

## On Fear

I. Write this down. Fear is not real. It has no substance. Yet it shapes most human behavior. We are sad, because humans are imprisoned by fear and in fear. This is not necessary. We wish to show you this. That fear is not necessary. Fear is not realistic. Fear is a human habit of mind. The premises of fear are false and inaccurate. Fear no longer accomplishes what it originally was meant to accomplish – survival for reproduction, both as organisms and as cultures. Now, fear works just the opposite; it threatens the survival of both organisms and cultures.

This will be a piece about fear. The causes of fear must be made visible. The consequences of fear must be understood. The fearful must be healed. Each fearful being, each cause of fear, each consequence of fear, each theory of fear, each response to fear, must first be met with compassion. It must be fully received with compassion. Only compassion's spaciousness – for there is nothing compassion cannot receive or acknowledge – can provide what is necessary for healing. Fear must be healed, one at a time, one person at a time. Fear can be healed. All fear can be healed. Every human being can be healed. Everyone is to be healed. The healers themselves must first be healed. Only then can the earth be healed.

It is time now for all this to happen at a much more intense and rapid pace. It must become part of many public conversations. It must permeate the consciousness of this time, until one by one, people recognize their own fears and learn how to heal them. This is the great transformation of consciousness which will in turn transform human communities and human life on the planet. Other revolutions have used fear as their fuel, as their fundamental energy: the fear of scarcity fueled the industrial revolution. The fear of oppression fueled the liberation movements of the last century and this. Those movements were potent and achieved great things. But the price was the institutionalization and the enculturization of fear in every modern society. Insecurity, mistrust, and competition became the hallmark of contemporary society. It was not always this way, and it need not be so now. It accompanied the enormous break-through of freedom, creativity, and expansiveness of the modern age. It made it possible for individuals to emerge from the collective forms. Fear stimulated the effort which led to such cosmic growth and invention. Fear has had its uses and its benefits.

But no longer. No longer. Fear is so unleashed, gorging itself on itself, that it is now the essential destructive force amongst humankind. This piece, which we will write together this summer, will discuss these issues in a clear and simple way. It will be called "On Fear;" like Arendt's "On Violence" it will radically reframe conventional thinking and non-thinking about fear. It will lay bare the non-logic that underlies contemporary politics, both domestic and global. It will name the recurrent fantasies of the media, the advertisers, the militaries, and the corporations. It will challenge the now simplistic views of "the Other" repeated by the churches. It will probe the quick-fix strategies of deflection and denial practiced by so many healers – doctors, psychiatrists, counselors, helpers, and the entire health care establishments. It is very very simple. But it cuts clean like a sharp knife, and so, we say it is radical.

Fear is neither bad nor good. It has outlived its value, its usefulness. Human consciousness is real and good. We act now, to enhance and protect it. The world of Spirit wishes to make a major intervention now in human life. This is one small part of that many-layered and multi-formed intervention. (June 6, 2004)

II. Write this down. We are eager to give you this. There is a great deal to tell you..... You are not paying attention. Please focus! Today we will tell you about fear and aggression. There is never aggression without fear. Aggression is an unskillful response to fear. There are other unskillful responses as well – timidity, flight, hiding, denial, lying, illness, and more.

Humans say they want peace. There is peace studies, the Peace Corps, peace workers, peace petitions, peace protests and peace keepers. But there is no peace. These efforts cannot give birth to peace, unless they go to a different level and ask: where is the fear? Who is fearful? You humans ask: who is right? Who is wrong? What is fair? But those questions do not lead to peace. They are the argument, that started the conflict in the first place. A conflict can only be solved or resolved on a different level. Searching for the fear takes you to that different level.

So, why or how does fear cause aggression? And why can there be no aggression which does not originate in fear?

(You are judging this and don't think it is very good. This stops the flow and interrupts our connection. Please relax and let it come. The content is our responsibility. Let this be easy for you.)

There is much to say and to learn about fear. It is both very subtle and very complex. Few have studied fear. It is not a pleasant inquiry. Fear and death - the two unmentionables. They are of course two aspects of the same phenomenon. Your language reveals this: You are "scared to death," "deathly afraid," "frightened out of your wits." Fear is the most powerful experience a human can have, except for love. But love opens and softens the self, and fear attacks it, little self. Fear throws a spot light on little self's presumptions and illusion about itself, its powers, and its rights. Fear cuts through all that inaccuracy and untruth, all that comforting fiction, and says, No, this is elemental and primal. Fear, and what gives rise to it, for fear is simply a response to a stimulus, a new piece of information, fear releases a dye into the psyche showing what needs attention. Fear scouts out the broken, the bruised, the vulnerable, the cramped, the unfinished, and the unintegrated. Fear can be the skillful assistant in the work of maturation.

Very few people understand or use fear this way. Everyone else "self-medicates" fear, and aggression is the #1 drug of choice. Aggression against others or aggression against oneself appear to be very different, but they are fundamentally the same. Each is an unthought, often unplanned release of energy designed to swamp or overrule the fear.

To understand this, we must go back to “little self” or ego, as you call it. The self you know and the self you believe is real. It is in truth the self you believe in, so much so that you idolize it. You turn it into your idol, and bring it offerings every hour of the day. You enhance it, feed it, reassure it that of course its view of things is accurate; of course, it is right – and blameless – and well intentioned – and all the rest. Little self’s primary task is to be irreplaceable, that if something were to happen to it, you would disappear, the world as you know it would disappear. That you call death. The ego’s job is to protect you from death. And your job is to feed and protect the ego from – guess what? – death. This becomes the great fiction spun out by two locked in an embrace of illusion.

The root fear is fear of death, of the end of little mind. The second fear is of learning the truth about the artificiality and fragility of little mind, for that so quickly whispers of death as well. These whispers and doubts are literally unbearable to little self. She experiences the whispers as an attack on her own substantiality and permanence, and she responds in kind, to silence the whispers and the doubts.

Every religious and spiritual tradition has a story about this. The Garden of Eden story is about the fundamental resistance – fear – to recognizing the limits of little self. The four noble truths, especially the first two, teach of the unavailability of suffering as long as one is the servant of little self, or even just identified with it. The many, many forms of penance, sacrifice, and propitiation are all, at least in large part, intended to “manage” this basic awareness of the limits on a human life and the fear that that arouses. Significantly, each of those traditions also teaches an ethic of kindness, non-violence, and even non-aggression. But as we all know, none of this has been adequate for making peace, and that is because of the great divide between the wished-for peace making behavior and the stories about the deeply fearful little self. The fear is not understood deeply enough, and the exhortation to right or peaceful behavior occurs on the wrong level of the human person. It only addresses conscious, voluntary acts, a very high level indeed, and separated by a great chasm from the anxious little self with its fantasies of omnipotence and permanence. Of its invulnerability to death. This is a chasm we wish to address.

(June 7, 2004)

III. There is much to learn and say about how fear dominates and fundamentally organizes and patterns the visible world. We will return to that later. Today we will turn to fear on the many inner planes. There are as many inner planes as outer planes. Human consciousness stands at the midpoint, the intersection of two realms. The flows of energy across that junction are consciousness and stimulate new, more complex forms of consciousness. We turn now to the interior realm, where fear also organizes and patterns energy, modes of perception, and forms of response, especially habit-mind responses. Fear makes a very simple network, a highway for rapid discharge of energy, rapid mobilization of energy. Its very simplicity shuts out all complex mental, emotional, and psychological processes. The system gains the capacity for rapid response, at the price of losing all complexity, nuance, detail, and genuine spontaneity and creativity. It is a huge price, one which no one would be willing to pay, if she knew it. And knew, that it is not

necessary. It is always a choice. It is always possible to respond through some other pathway than fear.

Study how fear works inside you. Say, for example, you fear losing your beloved. Watch your body clench, as you just hear the words. No, your belly says. No, I can't bear it, ripples across your back. Your body takes its position of stubborn resistance, preparing to defend itself, especially its soft, most vulnerable middle, where the crucial organs lie, and your back, because surprise attack is the most dangerous.

What happens next? Your mind goes into high gear, digging up images and plots – both about how good it is now and by contrast, how wretched your life would be without her. Your mind races through some “worry loops,” cycling faster and faster. What if? How will I ever...? I'll never get to... How could I keep going? Now, you are living in an entirely fictional world, created by mind and sustained by the energy of fear. Not a shred of this has any reality or substance. But your whole being – mind, body, feelings – are now mobilized into a state of very high alarm. It is profoundly taxing on every organ and system. The endocrine, digestive, cardiac, and nervous systems go into overload, and that adrenal and hormonal bath floods normal mental and emotional responses. Systems for discernment, perception, interpretation, and imagination are all shut down, as too costly and inefficient.

Meanwhile, unaware of all of this, your beloved calls. Your voice is tense and sharp. “Oh, I'm so relieved to hear you. Where have you been? I've been so worried. I really wish you would call...” Your fear has just transmuted itself into anger and blame. Or, we might say, judgment and aggression. This very unpleasant fear must be managed, even stilled if possible. Find the “cause” – your beloved, clearly – and demand it be interrupted; demand it cease. Now, we see, to move the energy of fear out, in hopes of stopping the discomfort, one must locate an external cause, and with that “move”, judgment and blame have entered. Aggression, hostility, and force are just a hair's breadth behind.

And all this – a simple thought experiment – from a situation of lover and beloved. Imagine the density of the responses in a relationship whose whole history is conflict? All this can be eased, though not at the level of the accumulated aggression and conflict. Healing, or real resolution, can only be addressed at the core level, the core fear that both shapes and fuels all the subsequent parts of the process. Without the energy of fear, this whole process collapses for want of fuel, like a fire deprived of oxygen.

So, consider this: fear is energy, a particular kind of energy. It can move on every level of material being. It is the energy of contraction, until it makes the near quantum leap into aggression, when it is sharply expansive. We will talk more about the energy aspects of fear later. (June 8, 2004)

IV. Write this down. Fear signals the receipt of some new information, usually from the outer world, but not always, as we have seen with our simple example. That was all

interior mental activity. Often, however, fear is a “red flag” that goes out when some new information is received. This, of course, is helpful. We will discuss now the helpfulness of fear, as the first step in a larger teaching about fear: Fear is not the problem, if there is a problem. We study fear to learn how to relate skillfully to fear. The unskillful responses to fear are aggression against others and aggression against oneself.

Let us work through another example. You have been to the theater and you are walking alone back to your car in the dark. Suddenly you notice some signs of fear in your body: your heart is beating faster than normal; your muscles in your back and legs are flexing; your palms are a little damp; and you are very alert. Then – an interesting question: are you responding to a well-known narrative in your culture, such as “It is dangerous for a woman to walk alone in the dark in the city”? In other words, is this fear triggered by an old story or belief? Or is there some danger in your immediate surroundings? You look around, listen for footsteps behind you, walk on the lighted side of the street, and keep your wallet in your front pocket. A skillful awareness of and response to fear begins with curiosity; what is happening here? What is causing fear to rise in my body and then my mind? Have I done everything I can to protect myself, or, in other words, have I taken the fear as a signal from my body about what it senses in the environment, and then responded on that same, bodily plane?

Your body is constantly monitoring its environment for danger. Every living being does this; it is the most fundamental bio-chemical task even for a cell. Without that constant alertness and testing of the environment, and ability to remove the danger, detoxify it, or move oneself, no organism could survive very long at all.

(I can't keep my eyes open. The pull to sleep is overwhelming, as if I were drugged. Something about this work....)

We say all this to help you understand, fear is not the enemy or even a problem. Fear, when the organism is healthy, is helpful, a sign of information being received and processed. There are however two main kinds of problems with fear: Fear caused by mental constructs, or as you might say. Endlessly generated fear through cycling and recycling old stories or conceptual habits. And second, responses to fear that escalate the problem rather than identify it accurately and begin to resolve it. We discussed this earlier, when we examined briefly how fear often generates aggression. (Later we will discuss aggression against others and aggression against self, as two closely linked kinds of response.)

Let us return to the internally generated fear, fear that arises from the power of imagination, on one hand, or from deeply engraved mental habits, on the other. These provide very little service to a human person, at the very best. Often they are literally crippling, leading to disease, accidents, serious misunderstandings, and conflict. They are all amenable to increased awareness and diluted by careful attention. No one need suffer from these delusions of danger with all their self-limiting and self-injuring consequences.

This will be the next section of teaching: on the origin of these self-generated, mental fears; how they are maintained; their consequences; and how to heal them. (June 9, 2004)

V. Little mind, ego, is often deeply frightened. It fears it will not longer be “necessary” if it isn’t active and useful. It runs on fear, deep systemic fear. It doesn’t believe in being, the truth and honor of being. Everything is to be of use, or its whole apparatus collapses. It is of course your fundamental fear form. It masks your old strategy, to be welcome, to be safe, to survive requires you be beautifully useful. Soon, you must let that go. Now you see it with sadness; that is good. It will erode another level of it. It is very powerful. This will be a big lesson – to learn how to do your work without doing it for all those survival purposes. It will free you unimaginably, and lighten you significantly so energy can flow through you much more. (Kwan Yin: June 11, 2004)

VI. You see your anxiety about the year, and it is crucial you disengage it and let it wither and disappear. This is a week then in which you experience deep rest and relaxation, of ease, really, without having to get sick. We see you struggle with whether it is OK to stop, to accomplish nothing. Another way to say that is can you allow yourself to leave the realm of “doing” – of being useful and rest fully in the realm of “being,” where there is only one Mind, one realm of energy and consciousness? What inhibits you is fear, a nearly formless anxiety that makes you believe, you must “keep moving” to be safe, to be numb, to be OK. You have wondered about that little driving force inside you, sometimes with gratefulness and sometimes wanting to be able to turn it off. You’ve identified it with will power, but it is much deeper than that. In truth, it is a form of automatic patterning originally set up to disable and then mask fear. If you were to study this very carefully you would learn a very great deal about how humans “work,” especially in your culture. Everyone around you complains about the great speed-up in activity. The reason is not really all the new technology, though that has its role. The real reason is an explosion of fear, of anxiety, and the literally frantic activity to do more, produce more, earn more, experience more, and control more is a very unskillful response to more fear. ....Study this in your own deepest parts, so you can see how it works. And then, gently and compassionately, let it go. Release it. Choose instead to name and face the fear, and then, let it rise and fall as well. (June 14, 2004)

VII. Write this down. Humans experience fear differently than other beings. Other mammals have very little or no imagination, so they don’t create mind-images that provoke fear. When an animal is fearful, there is some concrete stimulus in its environment that it is meant to fear, because it can signal danger. Other beings in the spirit realm do not create fear because they have such wide vistas of knowledge. Seeing beyond the sharp constraints of human vision, especially seeing beyond the limits of time and space, allows them to know clearly what is. There is much less unknown, and so, less to fear. In humans, then, fear arises as a response to the as-yet unknown. This, then, is worth deeper study.

What can one say about the characteristic of mind that inserts into its experience of the unknown a shapeless anxiety or fear? First, that it is specifically human. Second, that it is related to the human possibility of consciousness. That means, that in humans, consciousness and fear are closely linked. There is a fear to match each degree of sensitivity in a person. Very acute sensitivity makes increased consciousness possible; it also attracts subtle forms of anxiety and fear. Many human responses to fear serve to shut down parts of the system, either its emotions or senses or even psychic functioning. One consequence of that is a sharp decrease in sensitivity related to consciousness – to subtle energy, for example, or communication across distance or even across realms.

Interiorly generated fear, such as that which comes from repeating certain mental constructs or accepting narratives uncritically, or most prominently, repeating earlier cycles of fear so the pathways literally become hard-wired into the brain and its associated patterning of emotional, psychological, and sensory processes; all these also block the receptors of mind, really flood the mind. Then, the mind is unable to recognize new “moments”, new events, new patterns, new information. First it is stuck, and later it will solidify and retreat to lower forms of functioning. The price of old fear can become very high indeed.

There is one more piece here for you to examine, about humans’ relationship to fear. This is very difficult to understand on any level. Humans embrace their worst fears, gather it to their chest and hold it tight. They rehearse a fear silently, as if it were a mantra. They will retell it at any opportunity, usually embedded in a narrative that casts the person into the role of victim or hero. Look carefully, and you will see, it is a story told to master fear. Humans revisit and repeat the fear, from a deep instinct to subdue and conquer it. It is rarely effective. Instead, what happens is the person comes to identify with the fear and the story and experience associated with it. Little mind gathers up the fear-energy and the fear-habit and claims its task then is to protect the self from all of that. But that which it protects the self from has in truth been created and nurtured by that very same self. She keeps herself fully employed in this way, creating the necessity for her own usefulness.

How to break out of this cycle? Choose not to fuel it. Choose not to embrace the story of victim or hero. Choose to watch fear arise with – disinterest. All of these, once fear has been accurately named, will drain energy out of the loop, out of the cycle. Not fed, like any cancer which it closely resembles, it will begin to wither. A stronger, more clarified and free consciousness can begin to emerge.

Now you begin to see, the many kinds of fear, its many origins, uses, disuses, textures, and implications. We will continue with this study at our next meeting. Thank you for the ease of this lesson. (June 13, 2004)

VIII. Yes, today we will discuss fear and common human antidotes to fear, especially activity. Everywhere in the most developed parts of the world, humans complain about their increased activity. They blame it on employers demanding more at work, or children

requiring activities after school every day, of social obligations, and the complete disappearance of leisure and unstructured time. The more resources a family has, strangely, the more they suffer their relentless whirl of required activities. No one feels able to slow this down. No one believes it can be stopped. Those who try soon recognize it is not amenable to more discretion and better judgment. They conclude it is imposed upon them by bosses, work schedules, new technology, and social pressures.

In one way, they are, of course, right. Now it is a self-reinforcing cycle, and each of you is a tiny piece embedded in a highly complex system of interlocking demands, needs, and expectations. It is understandable that humans feel there is no way to get out, no exit.

They do not understand this great speed-up, the relentless round of activity, serves a deeply significant purpose, so significant that it elicits the begrudging but willing participation of every one of you. They do not understand it at a deep enough level. We want to explain this to you. (June 15, 2004)

IX. Write this down. There are two forms of fearlessness. They are entirely different. One should really be called “maximum denial.” That is the condition of recognizing no fear, and then, concluding, one is fearless. Denial, unconsciousness, or sheer self-ignorance do not make one fearless. Because the fear is still in the body, and because the information and energy of fear (after all, information is one form of energy) must be transmuted and/or released, it usually results in a false bravery or confidence, a kind of bravado, or aggression directed towards the other.

There is a middle position between the two conditions labeled inaccurately as fearlessness, and that is courage. In that situation a person recognizes the danger and feels her fear, her fearful response to the danger. If she then moves toward what she fears, in further response, while aware of both the danger and her own fear, she may rightly be called courageous.

The third position in the face of danger or the sharp experience of one’s own fear (and this is especially clear in the situation of internally generated fear, fear in the mind) is when one becomes aware of the fear, and then, either simply keeps a steady awareness of it, watching it grow and develop, shape shift, dissipate, or fall away, or looks for the source of the fear while interrupting any “story” which might try to wrap itself around the fear or which originates in the fear. These are very skillful forms of response to fear, and they are very advantageous.

First, they allow one to recognize that very little fear is real, in the simple sense of having some basis in palpable reality. One begins to see how much fear is self-generated in an illusory, nearly fictional way. Of course, everything that results from such a fear, any action or judgment is also illusory and fictional, and very likely to increase rather than decrease one’s vulnerability to fear.

Second, if there is a present danger, this skillful understanding of fear allows one to respond to the danger with a clear and informed mind, rather than to simply react impulsively or instinctually.

Third, with practice, one becomes more and more calm in the presence of disturbing situations and feelings, more confident in one's own clarity and steadiness, and that one will be able to maximize the use of one's own resources, rather than to undermine one's abilities, the usual consequence of a disturbing emotion.

We describe here, then, learning to be unafraid of fear, recognizing fear is a complex emotional "event" which might – but might not – signal some essential information entering the psyche from the environment. To be unafraid of fear, to be able to inquire into any particular fear and discover its origin or stimulus, and then to choose the most appropriate response, is to be fearless. And only this is truly fearlessness. It does not mean one does not experience fear. It means, one is able to see it clearly and respond appropriately.

Now what does it mean, to live fearlessly in this world, today? That is why we are giving you these teachings, and why we wish you to spread them abroad. Every human being on the planet, with only a few precious exceptions, is swamped by fear. It is the major marker of this era. It is true, humans have never before confronted so many overwhelming and deeply dangerous problems: environmental destruction, hunger and disease, endemic conflicts, imperial aggression, and many others. Every one of these problems is created and sustained by human beings, and every one is fueled by the near limitless energy of fear.

Now, you must address fear on every level. If fear causes and then stimulates each of these major problems, fear also makes solutions nearly impossible. One would think that fear of these imminent or present catastrophes would be sufficient motive to find solutions, but it is not so. Fear makes deep understanding impossible. Fear inhibits response and encourages reaction. Fear divides those affected, when only shared response can lead to effective solutions. All this must be widely understood, and then addressed, before any progress at all is possible.

We will discuss more of this tomorrow. (June 21, 2004)

X. Good morning, writing guides. Do you have something you wish me to write down today? And is there anything you'd like to say to me about how this is working? Is there something I could do to do this better? You or your energy seem very stiff and rigid to me.

Good morning. Yes, we do have a short section for you today, on the cure of fear. This seems much easier for you than when we began. We are pleased. It will work better as your own part in this develops more, which it will, in time. You will learn first to ask us questions, so this will become more of a dialogue. Eventually, you will shape our

teachings, introduce them, and perhaps even explain them or develop them further. We want these to go out into the world, and we will need your skill and judgment to prepare that. That we seem “stiff and rigid” to you is about our energy and reflects our connection is still not well suited yet. You and we are trying different openings and frequencies, to find one that works well. We may still be forceful. You are very soft and becoming more receptive. Soon we will find our “flow.” So, on to the healing and cure of fear. We speak now, of course, of inappropriate fear, of illusory and harmful fear, which is largely fear generated by little mind, within the mind. You call this anxiety, negative thoughts, and pessimism (which is pre-judgment and pre-response, a response before the fact); even powerlessness and impotence are often simply forms of mind-generated fear. All these inhibit a full human life, as you are beginning to recognize, as you observe the workings of your own mind more closely.

They paint the world as a more difficult place than it really is. They create problems where there are none. They cramp one’s freedom and spontaneity, or inhibit altogether. They provide a steady stream of false information about family, friends, co-workers, and the larger world to both mind and heart. Cooperation, kindness, collaboration, shared creativity, and other kinds of joint activity become extremely difficult or impossible. We could go on and on, and so could you. The point is, inappropriate fear, fear that is not a simple organic response to a threat in the environment, has damaged human life more than any other single factor. Any process which could release, mitigate, or interrupt these self-generating fears would be a great medicine for the contemporary world.

Notice this, please: we said intentionally, “self-generating fears.” You wondered, why not, “self-generated fears?” We mean both, and they summarize or encapsulate two teachings. Fear does generate a self – little self, ego, little mind. Fear causes, fundamentally, the construction and then the dramatic reinforcement and aggrandizement of little self. The “I” is born when “No” is first uttered forcefully. It is an unavoidable moment, not to be regretted, for little self is essential and useful. It is her claim, her hegemonic claim, to being real, that is regrettable, regrettable because not true.

On the other hand, then, this little self generates fears. A steady stream of fears keeps little self fully employed, as it were. So, like a government bureaucrat, she identifies more and more “problems” which require her particular expertise and experience to solve. It becomes a self-regenerating cycle, again, in both senses of the phrase.

So, are we clear? There are different kinds of fear, and we wish to treat each according to its basic nature. The consequences of fear on the outer level are very dangerous now for human life. The consequences for inner life, for simply being able to see what is, are equally destructive. They become one and the same because it is the fear-generated and the fear-generating self that is the root of the violence and suffering in the world. Fear, then, must be identified; the several cycles must be interrupted; and then, that which generates fear, the mind, must be calmed, even soothed, so healing can begin.

Fear is deeper than attachment. Attachment is a response to fear, a quite “logical” response. Studying attachment has led to some problems, which studying the fear

underlying attachment might avoid. This is not a new teaching, but an old teaching in a new key. You live now in a completely “psychologized” culture. You assume concepts of self, consciousness and unconsciousness, personality, split-off pieces of personality, and on and on. This allows us to express the teaching in a new way.

This is the medicine which must be given to the fearful self. First, it must be soothed and comforted, and led to rest. This is the “work” of compassion, meeting each fearful self, one by one, and helping it to comfort or even ease. That is a simple sentence, but it covers a huge range of skillful means, which may take a long time, even many life times, to accomplish their intention. We will return to this later. Now, you should see the whole picture.

When little self is truly relaxed and has rested, it can begin to accept a more powerful medicine: insight. This is the work of careful instruction, when the teacher adjusts the precise teaching – its difficulty, its challenge, its intensity – to the condition and aptitude of the student. The teaching will begin the work of liberation; right understanding of perception, mind, reality, and the other essential fundamentals assist self-liberation very quickly. Practices such as mindfulness, self-inquiry, and meditation are powerful tools here. The basic cycles of fear, suffering, and aggression emerge into clear day. With acknowledgment and awareness, their grip weakens. Day by day, the habits of many lifetimes dissolve. (June 23, 2004)

XI. The human body is the storehouse of fear. Learned fear. Accumulated fear from this life and previous lives. Fear reinforced by experience and fear created by the mind within the mind. Watch others in their bodies. Study the patterns of fear. You actually have the ability to scan someone, to “see” the places fear has accumulated, like an abscess in a hidden cavity of the body. Cancer is nearly always the result of such buried fear. Infections are often attempts to isolate and remove such toxins. Wasting diseases often suggest the presence of overwhelming accumulated fear. Physical healing is not always appropriate. In some instances the disease must proceed to eat up or neutralize the karmic fears.

The long process of human waking-up is essentially about dissolving fear. Little mind must learn trust, and she does so through the practice of surrender. From that she learns of Source, that she is nothing but the energy of source, and so, it is not possible to be separated from Source. Fear arises from the belief that little self is separated from source. It is an incorrect belief. Deep insight reveals that easily and quickly to an inquiring student. The experience of that easily comprehensible truth is necessary for freedom, however, and that is much more difficult to achieve. You have been experiencing it with increasing frequency. This is why the old beliefs and fears must be dissolved now. They inhibit the more steady awareness of non-separation. (Kwan Yin, June 18, 2004)

XII. And so, dear writer, the medicine for fear is compassion. This is the simple truth for humankind: it is the full expression of human life and the means of its healing. Nothing

could be more elemental or clear. To fear is to suffer, and to fear long is to create more suffering. To deny one's fear creates suffering. To project one's fear through aggression creates suffering. To become truly fearless – awake and fearless – stops the cycles of fear leading to suffering leading to fear and allows healing to begin. With that comes relief, and then release. Fear is a clenched hand, a clenched lip, a knot in the stomach. Fear carried long in the body quickly becomes disease. She who is feared will of course suffer, but she who fears suffers more.

How does this transformation begin? Through compassion. And the compassion must first be received. Usually, from another person – a friend, a teacher, or colleague. Not sympathy, or “feeling with.” That isn't wide or deep enough. Compassion flows through as the most broad and inclusive view of a person possible in that moment, a view grounded in deep insight into the goodness and equanimity at the very center of the fearful person's being. Grounded in that reality, the compassionate one sees clearly the fear, the suffering, the self-infliction, the misery, the projection – everything. For the compassionate one, there is no conflict or contradiction here, simply different levels of reality which are irreducibly one. The compassionate one, firmly rooted in this very huge and non-judgmental view of healing, opens the space to include the confused and fearful one. There is still no judgment. There will never be judgment. Judgment and compassion do not cohabit well, and each person may choose which she will live by. Fear and judgment are very near each other, fingers on the same hand.

The heart-mind of the compassionate one expands her energy to include the fearful one. There comes a release. It may be immediate and in the moment, just a profound exhalation and the body releases and relaxes. Or it may require weeks and months of careful attention, employing a range of skills and tools, to assist the fearful one in seeing, naming, understanding, and releasing the fear. Over and over, many, many times. Each human must learn this skillful response, just as she learns to bathe and read and dance. One can use fear as a point of inquiry which can lead to a very deep understanding of how small mind works, of the nature of ego or small self, and the accumulation of destructive mental and emotional habits.

Compassion, as you see, liberates. Neither sympathy nor pity liberate. Both bind further, especially pity, which is very destructive. Compassion is the most powerful medicine because it never turns away from the reality of the situation. Compassion doesn't fear, and so, it can heal fear. Pity and sympathy spring from fear: “poor you, and lucky me” is one version. “How did you get yourself into this mess?” is another. Compassion says calmly: “Ah, yes, and this too.”

That reveals another very central truth. Compassion and wisdom are one, two hands, two sides of a single fruit. There can be no effective compassion without wisdom, and wisdom cannot be accessed except through the heart of compassion. We have not spoken of all the skillful means a compassionate one might use to assist the fearful one. We will give that in the next teaching.

The last piece for this teaching is this: Usually, compassion is brought to fear through a person. Sometimes it happens that a person is receptive to a spirit-being, from some other realm, who is able to touch and open a human's heart, and then to lead it to receptivity and trust. When the teacher is such a being, a being from another realm, fear can be dissolved very effectively, because the energy is so strong and so capacious. And so, shall I say, objective? Or impersonal? This occurs in every religious tradition and culture. One might point to saints, gurus, shamans, angels, and all the deities and blessed beings. Most, if not all, see the human predicament clearly and are well able to respond with healing energy. This is compassion in many ways.

And last, the deepest healing of fear comes with the person learning to greet herself with compassion, to become a vehicle of compassion toward herself. This is essential healing, and only when one has become skillful at this, can one begin to meet another with compassion. This means, fear must be deeply released within one's own energy field before moving toward someone else's, in a compassionate way. This is admittedly a very high standard, especially in the west, but for many reasons, it is fundamental and necessary. (June 24, 2004)

XIII. We would like to say a little more about compassion and fear, especially how compassion can release and heal fear. This is what you've been wondering about. We welcome your questions and suggestions. We often do not understand what you and other humans require, in order to understand our teachings. That is an essential part of our cooperation and partnership.

This can be said in a very simple sentence, but like many such simple sentences, it includes a great deal within it. What is larger can contain and neutralize or de-energize what is smaller. Fear is small, smaller than compassion. Fear actually arises out of smallness or weakness, and most fearful responses are attempts to mitigate the perceived or experienced weakness. Fear is puffing itself up, sometimes to aggression, but always to raise a defense. That immobilizes the fearful one even further, for erecting and maintaining a defense of any kind takes vast amounts of energy. That leaves much less energy and opportunity for a more creative and appropriate response. It quickly becomes an oft-repeated cycle, a neurological merry-go-round which ultimately wires that person into certain mental and emotional habits. In fear, states of fear, then, we see a diminishment of the person and her energy, her gifts, her abilities, and her insights into the true situation in which she finds herself.

Compassion is very different. Compassion opens and broadens, and the compassionate person becomes larger and larger – in awareness, in sensitivity to energies and to others, and simply, in the scope of the world in which she lives. Compassion is both the result of opening and its cause. In that sense, we can say, compassion generates and amplifies itself. This too is a merry-go-round, which also, with each cycle, opens up more pathways of perception, insight, and response. So, compassion is expansive and inclusive, at an energetic level; fear is constrictive and exclusionary, its energetic opposite. It follows without surprise that compassionate energy meets and surrounds fearful energy.

Can fear immobilize compassion?

Yes, of course, but only in the short term. Fear drains away energy, and eventually it simply runs out, if it has no source of external energy to take up into its own energetic system. A fearful person held securely by someone's compassionate energy will be protected from at least some measure of further threat of attack. As everyone knows, a simple appeal to the rationality of a fearful person is ineffectual. Fear very rarely operates on that level. "That couldn't possibly happen! You know that. Think about it." This does not help. It does not recognize the intensity and credibility of the experience of fear. No, one must instead begin with "I see you are frightened of X. Let me help you find your center or your balance, in the presence of X. Then you will be able to relax a little and figure out an appropriate response to X." This is much more skillful because the compassionate one has been able to hold the fearful one and the fear and X all in a single gaze. Everything is recognized and named. The value of denial plummets. The fearful one gains a new quantum of energy and some of the psychic fascination with the fearful X, which is usually at least in part largely a projection. The fascination diminishes or simply drains away. The situation is already significantly different on an energetic level.

Next, with its new increment of energy and in a slightly more relaxed position, the fearful one, encouraged by the steady calm awareness and receptivity of the compassionate one, can ask, How can I respond to X in a more effective way? The nature of X and the skills of the fearful one now will shape the next moves by the compassionate one. It might be a moment to introduce new information, a new attitude, explore several components of the habitual fearful response to X and similar situations, or a new skillful means. Here, compassion's partner, wisdom, will take the lead, as compassionate awareness holds the whole situation in its embrace. Augmented by this new energy/skill/possibility, the fearful person moves in a new way. And any new move at this delicate moment, when she attempts to step out of the old pattern, is a mark of courage and a sign the energy balance may be tipping. This process, practiced repeatedly, shifts habitual ways of seeing, experiencing and reacting. It reduces the paralysis and automaticity of fearfulness, in the face of fear. It is one of the most potent practices of mindfulness available. It is also a powerful practice for the compassionate one, for it is also a practice towards oneself and one's own fearfulness, at the same time. Likewise, the practice generates compassion within the fearful one. In the end, it is really just an exchange of energy, in a particular moment. It is quintessentially fluid and shape-shifting, more like a pulse or the breath. It is certainly not a role. The practice of compassion includes all beings, and is meant to spread healing and release from fear and suffering, wherever it occurs. Which is everywhere.

It is at its most potent now, though, in relationship between two people. The deepest healing occurs one person at a time, each one gaining insight and skillfulness which in turn can then be passed on. It is all well and good to work on large scale political and social reform, but without the healing of fear, one person at a time, little will come of it. Its foundations will not be adequate to support and root the reforms. (June 27, 2004)

XIV. Well, beloved scribe, you ask two very important questions here; how are compassion and love related? And what is the relationship between fear and judgment? We will address the first one today. It may be difficult for you to receive our message, because your energy system is still trembling from your morning session with Kwan Yin. No blame, if it isn't successful.

At one level the main distinction between love and compassion is geographic, with love a central concept in the west and compassion the same in the east. As concepts, however, they are quite distinct, and refer to important differences, some subtle and some not. Love is the larger term, referring to a range of attitudes and behavior towards many different kinds of persons in very different forms of relationship. One "loves" one's lover, as a sexual partner; one loves one's beloved, as a life partner. One loves one's children and parents, of course. One loves dear friends. One can love one's country, one's teacher, and even a poem or a piece of music. One loves meeting with friends, and the glass of wine shared then. One loves the needy stranger, the unknown victim of war or catastrophe. One loves God, the truth, and freedom. And there are undoubtedly many other categories included in that most inclusive verb. Their lowest common denominator is something like "being well disposed toward" or "wishing the other's well being."

Compassion certainly wishes well being for the other, and reflects being well disposed toward the other. Compassion though is free of desire and attachment, and takes no account whatsoever of its consequences for the compassionate one. There is no account of pleasure or pain, appetite satisfied or not. Compassion describes simply the attitude or the posture of the sender, the compassionate one. It has two essential components: wishing the other well, as mentioned earlier, and the willingness and ability to open fully to the other's whole life situation.

And this is the main distinction from sympathy. Sympathy is feeling-with someone; though it usually is generated by the intention to do good, as it were, and thus reflects the desire the other flourish, sympathy does not require openness to the other's pain and suffering, only registering that someone is suffering. It sounds like a subtle, perhaps even semantic difference, but it is a very great divide between two very different psychic states.

The western concept closest to compassion is Jesus' use of "agape," the love for the other in which there is no self interest, or the generalized love and care for all. Another similarity that seems to be implicit is that both compassion and agape, because strictly speaking, they are not feelings at all, but commitments and deep postures, include a commitment to action – to do something to relieve the suffering. Sympathy does not, nor does love in its general form, because both of those are more nearly feelings or emotional states. They may generate some action, but don't necessarily do so.

The distinction becomes more clear when quite a different light shines on it: self love or self compassion. Again, the former can mean a range of things, from narcissism, masturbation, and simple egocentricity to care about diet, sleep and exercise. Self

compassion means to recognize and name clearly one's own woundedness or suffering, and to hold that in one's compassionate awareness.

A further way to study this introduces a distinction about the self. Love is vastly changeable, depending on which part of the person is doing the loving – little self or ego? A split off piece of psyche? An habitual piece more nearly a role, as in a persona? Or Big Mind, a more ego-free self? Compassion, as the great teachers insist, flows only from the latter. One could say compassion is love free of egoic perceptions and agendas, and one would be very close indeed. And admirably concise.

To allow compassion to flow through one, the, is the more arduous practice, but it is also infinitely less complex and multi-layered in its actuality. That simply reflects the ego personality has at the moment stepped aside. This is also the fundamental reason that it is often deeply settling and healing to be met or seen with compassion. There is no ego energy working all its angles. There is no fear or sense of danger. It brings spaciousness, and calm with the spaciousness. Love usually is an exchange or requires response, except in its form as agape. Compassion does not. Compassion is its own gift. It flows through, and the source is irrelevant. If it could be absent or anonymous, it would be so.

To be compassionate toward all beings is the highest practice, in east and west. Compassion is the way to heal the world. Love binds us, one to the other. Since we truly are bound to each other, in fact, utterly interdependent in every conceivable way, love is the most powerful way to awaken us from our deep sleep in which we believe in our individuality and our separation. Once awakened from that stunning illusion, we must begin the practice of compassion. Two hands clapping: one steadies and grounds us, and the other opens expands us. A very good system, don't you think? (June 29, 2004)

XV. Do not worry, Penny, that you haven't read what we've given you. You already "know" it, even though you haven't "thought" it in this life or in this form. What we tell you is common knowledge in our realm of Spirit. It must become common knowledge among humans. You will do your piece of that great project, if you wish.

How does one teach about fear? It is ubiquitous. It's like teaching fish about water.

Yes, exactly. You must teach fish about water. The central act of teaching is a gesture – point to something and add a name. Provide some language. For a receptive student, those two "moments" or acts become tools of new and much richer understanding of the world, and it significantly enhances her experience of the world. That then allows for further pointing and naming, until she becomes so alert to her own experience and her own cognitive and emotional processes, that she becomes a self-learner, pointing and naming for herself. Only then will she teach well.

Apply this to teaching about fear. Experiment this week with each person who comes to the office, and you will quickly see how prevalent fear is, as the determinative factor in most people's problems and difficulties. You will also see that when you help each one to

name it “fear,” it already begins to shift. A named fear is dramatically different from an unnamed, inchoate fear without form, and thus, without boundary.

Naming fear draws it back into a recognizable shape, leaving much space then relatively free of fear. Help the person to stand in the fear-free space, and observe the fear, without making any attempt to “fix” the fear or “solve” its apparent cause. Trying to “fix” or remove what causes the fear is rarely an effective approach. It usually results in reaction rather than response, often in revenge or violence or some other deadening response. It is crucial to simply hold the space of fear open, as it were, to help the person to simply stand still and observe it. This almost always reduces its potency remarkably.

Only then can a thoughtful appropriate response be imagined, because the fear is contained and reduced to its real components, and because being in the position of observer allows one’s creative, imaginative powers to begin to create some response, some way of proceeding, some “next step.”

This is teaching about fear at the personal level. There are also ways to examine how fear permeates and fuels much of your public behavior and the workings of your prominent public institutions. We could tell you about this, but you are well capable of watching and learning this yourself.

Fear is the most highly contagious ailment humans experience. One fearless person in a group can shift the group’s energy and its vulnerability to contagion, simply by his or her own being and how he or she is in a difficult moment. That is powerful teaching, all by itself. When that person also has some awareness about the deep processes here, and perhaps some specific tools to assist her in articulating and teaching an alternative way to be, much can shift in just a few moments.

You live in a society and a culture that runs largely on fear. We watch you in amazement, because we do not understand why humans would chose to do that, to force each other to live in and through fear. We know it is intrinsic to your values of competition and individualism. These are so out of balance, so exaggerated, that they have nearly obliterated cooperation and community life, the two antidotes to fear.

The next time we talk, we will discuss community and how some are engendered and maintained by fear, and some with a much deeper foundation make fear much less potent and destructive. (July 26, 2004)

XVI. We will teach you about forgiveness and fear. At first, it seems they have no connection with each other. Fear is something one experiences. It comes to one, imposes itself on one. Forgiveness is a rich and active and conscious response to someone. Forgiveness is only possible after the harmful event or action has been accurately named; the cause, especially the proximate cause is understood; and then, with full awareness, she who will forgive surrenders her grip on the consequences, on that which must be

forgiven. Forgiveness, or better, to forgive, for it is surely a verb, is active, sometimes requiring great effort over a long period of time.

Fear, as you recognize, is very different. As we have taught you these two months, fear too is a many-layered and very complex phenomenon. Fear is a fundamental emotion, a shudder of the whole organism or being in the face of a threat. As one begins to wake up, fear can intensify and multiply. One experiences everything more realistically, perhaps most especially one's emotions. There is less of a mask, less numbness, and less distraction. Becoming aware, increasingly aware, can sometimes even flood the system with powerful emotions that had been buried under many layers of repression and denial. They are even sometimes not even accessible to cognition at all, they are so split off and embedded in the body.

The skillful response to fear is often forgiveness. This is quite delicate, because it requires a profound opening to many faces of self. It is best to do this with a partner or a teacher, to protect one from danger and illusion.

First, one amplifies the fear, after seeing it and naming it. Stay fully present to it, and let it exaggerate itself. Watch how it permeates every system – psyche, organs, skin, cognition, and judgment. Stay firmly grounded in the observer position. Open to the fear and all it “does” to you, as long and as fully as you can. This is truly a “practice,” a training practice in stability and openness. You may find yourself becoming agitated or angry or even sleepy. Watch everything. Follow it like a dog on the trail of a rabbit.

When you reach the limit of your ability to hold the observer awareness with some equanimity, stop, exhale very powerfully, so your whole body reverberates. Then, bow deeply, in intention and if you can, in practice, before the fear, with gratitude for its teaching and how it sheds light on dark corners of your mind. Then, turn to the fearful part of you and forgive it completely and wholeheartedly for being fearful. This is essential, and it marks the close of this practice.

Fear itself, as we have taught you, is neither good nor bad. It is both. Strangely, however, humans fear and judge fear, and sharply judge themselves for their fear. This is not helpful. This stokes the first on a much deeper level, and with the added burdens of guilt and rejection. The conscious act of forgiveness cuts through all these layers at once, opening up the possibility of much softening and release. It is healing, of course.

Why is this a dangerous practice? Because it is very difficult to stay focused on pure fear. The mind's impulse is to deflect to anger or blame, and then the stories begin. This is not skillful. The companion's presence helps to keep the practitioner focused and grounded. She will be able to see if she loses her observer or witness viewpoint and can gently remind the practitioner to return to that centered, spacious view. And this is not a practice for a beginner or anyone with serious emotional or spiritual difficulties or weaknesses. You would call it a controlled, intentional “splitting” or “dissociation,” and the sudden reversals take significant maturity.

Consider and study forgiveness and fear in your own life and around you. This is the thorough cure of the long term effects of fearfulness. This is possible because it reaches so deeply into the premises of little self. We will discuss this more some other time.  
(August 21, 2004)