



DEBBIE FORD:

Hate is Not a Sexy Word



Carl Jung had an expression, “I’d rather be whole than good.” These simple words hold a world of meaning, and could open the door to an entirely new world, if we could only drink them in. If we learn to accept the totality of our humanity—both the dark and the light—and take back the parts of ourselves that we project onto other people as hate, we would live in an entirely different world. We’d stop pointing our fingers, we’d stop blaming each other, and we would stop being both the victim and the victimizer. Right now, our world is largely characterized by hate—hate going back and forth between people of different nations, between people of different religions, between people of different ethnicities, but most notably: *between people of different perspectives.*

I was a trial consultant earlier in my life. I got paid to find new perspectives through which to try a case. At a certain point, I had to stop. I simply couldn’t do it anymore because I saw that we could manipulate the legal system in unbelievable ways. All a trial consultant has to do is come up with a new perception that people can buy into.

Truth always has a big range. To embrace the full range of the truth is to transform hate. To become whole is to become neutral, to embrace the totality of an issue, not just one piece, one side, or one perspective. Wisdom comes with knowing that our perspective isn’t the only true perspective; there are many ways to view any situation. But in a world where the highest value is to be good and not bad, to be right and never wrong, our perceptions quickly shrink and take on unnatural limitations. To be whole is to be both dark and light. If we are accepted for being whole,

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rather than for being good—a paradigm that assumes that all of us are both good and bad—it is easy to see and hear what doesn't work. Our perceptions expand to include the whole.

We live in a paradigm that believes that there are good people and bad people. Everyone feels this pressure at some level: not wanting to be found out as one of those bad people. But truth has many sides. Nothing and no-one is all one or the other.

Hate is not a sexy word. People really don't want to hear about it. When speaking to groups of people around the country, I often say, "I want you to get the level where you come face to face with your own hate." Audiences just cringe. They say, "Oh, well, maybe I don't feel that good about myself, but I don't have a problem with hate."

Then I ask, "How many of you embrace your mean self, or your inconsiderate self, or your rude self, or your selfish self? And how many want to get rid of those parts?" People begin to see that they *hate* those parts of themselves. But if you hate anything, you hate everything. We are the world, we're a microcosm of the macrocosm, and hate is a pressing

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global issue. We have to deal with hate both internally and externally, because not only are we promoting hate unconsciously, but hate is why we don't take care of our families and why our educational system, by and large, is in such a sad state. If we have an internal shift and learn that it's okay to take care of ourselves, then we will start taking better care of our world.

The process of becoming whole and embracing the totality begins when we stop hating. It is so important that we stop the internal violence that is hate. And the process must begin internally. People hate themselves for not taking care of themselves, for not making their own unique contribution, for not being the greatest expression of who they are. But they don't know what to do with that hate. In most cases, they don't even know that it is hate, so they project it out into the world.

Owning one's projections is crucial for healing. Being able to notice the tendency to transfer parts of oneself on to another requires awareness. And this is a fresh, new awareness; it is not one we have grown into at the level of the collective. But it is coming into our consciousness, and watching the awareness emerge is fascinating. In "Shrek 2," for example, the donkey character says, "Don't you go projecting on me." And even though it slips by 90% of the people watching, that expression would not have been used ten years ago. Nobody would have known what the character was talking about.

Taking responsibility for the projections and being able to withdraw them requires practice. Through practice we mature and gain skill. In the spiritual movement, unfortunately, a lot of people are preaching, “Let’s just love one another.” But the dark side can’t digest that conversation. It is not unlike something Dr. David Simon, Medical Director of the Chopra Center for Wellbeing in Carlsbad, California, pointed out at a recent retreat he and I led together. He said, “People carry around elaborate packages full of all these vitamins and constantly douse themselves with all these expensive nutrients. But the body can’t absorb them because it’s so toxic.” That is what shadow work is about: detoxing the emotional body. Once hate is recognized and seen for what it is, we can begin to digest and eliminate it. Only then can the positive thoughts and affirmations and love really take hold.

Detoxing the emotional body is both an intellectual and emotional process. Intellectually, we have to understand the programming called “human” and the whole array that comes with being human. What gets in the way of our healing the most is denial. We all have our foibles and our blind spots. There is only one thing a person can’t see—and it’s him- or herself. Walk into a room full of a hundred people or a thousand people and there is only one person you can’t see and that’s you. The external world is a mirror. That is how we see ourselves: by what I love in you, what excites me in you, what I loathe in you, and what disturbs me in you. It is all a reflection of me. Most people aren’t willing to go to their co-workers, to their family members, to their children and say, “Do you see something in me that you don’t like, or that’s disturbing to you?” Wouldn’t it be interesting if we asked that question once in a while rather than always attempting to validate our light side?

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If we can’t see the dark side we cannot harness the power it holds because we displace it with our denial. One client I’m now working with is a woman who hates people who change plans after they are made. She can’t see at all the times when she changes a plan. Hate makes it impossible to see where you are that thing you hate, because you’ve made it wrong. That is what gets in the way of us clearly perceiving: Who Am I? How do I show up for others? What could I alter? What patterns of my own need to be transformed? Instead, most of us are scared of what we might find out.

People attending shadow process workshops often say, “I was thinking about coming for two years, but I was terrified.” Basically, they are saying that they’re terrified of themselves. And if we’re terrified of ourselves, how are we going to interact with the rest of the world?

Denial is rooted in our struggle to be one of the good people. Projection and displacement of our own misbehavior adds to the toxicity

of the emotional body. We cannot release what we cannot acknowledge exists. So the first step in emotional detoxing is recognition of the dark. This self-recognition, combined with the larger recognition of the entire range of programming called “human,” is a prerequisite to being able to release patterns we have held onto. When we’re children, we laugh or cry or scream freely, but as we grow up, we hold our expression in. Then we have to visit the dark side. Detoxing doesn’t have to be painful; there are many different ways to do it. But one way or another, we have to do our emotional work.

Projection shows up all the time in politics and international relations. We project our hate onto the terrorists. And they do it back to us; we’re the terrible Americans. The projection goes both ways. Human beings have always done this; the players change, but if we look back through history, it is nothing new. The people who support a war make peace activists wrong and the peace activists make the war supporters wrong.

My question is: Is any of that wrong? There have always been wars. There’s always been hate and killing. It’s just what happens. War and peace—isn’t that life? Isn’t it part of what happens in the world? Given

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that this is our collective human experience, how could we evolve, and work out our differences in a more loving way? When we relax out of hating, we can ask the right questions.

This is an internal process. Once we shift internally, we can begin to ask questions that further our social evolution. We can dip into the collective unconscious where all the answers lie. All the answers are within us. Tapping this inner wisdom is vital because we’re such an outer-based culture—always looking outside of ourselves for the answers. Deepak Chopra teaches that we must learn self-referral. Without it, we always have outside influences telling us what we should think and how we should feel and what we should do. Learning to go inside to hear the answers, to connect with our wisdom and our own divinity, opens the door to knowledge. Listening inwardly is essential if we are going to shift.

Compassion is the key. Compassion includes tolerance of our humanity, and acceptance of what is inside us—both the dark and the light. Learning to forgive ourselves, to be conscious, aware and gentle with ourselves is vital. If we do that internally we will do it externally as well.

In a Shadow Process workshop I taught a few years ago, a German woman stood out. I asked the critical question: “What is the darkest part of you, the part you’re most ashamed of?” She started crying. She shared with the group that her fear was that someone would call her a Nazi, or that she could be viewed as a killer of Jews. Her grandfather had fought

in World War II, and she was still carrying the shame and embarrassment of her nation being capable of that kind of hate.

Out of that process, a whole world of new understanding opened up to her. She realized that her entire life up to that point was a reaction to, and a defense against, what she did not want to be. She saw that she had moved to America and decided not to have any German friends. She had cut herself off from her father and didn't have any relationship with her family because she didn't want to be *that*. She had covered all the shame and pain under a blanket of denial. When she forgave herself, and her family for participating in the crimes, it was transformative. She was able to reconnect with her family.

This woman experienced a healing of the heart. We hear a lot of talk about the need to open our hearts, but the truth of the matter is that our hearts are already open. The heart can't close. But we can put walls around it. If we start to melt all those right-wrong interpretations, conclusions, and judgments of what's good and bad, then we can experience the open heart. With an open heart, I can love myself when I'm angry and love myself even when I'm hateful. Hate in itself isn't the problem; it's hating the hate that fuels the fire and causes people to do dreadful things.

Fortunately or unfortunately, pain is a great motivator. More than anything else, pain makes people wake up and open their eyes. When we are comfortable, we don't make changes, look for new answers, or invent new solutions. Pain can also signal the need to embrace a larger perspective: to know that our perceptions aren't the only true perceptions. Imagine if we started teaching children in kindergarten that there is no hard and fast reality. Imagine teaching them the nature of both perception and perspective—how these shape our view of reality. What if, instead of teaching our children to be “right” and “good,” we taught them that everybody has a different reality and just because your reality is different from mine doesn't mean that your reality is wrong, it just means that it's different. Teaching just one course—about shifting our perceptions and looking at different perspectives—each school year, would create a whole new human race. It would produce miracles.

In a world without hate upon hate, where people can acknowledge and digest the dark side because they don't have to hide it to prove they are good—mistakes become a catalyst for something great. People who do their emotional work and go through the shadow process—in whatever form—begin living fully. When we start being the best we can be, the world looks like a different place. From this new perspective, we can change the world overnight.

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