

# Being in touch with your needs can become a prayer for all beings

by Bridget Belgrave

“The Kabbalists knew what influence one individual’s intention could have on the world. This is why they teach that when you pray, you should not pray for yourself alone. You should pray with the collective needs in mind. So if you are praying for a soul mate, you might say, “There are so many people waiting for their soul mate. May they find their soul mate and may I be included among them.” That’s the way it works. The Midrash says that when Sarah, who was barren until her nineties, finally conceived, thousands of women conceived at the same moment. She prayed with the collective needs in mind, and the power of her prayers - when they were finally answered - changed the lives of so many others.”

from *Endless Light: The Ancient Path of the Kabbalah*, by David Aaron, Berkley, 1998

What a wonderful gift! To take one’s own unmet need and build out of it an intention that can help and heal others too! To say to oneself:

“There are so many people needing “.....”. May they find “.....” and may I be included among them.”

What a beautiful way to live the ‘needs’ part of the Nonviolent Communication process (NVC).

Reading this passage in David Aaron’s book opened my eyes to a new possibility in my NVC practice. Whenever I am in touch with my own present need, instead of expressing this to myself with the thought “I need peacefulness’ I can now express it (inwardly) in this form:

“I am longing for peacefulness. There are so many people longing for peacefulness. May all who are needing peacefulness find fulfilment, and may I be included among them.”

I love how this opens my NVC practice out, so that it becomes a prayerfulness for all, channelled through the aliveness and immediacy of my own connection to Life.

It builds into my inner, silent NVC practice an immediate and do-able way of caring for others along with myself, and keeps me in touch with universality of needs, and with my concern for how all beings are faring in relation to their needs.

I like how this connection with others comes at just the moment when, in practising NVC, I tend to be most deeply with myself. Because of this self-connectedness, aiming to bring all my attention to the place where I connect fully with my need can set off a fear that I am separating myself from others and losing touch with my awareness of others’ needs. Now this intention to be in solidarity with all in whom this need is unmet, means that going deep into this inner contact with my need will unite me with, rather than separate me from, others. Carrying this intention helps me relax more easily into a depth of contact with my need that I know deeply activates Life’s resourcefulness in meeting this need.

Remembering how many others on the planet may be experiencing the same need as unmet, at the same moment, also makes it easier for me to recognise and respect the humanness of the vulnerability I feel when a need is unmet, and calling for fulfilment.

Playing with this prayerful thought form led me to another beautiful discovery - how it can be applied when my needs are met.

Often, when I am conscious that my needs are met, I feel an underlying sense of sadness (and sometimes guilt) accompanying my joy, knowing that other beings are not so fulfilled. Using this prayerful thought form, I am finding that my ability to enjoy my fulfilment is increased and sweetened, because with this 'prayer' I can use my consciousness to immediately share something of my good fortune with others who do not have this fulfilment.

I can say to myself, "As I sit here in my back garden on a sunny Sunday, at peace with myself and the world, I feel so grateful that my need for peacefulness is fulfilled in this moment .... and then add the 'prayer'..... "There are so many people longing for peacefulness at this moment. May all who are needing peacefulness find fulfilment."

As well as enhancing my enjoyment of life, this discovery also gives me a purposeful reason to be just as conscious of my needs when they are being met, as when they are not. If I can use my moments of fulfilment to contribute to others' fulfilment, then this deepens my own fourfold.

In a world where it often seems that my happiness comes at someone else's expense, a 'me or you' world, this thought opens a generous space for both of us.

All this is exciting for me as I fully trust - based on many experiences, on conversations with others about their experiences, and from my reading - that to focus attention on a universal human need starts to generate its fulfilment. (This depends on being able to focus attention on needs in an open way without any grasping for fulfilment, or attachment to how the need will be met, just with awareness of the need, just being in contact with the need, with no energy going into trying to 'solve' it.) I trust that Life then does its best to gather and use whatever elements are available, and bring them together into forms that will fulfil our need. This is Life's 'answer to prayer'.

Sometimes we can assist Life, using our own intelligence, creativity, will and physical energy to generate forms and actions that will fulfil needs. Sometimes we can only leave it to Life; we are helpless, or suspect we would interfere with Life's creativity by our limited vision of possibility; then Life does its mysterious work, influenced by, and in response to, our human intention, without needing our practical assistance.

To make room for this to happen depends on being willing to experiment with trusting the power of intention and prayer to beneficially influence the way the universe dances with us human beings.