

Session 11.3 Conversation with Orland Bishop

Living in the Gift

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C.E.: Hey everybody, this conversation with my dear friend and deep soul ally Orland Bishop is part of a longer conversation. I excerpted the parts that are most relevant to this course. I'm doing other work with Orland if you are interested in where we are going in this conversation and learning more from him. I have some pod casts with him and I will have more material with him over the next year. This recording could probably go pretty much anywhere in the course because it goes so deep in just half an hour. We started, as you will hear, with the question I most frequently hear which is, "how do I do what I love in the world and still make a living at it?" So that's where the conversation picks up. I hope you enjoy it. I encourage you to listen with humility at the amazing quality he transmits. Possibly even listen to it more than once.

C.E.: What do we do about this conundrum, this dilemma of the conflict between what our heart calls us to do and the necessities, or so they appear, of complying with the money program?

O.B.: Well I think the sharing you just did; you prepared the context for how the gift could be understood. The paradigm really have changed so when you said the emerging or the new paradigm of what it means to stand in the world now, one has to consider that the education that we are having about our gift is not consistent with the nature of the gift consciousness now. It used to be that you would be educated to "re-find" your gift.

C.E.: Yes.

O.B.: Here, because the gift was already a kind of inner perception of what I am bringing to the world, it still has some elements of that, but not as a *content*, but a *context* meaning what I bring now is a deeper capacity to take interest in the world the way it is. The world is actually the gift to us now. Now that we're bringing gifts to the world in a way of the paradigm that preceded us, so the paradigm used to be "what lives in the soul?" so the paradigma was the soul, and still is. So the soul is the paradigm, not the consciousness that delivers it, or we say the intellect. We wouldn't know the gift before we take interest in the world. Not any more.

C.E.: Now this seems like a very abstract answer, I'm thinking of a young man in anguish, so wanting to pour forth his gifts and he can't. The only job he can find is at the checkout counter in a supermarket.

O.B.: Yes, so you take that up first, if that's the only thing. The first part of the gift is to take interest in something. You actually take up something and give it meaning and the meaning giving process is the gift. When it clarifies enough levels of that purpose of giving something meaning, it reveals the next level of the gift which is to create a potential to transmute what you took up into what it could really become. The gift is now actually the work on the transmutation of the elements both in the personality of the person and in the culture at the same time. Part of the realization, it used to be that gifts were these capacities that would create our civilization through whatever orientation of crafts or science we bring.

C.E.: Right.

O.B.: The gift is actually now coexisting between two or more people as a potential field, almost like creating out of nothing. We wouldn't find what we think we should find in the world, we find something that actually might be even counterproductive to our interim, but taking it up begins another chemical process in the personality.

C.E.: So to paraphrase, it used to be that the world had ready made places that we could gravitate into, that we could occupy and through those contribute our gifts to something that was meaningful to us. Now, because the world is in this phase of transition, the ready made places in the world, they invite our participation in something that is not the right expression of our gifts. Therefore, the right expression of our gifts takes on a new character which is, as you were saying, creating something from nothing. We then have to understand that whatever position we are put in, even if it is the checkout lane of the supermarket or even if it is your parent's basement because you can't even find a job or you can't motivate yourself to fill out the application forms, that circumstance is a gift to us and it is the pallet or canvas upon which we can create what needs to be created in the world and that process of creation could happen too... one way I like to describe it is that whatever position that you're put into is the vehicle for your actual gift even if being the barista in a coffee shop doesn't seem like an expression of your gifts, or a full expression of it. You have to trust that there always an opportunity to unfold the gift to the level of expression that it is ready to take. Even if it seems otherwise and to transcend the conditioning of the past that told us what a valid expression of our gifts looked like, which was to have a recognised and highly paid and highly appreciated role in something that was identifiable to the culture. We do not have that anymore so we need to divest ourselves of that conditioning that told us what a valid expression of our gifts looks like. I feel like people really need support in trusting themselves to do that.

O.B.: That is the right of passage for our youth in our culture because the experience with money the way that it has distorted the nature of how we feel the gift to be. The gift is really a natural propensity to connect with the nature elements first, which is in our perception meaning that I could actually find more value in going to the earth based activities first before I go to the higher career options in the technology fields or political fields or even in the areas of "civil" civility, to take interest in someone else's wellbeing is an important part of the gift. One can say it is the water element in the gift, to create peace first. We have now a new criteria of what the earth must have in order for a new culture to take root. It must have peace. It must have a certain way, an ecology where nature again has some degree of reverence in our observation of the world. We cannot bypass that and say I'm going towards my gift and the world is polluted. It's not a given anymore. We did not come to our gifts that way in the prior ages of human civilization. We came to our gifts because something was prepared. In a declining culture, declining world or civilization, we find it hard to take up what is already polluted, contaminated and destroyed because it doesn't feel good in our inner perception. This is really why the work is so different, because it is not about the current realities, about the future reality. To get to future, to create out of this process, we then have to know something about our own human nature.

C.E.: Right. It's like gifts are called into manifestation by needs. Gifts don't make sense in the absence of a need. If you're in a situation where you want to give people bread but nobody's hungry that's not even actually a gift. There's something else that wants to be given. So in our current time, the need that calls forth gifts is the need for peace, is the need for ecological healing, social healing, justice, compassion, these kind of things and

in the absence of those, I think this is what you are saying, nothing else is really even relevant. It's not the time for these other ways of expressing gifts. I don't want to make this a universal declaration. I think there is still a place for mathematics and astronomy and things like that, but as for the main thrust of society right now, it's got to be towards peace. It's just so obvious that that's what the world needs. As we spiral into more and more polarization... you just can't ignore that.

O.B.: Right, right, yes. So a civil society emerges. One of the characteristics we see in it is the need for agreements to actually enter into a shared understanding first of what the fundamental principle of the world is, which is nature. It has to go back to understand the fundamental basis of our world. It's not a man made world first. It's a nature based reality upon that which we then build our arts and sciences, our civilization. In the context of that we have to begin now to create agreements that support the capacity to share in the understanding process, meaning that if I could understand you I'd understand my gifts in a better way because my gifts are not relevant without the context of sharing. It's not whether I have my gift; it's that we have our gifts. The *we* part of this is critical, it's called the collective consciousness field and we cannot bypass that to go to a personal interest field for anything any longer. This criteria of the soul that we must actually experience a shared interest in order for our gifts to feel more present in our own lives is consistent at least for me in observing the mentorship work we have been doing with young people for the last twenty years. When we brought them to a relationship first then they remember that they have something meaningful to say. I remember when I met some years ago in 1998 with a Zulu elder and this is what he told me first, to use the word indaba. Indaba means I have something to say. The critical part of the gift is actually an inner voice to share one story, to share one's longing and then when the community is created for that another part of that consciousness expresses itself. So the person's actually looking to be seen for their capacity to bring something, but we have to create a place for them.

C.E.: Right, because these gifts, our gifts, don't exist in isolation. They're only relevant through cooperation with other people. Well, most gifts at least, maybe there are some gifts that operate purely in isolation and it's just your own two hands that are relevant, but for most people we are participating in the social construction of something, and that, as you were saying, requires an agreement or common vision and also an understanding of what other people are offering and why they are here so that our own gifts can be coordinated with them so we have to take an interest with others. So it comes down to, and I'm just restating what you're saying, the gifts cannot operate without these deep conversations in which we take an interest in the other person and seek to understand what their gifts are and what their gifts want to work toward. Only then can we understand what our own gifts want to work towards. So the answer to the young person's question, it starts with an orientation for one thing, simply understanding that, generally speaking, there is no ready made place that's socially, economically recognised for a lot of the gifts coming out and to understand that the real work is peace. The real work is healing and then to be curious and attentive to the needs of the context that we're in and the gifts of the other people who are in that context and to trust that we wouldn't be with this other person in this context if we were not being offered a new opportunity to exercise a gift. Like basically understanding that the universe is generous in it's offering of opportunities to give our gifts. I would add that.

O.B.: Yes, so to add a little bit more about the peace process. It's not just the end of violence; in a way it is an inner preparation to receive inspiration. If the longing does not become a kind of receptacle for receiving inspiration, the world will not look meaningful to young people. Part of the peace process, how do you resolve the longing from something that you're looking for out into the world, something that allows you to take up the world and come to peace with it. Come to peace with the fact that you give meaning to the world. The world doesn't come with meaning, we give it meaning and this is the first key in the exercise of refining the consciousness to this age of worth is that the skills that we're looking for are actually improvisational skills, they're not trained and skilled... it's not like to have to learn it by going to school. This is the kind of spontaneous remembering of the future, and this is the critical part of our current age and the young people who live in this current society is that they have the capacity to remember things that they weren't taught. This is what peace does, it liberates the person from feeling to be not a knower of reality, but the knowing we are looking for is not a trained intellect, is a trained social interest, a trained will process so the social will is what is being called for in this emerging civilization now.

C.E.: So peace, yes. Trying to feel into, to explore what really is the core essence of peace. One way to think of it is an orientation that's distinct from the orientation of not just war, but control or the exercising of force to interrupt the natural flow and evolution of things, a fight against the world. Peace is, at the extreme it's totally irrational if you're facing an implacable irredeemable enemy. Peace then is the delusion of fools. It's also irrational and foolish to be at peace with the world if you understand the world as arbitrary or hostile or indifferent to human wellbeing and to any purposeful evolution. So I'm really looking for what is the perceptual ground of peace that we can offer, not to say that perceptual ground is the most important thing, but it's part of the peace orientation. I think that more important than the perceptual ground would be the energetic ground, feeling the vibration of love, trust, things like that, but I'm wondering if there might be one more thing you can say about "what is the essence of peace?"

O.B.: First, the first essence of peace is to transform the rational mind into higher function where it would take up what seems impossible or irrational. So given what you shared earlier, that yes, it might be considered irrational to see an enemy and hold a space of peace. This is the act of transforming the lens itself through which I see. By changing this chemistry of my own vision I would see not just an enemy but the future of that prospect. This is a kind of clairvoyance; it's a kind of development in my perceptive field to see beyond the limits of what is given. So what is not given in this field of observation? The future comes with every content that I observe, but I don't see the future, I see the thing itself. The idea that was introduced by Gerta in *The Science of Metamorphosis*, that everything that's given has its future stages in it. If you would observe the seed you will see the tree in the seed. If you could really observe it you will find an inner picture of what that seed would become. This is now hundreds of years in our culture which we have taken up that way of observing reality. So part of the exercise of this next level schooling of culture, peace could be considered a prerequisite of transforming our chemistry of life itself so that the higher frequencies that transforms a rational mind into a kind of super conscious state that we can see beyond the limits of our own emotional and mental frameworks, because rationality is a framework in consciousness, it is not a given. Everybody's not rational. We're trained to be rational. We're educated to be such. The child is not rational. Rationality is a construct of a preference, one preference in thinking, but it's not exclusive to thinking. People can be

trained to think mystically, artistically. You know the artist is not rational. The artist takes a note and reframes the combinations so carefully, but improvisationally.

C.E.: Yes

O.B.: It's not a rational process and so part of going further with it, even to the degree of a science, a science that is not rational, we now have to ask questions beyond limits of our known paradigm and go to the source of the paradigm, the source itself is in the soul and so on the level of the soul all constructs of consciousness could be called forth to be able to prepare for seeing the future the way that it could become. So I'm saying that the future's not just a given field, it's a potential and in the potential all of the characteristics of what's given could be observed and then what's not given as well, that from which we can choose. The things that are not given in the field that we could decide for, based on the fact that it's not such a rational choice anymore, but a creative choice in which all the possibilities can be considered.

C.E.: I sometimes see it as a menu of possibilities. There are maybe certain possibilities that are not possible, that are pure fantasy, but there are also many coexisting elements existing in a quantum superposition of states that resolves into one or another actuality depending on where we put our attention. So, practically speaking, I've experienced this myself many times and heard some amazing, amazing stories about the power of seeing the future of another person and holding that as an invitation to that person to step into the timeline that leads into that future. Despite all reason to say, "I know that you're not actually a scary killer," or, "I know you're not a selfish, manipulative son-of-a-bitch. I know you. You're actually someone who yearns to give their gifts to the world. You're actually somebody who wants to pour forth their song. You're actually somebody who really cares about life, somebody who would like to be courageous in service to this." To actually see that in somebody is a powerful invitation for them to be that. It only works if you are actually seeing that and not making it up on ideological grounds saying, "well it must be there because Orland Bishop told me it's there." But to actually see it... I wonder if you have any stories from your mentoring work that exemplified this principle in which you or somebody you work with was able to elicit through their holding and seeing of another the gifts that were latent in that person.

O.B.: The entire twenty years of work that I did with gang intervention work here in Los Angeles and other places. Two people who're maybe considered enemies, who's only choice is to have a future, but not without each others agreement. So, two people in rival gangs want to have a future and say in order to have that future you have to have a relationship with each other because without the trust that one wouldn't try and kill the other that future would be at risk. Part of the transformation of that gang culture was to invite them and invest in them a seeing of each other as the co-creator of the future that both of them wanted. So it was a practise to come into a circle and try to participate in the exercise of seeing not an illusion, but seeing the enemy clearly, like why is this person your enemy now? Let's talk about it. So you have to hear the facts about it then what happens is ok, at the point of saying enough about the enemy, what happens is that there is an interest. When the person is not just that, who are they? Do you think this person is just your enemy or is that person trying to fulfil the role of a father, a brother, a son, you know? What else is this person? So you see the other people's relationships. They don't see that. They never see the relationships of that other rival gang member, they only see the person and this is the first transformational contact. This person belongs to people who love them. So why would somebody love them? Because they want to give them and

support them to have a future. So, this realization, to know that someone else loved this other person, is a transformation in consciousness and so they begin now to appreciate the fact that they could feel in themselves the people who love them and feel for the other, those who love them and this process starts a relationship. Without that it's not possible. You can't bribe them with any "get a job" and all that stuff and end the violence. No, the violence is transformed because they realize the relational context of the other person's life, that someone depends on them for love and life and so we bring them into the life context of the other person's belonging. This creates the shared space first, then we build their other societal things, we build them on top of that, but the creativity is really acknowledging that this person belongs to life and love and light where we see a future. I remember one of the young men who was really ready to commit homicide/suicide because he was so disillusioned and I asked him, "is there a dream that you have for your life?" He couldn't bring anything to consciousness and I said, "well, let us create a dream for you really." So I invited a group of people to the room and we created a space for him and spoke into it, the intention that we are there for him, just that alone. And I asked him, "just come here everyday and we'll spend a little time," because that is all he could commit to, one day at a time really. Not a whole future, not a whole ten years or whatever and within that two weeks he was shot and was pronounced dead really by the paramedics on the way to the hospital, but here's an irrational cognition, in his soul he remembered the intention that someone is holding life for him. Wherever that memory comes from, it came back and revived him back to his body. So they found vital signs and rushed him into surgery and performed the surgery, took these bullets out of him and it's the memory that kept him alive so that the surgeons could do their procedures. The life force kept reviving itself because there was a meaning and purpose for it until he recovered and then three days later he pulled off all the stuff after open chest surgery and walked home because he was more in the will, in the social will, than his own personal will. His own personal will he would have died, but the social will kept him revived and intact and so he is still alive now. Connected to his work, connected to the story of other people's transformation and he became a host for that level of indaba, that level of transformation. So the violence, even though it was a violent act, it didn't cause revenge. It couldn't cause revenge because the revenge had been killed.

C.E.: And the group that you had gathered around him was holding a reality that was distinct from the reality he had been in. The reality he had been in he was someone who could be and was going to be killed, but the new reality that you are collectively holding him in was one in which he is pursuing this dream for his life and has a function in this world. He was shifting into a different universe.

O.B.: I held two observations, one that he was going to be killed because of where the trajectory of his life was going and I hold an alternate space because that is a choice. If you want to live you have to be loved. If you want to orient towards that love then you actually change the orientation of life from the trajectory where the mind says, "these are the only choices I could make," to now choosing where love guides and love guides you into a kind of protection with the collective consciousness to help reinforce where the life choices might be.