

# The Path of Spiritual Development

By: Dudley Tower

1. When you are born into this world you are given both a spark of the Divine, and a body. So you are partly a non-material, transcendent, perfect Being – but you are also encased in a solid shell that makes you OF and IN this world.
2. When you are an infant you will interact with other people, events, and things from a sense of neediness. Some of your needs will be fully met, others partially, others not at all. You will learn to get more of what you want if you act or don't act a certain way, and avoid painful interactions with your parents and others by acting or not acting other ways. These interactions, synthesized from the infant's and toddler's view of neediness, creates what is known as the "PERSONALITY" – or EGO.
3. This personality will express many wonderful qualities about yourself, but other – just as wonderful – qualities will be missing, because these qualities were not mirrored, emphasized, or supported by your parents and others. These missing or undeveloped qualities become "HOLES" in the potential of your Being. At a very deep level, you will feel these holes as loss - and want to fill them.
4. Since the so-called "real world" tells you that you can fill these holes by making more money, finding the right mate, having a family, becoming famous, owning more objects, etc. – you start out trying to fill these holes with things you find outside yourself - in your external environment.
5. However, since the real purpose of life is to achieve your full potential as a human being – having the ability to fully express all of your Divine/Essential qualities such as love, compassion, empathy, strength, responsibility, discernment, beauty, care, etc. - you must eventually learn to fill these holes from within.
6. In order to accomplish this, you must begin to look at life as a series of lessons to be learned. There are no mistakes or accidents, good or bad things that happen to you - merely lessons. Each day you will be given multiple opportunities to learn lessons about yourself. These lessons will help you to dis-identify with those objects, people, ideas, parental rules and messages, societal norms (anything you have become attached to in order to fill your holes from the outside), so that you might fill those holes from within - by allowing your Divine/Essential qualities to spontaneously emerge and be expressed.
7. You may not like these lessons. And, at first it might seem quite painful to realize you have so many attachments/identifications that prevent you from achieving your spiritual potential. Therefore, your first reaction will be to block or defend against an understanding of these lessons. This might seem like the smart thing to do, but each lesson will continue to be presented to you in various forms until it is learned. Most people never learn from their lessons, and spend their entire lives repeating the same failed patterns of behavior over and over. These people never come close to achieving their potential.
8. For those who choose a path of spiritual development, your learning of lessons never ends. Each lesson is presented in layers that can be handled only at your level of development at the time. Each lesson keeps coming back to you throughout life in deeper and more complex ways. Each new lesson learned creates greater awareness, less self-identification, and increasing access to one's Divine/Essential qualities. Enlightenment is not some goal – some ultimate state – for most of us. Instead, it simply involves an increasing love and appreciation for this process - and the progress we are making.
9. All of our negative emotions – hatred, fear, anger, jealousy, envy, etc. – are the result of our trying to fill our holes from the outside. The answer to joy and fulfillment in our lives lies within us. If you stay with this process I have outlined it will one day become less painful, and eventually feel joyful, mysterious, exhilarating, satisfying, and flow from one interaction to another in an endless spiral of learning and growth. You will be having so much fun, and you will become so increasingly joyous, you will not be able to conceive of living your life in any other way.

## Addendum:

The greatest lesson most of us can learn is that other people are merely mirrors of who we are. We are constantly "projecting" onto others both our own good, and not so good, qualities. You cannot love or hate something about another person unless it is something you love or hate about yourself. Those people we interact with who catalyze our strongest reactions – love, empathy, hate, envy, fear – are our greatest teachers. We need to become open to and grateful for their presence, and the lessons they provide us.