

Session 8:  
Jase McDonald's Story  
Living in the Gift  
[Charleseisenstein.org/gift](http://Charleseisenstein.org/gift)

Hello everybody, my name is Jase McDonald. I'm from Melbourne, Australia. I'm finding myself talking to you through quite a wonderful experience that has happened to me, probably about four weeks ago now. I was out riding my bike one evening listening to Charles' talk with Nipun (Mehta). I'd listened to it already once before, as I often do listen two or three times to his talks, but I hadn't listened to Charles' follow-up where we are given the task or the instruction to do a little experiment. As this was going through my ear-buds I rode past a gentleman just sitting on the edge of a walled path, a bike path. It was an older guy and he looked there, but not "there," sort of kind of receding into the bench seat as the world was zooming past him. I thought to myself, "perhaps I could give this guy something because here is an opportunity," but I was like I got my bike, but I don't think that's appropriate, nor was my little mp3 player so I kind of just let it go and busied myself past.

A couple hundred metres up the road I stopped because something was churning in me or working in me. I had Charles in my ear saying "feel into this grounded place of love." I took those (ear-buds) out because that was sort of distracting as I was feeling into the grounded place of love and watching my internal experience and questions coming up, "if I went back what am I going to give this guy?" Then I thought well, I guess time and presence is a gift.

As it was I was trying to get home to put my daughter to bed. I knew my partner would be able to take her to bed if I came back a bit late so it wasn't like I needed to be back, but I wanted to be back to put her to bed. Then I thought, "this guy, I could give him some of my time as a gift." It wouldn't be something I normally do and as I was churning through these questions of, "but what if I'm intruding on his space? What if I get rejected?" All those kind of questions that come up and prevent us perhaps from talking to strangers and feeling into this grounded place of love, something just clicked. It just felt right so I wheeled the bike around and went back and came up to the park bench next to him and asked, "Excuse me, do you mind if I sit down and have a chat?" He looked at me sort of a bit quizzical and said, "Sure." I propped the bike there and sat down next to him and didn't say anything, I just felt into his space and he felt into me. He turned to me under his unkempt hair and long beard, wizard looking gentleman, and said "quite strange that you would stop. You're on this path, the world whizzing past, no one really stops and talks to strangers these days in this dog-eat-dog-world." He said "I think that's really unfortunate, what do you think?" I was like "yeah, I agree," and as I said this I could feel something stronger and brighter arising in my being. I said I was just rushing past and I was going to put my daughter to bed, but I thought I would come back and have a chat with you. He started enquiring about my daughter and I said she was going to a Steiner kindergarten and he

says, “Oh, Steiner, that’s very interesting. You might even call that a synchronicity. I was reading about Steiner just today.” I just went “whoa” at the word synchronicity.

Things really starting to amplify now and we had a really amazing conversation. We were talking about all kinds of figures, people that I find very interesting and they’re usually on the fringes of mainstream society, people that I would probably find hard to discuss with most of the people in my circle of friends and here I am, this stranger, connecting with and talking quite deeply about a lot of different concepts around us and particularly also around the course (Living in the Gift), it was just coming up, some of the concepts of the course he was bringing into the conversation, sharing ideas.

It was about a two hour conversation in which I learned that Malcolm had quite a rough life. He wasn’t exactly homeless; he was living in, or is living in public housing. He shared quite a bit about his story of which I’m not sure I should share all of with you here, just for his privacy and because he’s now become a friend and I’m very protective of him. His words are he’s lived life through the University of Hard Knocks. He was ejected out of society through circumstances and having to look after his now departed wife. He sacrificed his career and many things to look after her rather than have her put into an institution. He also was pushed out of his career because he wasn’t happy with were the powers that be were taking that.

The synchronicity really kicked in as he was sharing with me all these things about life and when he started to tell me what his career was. He was a chiropractor and studied chiropractics and osteopathy and had taught both these things. At this point I started to go “Whoa!” because I hadn’t told him anything about what I’d been doing. In the last twelve months I’ve given up a twenty year career as a creative director and designer and was looking for something a bit more nourishing, a way in which I can serve and give to the world. I’d been studying a form of a healing modality that kind of spun out of the chiropractic world. Maybe a couple of weeks before I finished the first year of the course, this is really coming alive for me this course, there is something definitely here, I can see myself being drawn deeper and deeper into it, can I have a sign to say that I’m on the right path. And of course, now here was a sign.

Not only was it a sign, but then Malcolm said to me that when he left the world of chiropractics, because he felt it had become over “medicalized,” loosing its intuitive, connective opportunities to help people and when his wife died, sixteen years ago now, he basically became a hermit. In that sixteen year period of hardly having much connection with anyone he was doing a lot, a lot of study, reading, research and in his words, “intuiting.” Getting a sense of different ways he could us to help heal people. And I’m just kind of going “Whoa!” because as he explained it in more detail to me it was very much in alignment with what I’d been studying.

Another little sort of weird synchronicity is; I'd also been studying the archetypes and I'd been looking quite deeply at the magician archetype in the week or two beforehand and here I am sitting next to a magician.

I guess I should also mention that since we have become pretty good friends. I've been around to his place and visit him regularly. He's teaching me and showing me things. We have wonderful conversations that can range from a two hour chat around C.S. Lewis and his fantasy literature and how that can bleed into broader concepts of humanity. We talk about Rupert Sheldrake. We talk about all kinds of weird and wonderful things and it's a lovely friendship where I continue to, in my busy life as a householder with a young daughter and studying, all the things that happen in that world, gift him my time and he gifts me his time.

It was four weeks ago that this happened. The energy of this happening was very, very strong for two weeks, it's dropped off a bit now I suppose with the festive season and running around with the family on a family holiday. I spoke to Malcolm yesterday and I'll be going to see him again next week, taking him a few books, sharing some more ideas. My daughter and I will bake him some cookies which we did before Christmas and he enjoyed so we will be doing that again. I think one thing I'd like to try and really emphasize and get across is that the moment that I stopped my bike, and I suppose I had some questions coming up that brought pause or hesitation to turning around, in that moment when I felt into this, as Charles mentioned "the grounded place of love" or some other deeper connection within myself. It wasn't an issue of having courage to turn around. It wasn't an issue of finding some sort of gumption or pushing myself to turn around, it actually came really, really easy. It just flowed and the conversation I think totally just flowed and the unfolding since has flowed from there.

I can still connect with that moment. Like right now I can connect with that moment, just trusting it and feeling into it and everything that's happened since. It's quite a powerful space and everything we're learning in this course for me, very fortunately I suppose, is crystallized through that moment. Of course, there's a lot of other things to take in, but it's such a bright event for me and I'm really glad to share it with everybody so thank you for this opportunity. I encourage everyone to find that space within them. Not just for experiment, but perhaps ongoing through life. Thanks everyone.