

## *One Life: Living in Joy and Sorrow*

As I have written many times, we live in one interconnected world: We are not separate! While our sense of individuality and separateness are true and helpful at a relative level of reality, these are not ultimately true.

From this knowing, the biggest question that lives for me is: How do I (we) live authentically with: joy/suffering, love/violence, delight/pain, gratitude/horror occurring simultaneously in our experience.

The endless stream of suffering in our personal and collective worlds can break our hearts everyday. Only by an anti-life armoring, can we be immune to the hurting of the innocent occurring right NOW.

### **Universal Love, Universal Suffering**

When we live in the reality of interconnectivity, even on our most joyful days, there is always immense suffering in our world. If we are truly universal in our love - if calling others our brothers and sisters is not just words - how do we allow the joy of being alive, the gratitude for this moment, while knowing the immensity of universal suffering.

*The current devastation of Ukraine - the images of children dying in their parent's arms - shakes us to the core*

AND

*The whole-hearted serenade of early spring birds, the delicate crocuses emerging from the earth, tingle in our marrow.*

The gift of life, with its the miraculous possibility of awareness, (i.e. Life knowing itself in our experiencing) is not dependent on positive events. Our capacity for appreciation and loving-kindness is not destroyed by the dreadful. As some survivors of Auschwitz or other unfathomably inhumane instances from our collective past demonstrate, the light of the human heart will not be extinguished by the darkest of the dark.

We are big; we are a multitude of possibilities, all existing at the same time!

**There is nobility in allowing our heartfelt allegiance with suffering to co-existent with our unbridled faith in the goodness of Life.**

This is our difficult, challenging and wondrous path....

Russell

### **Hearts Broken Closed, Hearts Broken Open**

Hearts break in two ways - Closed or Open  
When overwhelmed by hopelessness and powerlessness  
When fear rules our hearts  
They break closed

When we can include the horrors and fears  
Without getting lost in our  
Confusion, separateness and fear

When we remember  
From our deepest Self  
That we are all  
Born from Love  
Our hearts break open!