



The Growing Edge



Facing What Is: Not as Easy as it Sounds

*"If we replace the impulse to avoid uncomfortable feelings with a desire to face and explore them, we find, at their heart, exactly what we were seeking by trying to avoid them." - **Rupert Spira***

*"People will do anything, no matter how absurd, in order to avoid facing their own soul. One does not become enlightened by imagining figures of light, but by making the darkness conscious." - **Carl Jung***

"Practice is not about overcoming human problems. It's not about becoming serene or transcendent. It's about embracing our lives as they really are, and understanding at every point how deep and profound and gorgeous everything is – even the suffering, even the difficulty. So we forgive ourselves for our limitations, and we forgive the world for its pain.

*We don't say, "That's not pain." It is pain. You don't say, 'It's not difficulty.' It is difficult. But when we embrace the difficulty...we see this is exactly the difficulty we need. And this difficulty is the most beautiful and poignant thing in this world." - **Zoketsu Norman Fischer***

At the core of all true and real emotional and spiritual inner work is one uncompromising requirement, as challenging as it may be: to face and embrace our experience of ourselves, our feelings, and our lives exactly the way they are. People have a deep-seated attachment to how we think things should be, or ought to be, or how we want things to be, which is almost always at significant and uncomfortable variance with how things actually are. When we experience this discord or incongruence between how we need things to be and how they actually are we employ a vast array of defenses and strategies to live with this distressing reality: avoid, deny, pretend, minimize, hide, distract, use food and substances, and suppress being many of our most employed in a desperate and ultimately failing attempt to stay away from the truth of our actual experience.

Though completely counterintuitive and paradoxical, from having intimately worked with others in this domain for over four decades, one law governing the inner world of humans that has never failed to be powerful and true is this twin-sided one: “Whatever you deny or resist will persist and get bigger.” “Whatever you admit to, accept, face, and allow yourself to fully experience will lose its hold over you.” Herein is the confounding, sometimes daunting, but ultimately liberating way out of an immense amount of your suffering. Astonishingly, it is the way in. That is to say, the way out is the way in.

If you are prepared to approach the dragon, the dragon will inevitably relinquish its fire and roar and harmlessly and sweetly lie down by your side. Putting it another way, if you are willing to kiss the toad (about the last thing on earth that the beautiful princess in fables and stories would think or want to do), the toad will transform into the handsome prince.

With the marketplace and social media relentlessly offering a seemingly infinite number of ways to avoid, deny, pretend, minimize, hide, distract, and suppress, this is a very hard sell in contemporary culture. But just ask yourself: “Has any of that worked?” If it has, I recommend you keep doing it. If it hasn’t, give some consideration to the facing vs. running from option. It might surprise you.

The Guest House

*This being human is a guest house.
Every morning a new arrival.
A joy, a depression, a meanness,
some momentary awareness comes
as an unexpected visitor.
Welcome and entertain them all!
Even if they are a crowd of sorrows,
Who violently sweep your house empty of its furniture,
Still, treat each guest honorably.
He may be clearing you out
For some new delight.
The dark thought, the shame, the malice.
Meet them at the door laughing and invite them in.
Be grateful for whatever comes.
Because each has been sent
As a guide from beyond.*

- Jellaludin Rumi

Translation by Coleman Barks

Relationships: The Work of Love

Working Through Our Fears in Matters of Love

This weekend seminar shows us:

- Our fear based, survival orientated patterns of behavior in relationships.
- How and why we sabotage our love relationships.
- How to have more loving relationships in our lives.

The very same ego consciousness that helped us to survive the emotional pain of our childhood and adolescence comes back to haunt and sabotage us in our most significant relationships in the present. If the experience of loving and being loved is associated in the unconscious mind with the experience of trauma, violation, conflict or abandonment, nothing will be scarier than “love” approaching. The ego consciousness will mobilize to protect the inner family from perceived enemies like trust, closeness, commitment, vulnerability and honesty, not to mention men or women. The extent to which the adult consciousness has become identified with the ego in this lifetime is the extent to which love in all intimate, committed, monogamous, long-term, primary relationships will become problematic, dysfunctional and even destructive.

In the weekend seminar Relationships: The Work of Love we examine ourselves as the perpetrators of pain. We examine the myriad flight and fight responses that we have employed to keep from our hearts and souls the very people we say we want to love, the very people who have committed the “crime” of loving us. This most certainly could include our love interest but we will also examine our relationship with our father, mother, sister, brother, son, daughter and past loves to discover the ego patterns that have run us and our relationships into the ground. We begin to move from being baffled, righteous, or victimized by our love lives to taking 100% responsibility for the state that our most significant relationships are in. All of our dynamics and imposed barriers to real intimacy, committed love and monogamy are faced.

Only then can we discover and examine the components of a healthy, loving and mutually beneficial relationship. Only then can we discover that with courage, vulnerability, honesty and humility, we can begin to experiment with laying down our survival-oriented, fear based ego patterns and return to our connection with the child and spiritual consciousness within as an entirely new base from which to interact with the people of our lives.

Cost - \$400.00 per person (plus gst)

(deferred payment plan or bursaries available to those in financial need)

**When: Saturday, October 24th, 2026
and Sunday, October 25th, 2026**

**www.joelbrass.com
info@joelbrass.com**

If you have further questions or would like to register contact:
Jason (seminar coordinator) at seminarsjoelbrass@gmail.com

or

Joel at (604) 535-4220

