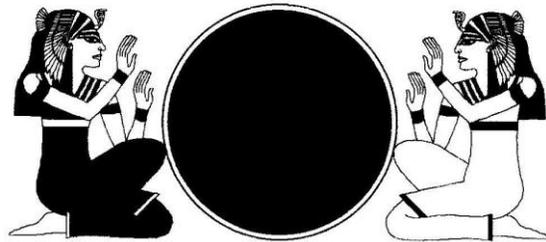


Temple of the Dark Moon



The Role of a Spiritual Teacher

By Frances Billinghamurst © 2007

A student recently accused me of not doing my job. She reminded me of a conversation we had had a number of months previous when I mentioned that I saw myself as her “spiritual teacher”, someone who guides another along their chosen path. My “failure” in her eyes turned out to be that she had been waiting for me to criticise what she had written because apparently this was what she had been used to. However, I had found nothing wrong in the first place. Her comments did get me thinking about what it meant to not only be a “spiritual teacher”, but also what having a “spiritual teacher” means. The following are my thoughts on the matter that I thought I would share.

After a certain length of time on our spiritual path some of us find ourselves stepping into the role of “teacher” or guide for another along their own chosen spiritual path. This role may be our desire or simply a seeming twist of faith. Somewhere on a level of consciousness which we may or may not be aware of, our soul has made this decision – that it is now at a stage in its evolution where the lessons learnt can be passed onto another. More often than not, this is a stage of transformation that does not come with any instruction manual or rules, leaving the new “teacher” sometimes out of their depths as they try to balance the demands of others with their own spiritual needs. Frustration can be felt on the student’s part especially if they feel that they are being “ignored” by their spiritual teacher. More often than not this is the case and a degree of patience needs to be employed by the student.

The role of student and teacher is always a two-way streak – the student must desire (and not simply want) to learn from the teacher. Likewise, the teacher must desire to take on the role as teacher (even if it is at some higher subconscious level). A teacher must also desire to share what they know willingly with those who are asking for it. The boundaries of student and teacher can be blurred as the formulation such a relationship usually becomes a two way learning process. We should never lose sight of the fact that a student cannot offer anything to a teacher, as for in every relationship something can always be learnt.

A teacher may see things from a different perspective than you – especially if you are caught up in a highly emotive situation. At the end of the day when you ask for their assistance, guidance and advice, that is only what they can give you. These things are based on their perspective of situations and events, and therefore may even differ from what you want to hear. It does not mean that automatically you are wrong and they are right. They are only giving you possibly a different angle to a situation, which you may not have noticed – or even confirming what you actually know deep down yet do not want to admit to yourself. Yes, at times the truth can be rather confronting.

YOU however always REMAIN IN CONTROL. It is ultimately your decision of whether to embrace and take on the assistance, guidance and advice being shared. As this is your own life, how you live it is your responsibility. Trust in what your spiritual teacher says does not necessarily mean having “blind faith”. It is your right as a spiritual being to test everything that you come across to determine what is right for you. But if the teacher is truly following their path, their aim is to guide you to the best of their ability and this really can only be done through them first having such personal experience.

It is our soul that determines what lessons we need to learn in each incarnation and so it is our responsibility to understand those lessons, to accept and work through them in order for us to grow spirituality. Shifting the blame or hiding our heads in the sand does nothing. While we may not always have control over what happens to us, we DO have control over how we react to things. This applies to whatever situation we find ourselves in.

As spiritual beings, regardless of what path we follow, the ultimate aim of our souls is to evolve and move towards enlightenment – regardless of what belief (religious, spiritual or otherwise) we may have. This progress can be a difficult one and this is where assistance from others (ie, teachers) can help – but this help can only be of assistance if you persevere along the path yourself. The progress is set at our own pace – no one else’s. It should not be a race to see who can be the most enlightened being first. More often than not, those who rush along the pace, miss out on very important things.

It can be said that the path of enlightenment being likened to a path up a mountain. Those who rush to get to the top of the mountain where they can sit back and rest of their laurels, fool only themselves because this is not enlightenment. While the view from the top of the mountain give definitely give an advantage on things because you can see them more clearly and perhaps from a different angle – true enlightenment is not about getting to the top of the mountain at all. True enlightenment is about what we learn along the way while we are climbing the mountain.

Once we reach the summit of our personal mountain, we experience a certain level of self-actualisation, which brings the cycle to completion. Then a new cycle begins. Those who climb their mountains in a hurry often end up feeling frustrated. This is because they forget or even overlook the values that lie in the lessons themselves. These lessons are designed to help each of us to grow on a spiritual level. This is the main reason each of us has incarnated on Earth. However, if we continue to make the same mistakes, the same lessons will continually crop up until we learn how to move through them.

In the student/teacher relationship the teacher cannot climb to the top of the mountain for you – just as they cannot describe the Mysteries of the Craft or any other spiritual path to you. They can only assist in deciphering or offering you a helping hand. It is you who has to climb the mountain. If in doubt, stop and think at a deeper level. Is this what you truly

desire? You may find direction from unlikely sources, like someone pointing out how passionate you are when you talk about your path etc? Do not be afraid to ask for spiritual guidance as well from other sources – even from the Universe in general. But be prepared that the answer you may receive may not be the one you are expecting.

Our paths twist and turn all the time. This is a natural part of spiritual evolution. Some of us stay to the same path for most of our lives, others will find their path evolving and changing into something else. All knowledge that you have learnt along the way is beneficial even if you are no longer following that particular belief system. I firmly believe that our souls have our evolution pre-mapped out for us at a certain level. Bearing this in mind, while some decisions we make or situations we find ourselves in may not hold little or any meaning to us on this physical plane or at that given time, there is usually some reasoning behind things ... even if we are not consciously aware of it in this incarnation.

We each need to take responsibility for our own spiritual evolution. We should not allow it to reside in the direction or under the guidance of another individual, even a “spiritual teacher”. This is because at the end of the day, our teacher can only help guide us along our spiritual path, they cannot live it for us.

About the Author:

Frances has been a student of metaphysics and the occult for most of her life, with her formal training having commenced in 1993. She has been initiated into the Alexandrian Wicca tradition, with interests also in ceremonial magick, the Qabalah and traditional Wytchcraft.

After founding the Temple of the Dark Moon in 1999, Frances spent some six years as secretary for the Pagan Alliance Inc (SA) where she worked closely with both the Police and Attorney General with respect to changes in legislation. She has led rituals with Chief Druid, Philip Carr-Gomm, and occult philosophy Ramsay Dukes, as well as presented lectures at various national and international events.

Frances regularly writes for *Insight*, Australia's number one spiritual lifestyle magazine, with her articles also appearing in over 10 separate publications, including *Spellcraft*, *The Cauldron*, *Circle* and the Llewellyn's *Witch's Calendar*. She has further essays in a number of anthologies including *The Faerie Queens*, *Unto Herself: A Devotional Anthology for Independent Goddesses*, and *Memento Mori*.

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