contact with the edge they present and illuminate.

Too much of the time, we pretend that we're not at the edge, and then pretend we're not pretending. But the edge is nonetheless still very much here, precisely and unavoidably here, ever inviting us to wake up to its presence and invitation, so that we might truly live.

Like Theo Calder, we are not inclined to drop our illusions very easily, especially when our entire life is built upon them. We may have the illusion that we are free just because we are comfortably established in our our nicely furnished, pleasingly populated cell; we may have the illusion that we are in control just because we are able to sit above others or padlock the closet that contains our more undesirable elements; we may have the illusion that we are who we think we are, just because so many others think the same way; we may even have the illusion that it's all an illusion, just because we're attached to a spiritual path that says this is so (except, of course, about itself!); and so on.

The Crucible of Awakening

Having the illusion that we are free does not mean that freedom itself is an illusion. It's just that we have an astonishing ability to fool ourselves, and an equally astonishing ability to cut through whatever's in the way. The first ability (which appears at every level of development) generates the very conditions that catalyze the second. However unwittingly, we invite in circumstances that bring our dissatisfaction to such a peak (or trough) that something has to give — and that something is mostly just our clinging to whatever it is that we've convinced ourselves we just have to have, no matter what.

To cut through illusion, we have to get disillusioned, and the more thoroughly the better. There's the pill of sedation, and there's the pill of thrill, and then there's the pill that wakes us up in the midst of our dreaming and scheming. We don't need a prescription for these, since Life itself does such a great job of providing them.

We can play the sick one; we can play the fixer of the sick one; and we can play the one that includes both. But what really matters is our degree of intimacy with each.

We are all Ethan Powell, studying the habits and lifestyle of other primates, hairless and otherwise, sharpening our anthropological lenses, with our life being but a field study that pulls us so far in that we forget there's an out; and we are all also Theo Calder, stuck in trying to get an inside look at what makes others tick, trying to do for others' interiors what Powell is doing for others' exteriors (behavior, life style, etc.).

We can identify with either, or we can identify with neither while at the same time compassionately holding both, along with everything else that constitutes us, in an embrace that is not so much ours to have, but ours to be, until the edge is recognized to be everywhere, even in the homeliest or most mundane of moments.

BREAKTHROUGH

JUNE 20th-21st in WHITE ROCK, BC

A weekend of deep healing and awakening.

THIS GROUP IS LIMITED TO 12 PARTICIPANTS ONLY, so that everyone will have time to do in-depth work.

LOCATION & TIME: 16133 9th Ave., White Rock. 10am to 6pm both days.

TUITION: US\$550. Nonrefundable deposit of US\$200 is required.

INTO THE DRAGON'S CAVE

Working Through Personal & Collective Fear

JULY 11th in ASHLAND, OREGON

Since our economic downspiralling, there has been an increase in fear, both personally and collectively. So what are we do to with this fear? Giving in to it only further entraps us in it, and avoiding it simply keeps us in the shallows, overly absorbed in distraction.

In this experiential group, we will learn to face and make wise use of our fear, so that it becomes an ally rather than an adversary.

Limited to 30 participants.

LOCATION & TIME: Hidden Springs Wellness Center, 1651 Siskiyou Blvd., 10am to 6pm.

TUITION: By donation (no one turned away for financial reasons).

TO REGISTER: Contact info@robertmasters.com

OPENING TO THE MYSTERY

An Evening of Original Healing Chants with Diane Bardwell Masters

JULY 19th in ASHLAND, OREGON

An evening of chants, all original and in English, led by Diane, who has sung professionally for over 30 years.

Diane's mission is to provide healing music that helps to counteract the despair, disconnection, and apathy that is so prevalent today. Her heartfelt, deeply spiritual chants affirm and strengthen our connection to What-Really-Matters, set to music composed to help the words (all in English) sink into ever deeper levels of consciousness.

For more about Diane, visit www.DianeBardwell.net.

LOCATION & TIME: Hidden Springs Wellness Center, 1651 Siskiyou Blvd.,
7:30 to 9:30pm.

FEE: By donation.

Masters Integral Psychotherapy Practicum

An opportunity to directly learn from a master integral psychotherapist and groupleader (1) unique, exceptionally effective psychotherapeutic, spiritual, and bodywork/energywork skills; and (2) how to creatively and effectively integrate these in counseling work.

2009/2010 APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM

The purpose of this training is to deepen the capacity of participants to effectively counsel others through a dynamic, intuitively structured approach that integrates body, mind, emotion, and spirit.

To this end, the training will blend deep work on oneself and equally deep work with others, in personal, social, and spiritual contexts. Healing will be the primary intention and activity. Approaches that are taught and practised will be held, as much as possible, in a perspective that transcends them.

WE WILL ONLY BE TAKING TWELVE PARTICIPANTS.

THERE ARE ONLY FOUR SPACES LEFT, SO IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN ATTENDING, PLEASE CONTACT ROBERT AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

NOTE: The Practicum is intended for those who want to learn and practice a deeply intuitive, integral, and bodywork-including approach to psychotherapy, and who at the same time also want to participate with kindred spirits in a year of exceptionally deep personal (and interpersonal and transpersonal) work, during which they will learn skills that will serve them in every area of their life.

Graduates of previous practicums have not only found themselves at home with new skills (sufficient enough to begin working as an integral counsellor), but have also done work of such depth — and not just a few times, but *many* times — during the practicum that they invariably emerge more grounded, open, intuitive, and confident about both themselves and their ability to effectively guide others.

Much of the depth and quality of the work done has to do with being with a group of individuals who are all deeply committed to their own healing and awakening. In such a setting, there's not only more than enough safety and trust, but also a rare intimacy, generated by sharing such deep work both as a participant and as a counselor-to-be.

LOCATION & STRUCTURE:

The Practicum will take place over 5 four-day modules in Ashland, Oregon.

Each module will include individual and group work, plus facilitation by participants of each other's work (with fitting feedback and guidance from Robert).

After the training concludes, participants who have attended it in its entirety will receive a diploma indicating that they have completed a one-year training in Masters Integral Psychotherapy with Robert Augustus Masters.

PREREQUISITE: Previous work with Robert.

TUITION: \$7000. A nonrefundable deposit of \$1000 is required. Lodging and meals will be extra. Contact info@robertmasters.com to arrange payment.

SCHEDULE (Please note new dates):

June 25-29, August 20-23, October 8-11, December 3-6, Feb. 4-7.

ONLINE COMMUNITY

GAIA, a social networking site (free to join), has a group for people who have worked with me and/or who are interested in my work/writings to connect and discuss my work/writing or anything related to it.

The online culture of my Gaia group is vital and inviting, and its powerful forum software is perfectly suited for meeting, discussing, and sharing with others who are interested in authenticity, healing, transformation, and Awakening.

You don't need to be a member of Gaia to see the posts there — just go to **http://pods.gaia.com/robert_augustus_masters**.

But if you'd like to participate in the discussions, you can join Gaia by going to **<http://www.gaia.com/apply>**, or by emailing Arthur Gillard

(thinkintuit@gmail.com), the cultivator of the site, who will then send you an invitation.

The format of my Gaia group makes it very easy to navigate through, with everything organized into eight main categories: *Introduce Yourself; Announcements & Feedback; Doing the Work; Dreams & Dreamworking; Robert's Writings; Other Influences, Teachings, Lessons, & Exemplars; and Potpourri for the Soul.*

For more information regarding groups and trainings with Robert and Diane, contact info@RobertMasters.com.

All checks (deposit & otherwise) should be mailed to Robert Masters, 16133 9th Avenue, Surrey, BC V4A 1A5.

Payments for groups and trainings (plus Robert's books and Diane's CD) can also be made online at our Store page; simply go to www.RobertMasters.com and click on STORE.

To view previous newsletters, click on the NEWSLETTER button at www.RobertMasters.com.

To view Robert's blog, go to www.RobertMasters.com and click on the BLOG button.

2009 Work Schedule

June 20-21 Breakthrough: White Rock, BC

July 11 Into the Dragon's Cave: Ashland, Oregon