

Imagine an authoritarian adult, who might feel menacing to a young child, telling her (or him) before communion that the sacramental wine is the blood of Jesus or in a different context, imagine a young child exposed to images and stories of the Hindu Goddess, Kali. Sounds like material for childhood nightmares to me. Unfortunately, early fearful experiences and messages tend to get etched in our psyches and bodies for posterity. As Piaget and many others after him have postulated children's thinking is quite concrete up till a certain age, which means that metaphor and symbolism are lost on them. So in this context, it would be wise and necessary to sit with a child and help her understand so that fear and other emotions can be diffused. And some stories, films and enactments are simply not child friendly. Of course, as adults we understand that things are not meant to always be understood as literal, but if we have not integrated a fearful memory held by our earlier self or the emotions and beliefs around it, wine or Kali or any other story could automatically trigger fear or physical responses. What's more, they can potentially erect walls that block integration of original events that would set us free. Every time an old fear is triggered, if it is dismissed or suppressed it tends to reinforce the original experience.

All this takes place automatically below our conscious awareness. This is why it is essential we work on integrating early disempowering experiences through making sense of material and healing through a combination of modalities, one being *good* therapy. Our conscious knowing is a very small percentage, whereas our unconscious activity is way over 90%. It makes sense that we seek ways of better 'knowing thou self' and bridging the chasm between the conscious known and the unconscious unknown. Some people are more inclined to search their depths than others. Some fear the process and so are not willing to engage. For many it is not possible. Survival priorities and responsibilities may not allow it and for others the time may not be ripe. People have different developmental tasks in different stages of their life. There are different ways of living and we should respect people's choices and circumstances. In all cases, stigma around people's choice to engage with self awareness and self development processes should be removed because it serves no one but our oppressors. On the other hand, striving to constantly, fix ourselves and believing we are not enough or defective, could also be traced back to disempowering experiences like the ones mentioned above.

Environmental resistance to curiosity, knowledge and acquisition of information should alert us. We could begin by asking *why* there is resistance to our choices whether they involve self exploration and

healing, exercise, dietary changes, returning to education or picking up art..... *Why should we not question? Who does ignorance and silence serve?* Below cultural resistance to our natural curiosity and desire to explore and grow often lie messages that encourage fearful bowing to authority and discourage questioning the status quo or authority of any kind. Environmental resistance shows up in many ways and reaches us via many people or routes. In the past I used to go to yoga classes with a friend. She was into yoga and so we rarely missed a session. Then after a while she started bringing me leaflets condemning yoga from a religious point of view. These are the times we need to be present to environmental and cultural dynamics and reasons behind events. Being present allows for discernment of contradictions and repetitive patterns. Before we brush things off as insignificant we could sit with them because they could give us important information. Working towards becoming more and more present in our life reduces the chances of our reaching a place of great urgency and emergency.

External resistance to doing inner work meets our own inner resistance and fears. It is easy to retreat from our trauma because there's a fear that if we embrace and move through it the trauma or the pain will consume us. Thomas Hubl believes that those who have worked through their trauma and dark shadows know that actually it moves through us. He believes that trauma is embedded into our being and how we define ourselves and other people and that if we look around us we will start to see dysfunctional patterns of behavior playing at a systemic level because trauma gets passed on from one generation to another, and it seems that we all have an 'unseen lake' in us that is modulated in the neuro-network of our brains, which doesn't allow us to see our traumas. We are afraid to see and feel because we fear it will dismantle what is familiar and feels safe to us. We fear that we might discover that we are alienated from aspects of ourself. We are afraid of our emotions and suppressed grief and of our vulnerability becoming visible.