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When I asked myself what angers me and the first thing that came to mind was hypocrisy. When asked what was an organizing principle in my life the answer was Honesty. Later Cathy and I were talking about principles and we were struck by not only Honesty but how the other 15 guidelines and Buddhist teachings were intrinsically woven into Angeles Arrien's The Four-Fold Way. I would like to share with you what I learned from reading her book and invite you to make your own connections.

The Four-Fold Way by Angeles Arrien

Show Up and Choose to Be Present
Pay Attention to What Has Heart and Meaning
Tell the Truth without Blame and Judgement
Be Open to Outcome, not Attached to Outcome

Arlene introduced us to The Four-Fold Way on a Wed. night about 5 years ago. When Arlene said that she valued these guidelines, I paid attention. We were given a card which I put next to my meditation Buddha and made it my intention to use these principles in my daily my life.

Angeles Arrien was born in 1940 in the Basque region of the Pyrennes. Her father was a sheepherder and in 1947 found work in Idaho so her family moved there on a 3 year renewable visa. Throughout her childhood they rotated between living in Spain and Idaho. She says being raised in 2 different cultures influenced her decision to make cultural anthropology her life's work. Her PH.D. research demonstrated that virtually all sacred teachings of ancient and tribal peoples draw on the power of 4 archetypes. They believe in each of us there is a Warrior, Healer, Visionary and Teacher. When these archetypes are developed and expressed one can live in harmony and balance internally and externally.

Show up and choose to be present is the guiding principle for the internal warrior. Warrior is another word for leader.

A developed leader shows honor and respect for all things, acknowledging the strengths and weaknesses in themselves and others A leader is able to stay open and flexible to reviewing and changing a point of view

The power of the mind is used to direct ones inner voice to develop confidence. This is needed to behave responsibly by aligning words with actions. Angeles says "the two causes for all misunderstandings: are not saying what we mean and not doing what we say"

An effective leader will set limits and boundaries and have the resolve to take a stand on a specific issue

Being present means bringing forward our mental, emotional, spiritual and physical selves and sharing our strengths with the world by serving humanity fairly and justly

Pay attention to what has heart and meaning is the guiding principle for the healer in us.

Angeles tells us that "healers in all major traditions recognize that the power of love is the most potent healing force available to all human beings". And that unexpressed love is the greatest remorse.

Healers extend the arms of love: thru acknowledgement, acceptance, recognition, validation and gratitude.

It is believed by many native cultures that the four chambers of the heart are the source for sustaining emotional and spiritual health. By asking, "Am I full-hearted, open-hearted, clear-hearted, and strong-hearted one can examine the condition of their heart.

Ancient cultures maintain and renew health and well-being by using 4 healing salves: singing, dancing, storytelling and silence to help them stay balanced and connected.

Tell the truth without blame or judgment is the guiding principle for the visionary

A visionary is able to make the truth visible and the skill to say what is so.

The truth is manifested by giving voice to what we see and sense thru intuition, perception, insight and vision. Meditation, reflection and prayer are the tools that help us find the truth.

Angeles says, "Native cultures of the Americas believe that each individual is "original medicine", nowhere duplicated on the planet We are unique/ original so there is no need to compare or compete with one another. They believe that if ones creative spirit, life dream or purpose on Earth isn't expressed it will be the world's loss.....I am going to switch to first person now since I claimed this as my guiding principle. If I don't express my own ideas and listen to my own voice I will betray myself. My authentic self won't get caught in patterns of denial, blame and self indulgence if I fearlessly refuse to edit, rehearse, perform or hide from the truth.

A visionary sees the inherent creativity, dreams and life goals and uses them for the benefit of all beings. This is what gives meaning to life.

Be open to the outcome, not attached to outcome this is the guiding principle the teacher in all of us needs to become wise and objective.

Shamanic traditions believe wisdom is flexible and fluid.

The teacher's way is to be open to outcome and access wisdom by learning to trust and be comfortable with ambiguity [in some parts of Africa this is known as "walking in the land of gray clouds"

Trust is the container out of which the qualities of wisdom grow clarity, objectivity, discernment and detachment.

It is in times of solitude and silence that one gets in touch with inherent wisdom and ask for guidance and listen and observe what is revealed.

Angeles writes, "Cross culturally, sitting meditation teaches us about the art of observation, where ideas and images are released as quickly as they are revealed. This is one practice of detachment".

To monitor attachment Angeles suggests, "If we observe what causes us to lose our sense of humor, we can identify our point of attachment.

Where we maintain our sense of humor is where we are detached and can remain flexible".

She goes on to say, "When we don't get pulled in and when we maintain our sense of humor, we demonstrate our own capacity to care deeply from a detached place".

and "When we are able to patiently wait for clarity instead of acting or reacting in a state of ignorance or confusion we are accessing our inner wisdom".

The teacher accepts, where there is gain there is loss and where there is life there is death.

Many cultures use rituals to acknowledge major life transitions. They call on their ancestors for guidance and support thru life and especially at the time of death because they know their ancestors have had the ultimate experience of letting go.

Conclusion

"When we are open to being powerful, loving, creative, and wise, we experience the world and ourselves as the many splendid things that we are."