

November/December 2006

AWAKENING –

THIS YEAR, DAY, MOMENT IS MINE TO CHOOSE! by Susie Itzstein.

It is just 6.30am. I'm a bit jet-lagged. I have awakened this morning in a completely new place in the world for me. I'm talking *physically* here, as I'm in Beijing where we arrived last night. I've never been to China before. Wow, what a whole different world! First impressions are freeway after freeway, road after road, all shape and size of high-rise buildings; few less than 25 stories high. I remember thinking on the 45-minute taxi drive from the airport that whoever invented concrete, steel and fluorescent lighting must have made a mint! **They certainly have made a difference!** It doesn't seem to matter which city in the world one goes to, there they are – freeways, skyscrapers and billboards... It could almost be named "The Concrete, Steel and Fluorescent Revolution" a la The Agrarian or Industrial revolutions, etc... But that's another whole topic, not what I want to write about now.

Awakening is the topic. What is the completely new place *psychically* that I have awakened to? Being in a completely different environment and schedule gets me thinking about and evaluating who I am, and musing about what it is that I am doing with my life. **Am I being/doing the best possible me**, I'm asking myself and getting curious about.

Most people don't awaken in the morning and think that this day is mine to choose. We tend to do things on automatic pilot. We don't think: how will I experience and fill my day, what will I focus on; where will I use and direct my energy, the thoughts I'll choose to have in my head... the actions I'll choose to do... are all mine and my choosing... **I'm thinking about how important, and in fact crucial it is, to step outside our own world and look back at it; at ourself from the outside.**

So in this reflective mode a thought comes forward. I have been flipping lately between seeing myself on the one hand as a person of huge worth and impact, compared to on the other, being a mere tiny speck in the bigger scheme of things. And flying pretty well always brings this perspective to the fore for me. Being high up above everything it is so awesome to be able to take in such large, wide-ranging, feels like never-ending, vistas below. It might be huge ranges of snow capped rugged mountains or continuous, boundless spans of oceans or then as we approach an airport there is an endless sea of lights... And each one of those lights I make up represents buildings or houses and in the buildings are people... and in China there are 1.3 billion people (how huge is that!!), here in Beijing 13 million... feeling like that tiny speck again...

And then I'm musing about all the different cultures and societies that I could have been born into. What if I had been born in Beijing instead of Australia? Or, in a little village in rural China like in the movie I saw the other night where a bowl of water was used for about 20 children to wash their face and then a donkey drank what was left over.... I'm thinking of the choices different environments would offer me. Then I'm thinking about all the things that I am attached to from my culture, my socialization, and my upbringing, all the external trappings that I let define who I am.

So what is the completely new place *psychically* that I have awakened to?

I'm thinking about how do we actually change anyway?

It's like going through a series of opening windows until one day we actually see the view outside differently because now **we've changed the lens through which we are looking**. We think the view has changed when really it is I, the one who is doing the looking who has changed.

A simple example of this is you're out somewhere in a social setting in a room full of people and no-one comes up and talks to you. You could look around the room through the window/lens/attitude of; these people don't like me and have thoughts such as they are ignoring, neglecting or rejecting me.... Or you could look through the window/lens/attitude of these people are shy and uncomfortable and unable to come forward and engage and there are many potential new friends here. Or, as a person I met the other night shared with me, while he was traveling by himself around Australia he had the attitude in meeting new people of "these are my people" and we take care of each other. Immediately notice **the experience you create inside yourself from your own thinking, from the lens you experience reality and your life through....**

What a special time of the year it is to be reflecting on our lives. It is probably one of the most favoured times as this is the time when we are encouraged to create New Year resolutions. So to do that **I offer you the suggestion to somehow step outside your own world and look back at it, and at yourself from the outside.**

So for me the greatest awakening is that **this day is mine to choose.**

How I will experience and fill my day, what I will focus on, where I will use and direct my energy, the thoughts I'll choose to have in my head.....the actions I'll choose to do.....are all mine and my choosing...**I am the one choosing.**

In every moment of the day the choices I make, will make a difference to my life, and directly make a difference to the world.....I can choose to **both** feel like a tiny speck **and** I can choose to feel that I am a person of huge worth and impact.

The environment in my head is the most powerful world that I live in.

Here's a simple practice from Raphael Cushnir's new book "*How Now: 100 Ways to Celebrate the Present Moment*" that may assist with making your own choices:

#29 Reasons for Being

Beyond obvious goals, such as making a living or taking care of our loved ones, each of us has one or more essential reasons for being. Here are some common reasons: to love, to learn, to serve others, to heal, to create, to enjoy life. Knowing your reasons for being makes the act of being a more graceful and joyous experience.

The Practice: Find a quiet moment. Ask yourself; *What are my reasons for being?* When an idea comes up, say it out loud and see if it rings true. Notice what happens in your heart, your gut, and throughout your body in the wake of this statement. It might take a few tries before you strike gold. You know you've found a true reason for being when your body says, "Yes!" Your own personal *yes* might come as a knowing, a sense of peace, or a surge of uplifting energy.

For the next week, repeat your reason for being each morning before you get out of bed. Imagine it permeating every cell in your body. Then, throughout the day, notice whether you live more “on purpose.”

Happy New Year! May 2007 be a year full of intentional choices! Be it around choosing a new job, new study & courses, a new relationship, having babies, a new house or home, new projects and businesses, a new diet or body, or new ways of doing all the things you've always done...I'm excited for and admire you for making your life more happy and authentic.

Let us rejoice and sit back and count our many blessings and applaud all our amazing journeys and lives. I've experienced enormous growth and movement and breakthroughs of so many people and I want to thank you for *daring to be different* and reclaiming more and more of the beautiful essence that you are. Let me leave you with a new quote a friend sent me:

“Whether you believe you can or you believe you can't, you are right.” Henry Ford.