

Who are you being for others?

Written by Shelley Lowther
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"When someone shoots an arrow at you, don't be there."

My teacher Baron Baptiste reminded me of this Zen proverb last month standing on a beach in Maya Tulum.

We started our conversation (a conversation that helped me reset my bearings and shift my listening) somewhere else, but what was coming up was that I was upset about feeling targeted. Unsafe. I felt a real pain in realizing that even though I strive to bring joy and openness into people's lives, I am sometimes met with adversity. In fact, not everyone likes me.

For a people pleaser like me, someone who always wants to make others happy, this was like a sock in the gut.

Not everyone likes me.

I thought I knew that. I thought I had come to terms with it. I guess not.

One thing I hear a lot is surprise that people in the yoga world often treat each other the same way people in the "real" world do. We can be competitive. Untrusting. Maybe even mean. It really should not surprise anyone – the yoga world is full of people. We all make mistakes.

The difference is in how we deal with it. If a yogi is living their yoga, they will right wrongs in the moment, and not wait for time to heal all wounds. (Time does NOT heal wounds.) A practicing yogi will also realize that if someone wrongs them – it is not ABOUT them.

When someone treats you poorly, it does not speak to who you are, or who you are being. It speaks to how the person mistreating you is being. If you haven't figured it out yet, who we are being for ourselves is who we are being for others.

The late, great Martin Luther King Jr. said, "'Life's most persistent and urgent question is: 'What are you doing for others?'" Dr. King was a man who lived his life in service. And doing for others is important – we should serve where we can and give where we can. But what if the real agent

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of change in the world runs a level deeper?

I want to repose MLK's question in a manner that Baron has taught me: Who are you being for others?

In a world of do, do, do, do... what if we start BEING more than we are doing? What if we start treating ourselves – and others – how we would like to be treated? What if we grew so sure about our own path that we became unmessable with? Unflappable in our goals and our service? What if, the next time someone shot an arrow at us, we weren't there, because we were too busy living?

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