

M&M Session 6.1- Entering a Different Reality
Metaphysics & Mystery Online Course
charleseisenstein.org/metaphysics

Lauren Buckley: What is your understanding of what a soul is and do you think we have a soul?
Do you think plants also have a soul?

Charles Eisenstein: I think that we are a soul, that this is what a soul looks like right now.

Wendell Berry describes it very beautifully in a lecture he gave to some Baptist theological seminary. He goes to the Bible you know and he says, “we think that the formula for man is body plus soul equals man,” but he says, “actually if you read Genesis it says God sculpted man out of clay and then breathed the spirit into him” and then it says, “and man became a living soul.” So the formula, according to Wendell Berry then, is not body plus soul equals man, but it is body plus breath equals soul or clay plus breath equals soul or spirit plus body equals soul. So I don't know. My mother was at her grandmother's deathbed and she said that she saw the soul leave the body. I believe that she heard a sound too and she saw this light thing you know rise up and leave the body. Many people have these kinds of observations and she was at her brother's deathbed and didn't see that light. So it's not like she saw it every time that she's witnessed death. So you know you could say that the souls left the body or you could say that the soul has taken a new form that maybe for a split second that some people could see. These are mysteries that people steeped in a wisdom lineage might know a lot more about than I do. I am very curious, I love listening to people who are steeped in a tradition like that and I respect those traditions. I don't write them off as superstition. These people know something. It would be really arrogant to just write them off as the bumbling attempts of pre-scientific people to explain the world. Let's have some respect here and realize that they were as smart, they were and are just as smart, just as sophisticated as we are. No more or less blind to their own capacity for error, for self-delusion. They were as conscious as we are. We are not becoming more and more conscious. Let's get over that. That is part of the same triumphalist arc that celebrates our technology as being the path to Utopia and holds our ways as being better than those of whatever, a Bantu farmer or Inuit hunter or something like that. We're more progressed than they are. Progress toward this unitary goal and we are farther along than they are and everybody's destiny is to be like us. Time to get over that because it's not working very well not only on a technological level or the level of social organization, but also on the epistemic level, the level of knowledge, the level of metaphysics, not that I can define it, but what is a soul? Just because I'm some smart guy who knows some science and knows some this and knows some that doesn't mean that I am at all qualified to speak on such matters compared to somebody who is steeped in a lineage of observation that has studied this for centuries. Yeah, go ask them what a soul is. I'm curious to know as well.

L.B.: Yeah, along similar lines, curiosity is like what is this experience of intuition or this experience of synchronicity or this experience of a miracle?

C.E.: Intuitions a word that people apply very broadly these days. Something fits into your story and even though there's no evidence for it you believe it and you call it intuition. So I see a lot of people kind of laying claim to knowledge because it's intuition. The kind of intuition that really impresses me is when somebody observes something about me, knows something about me that I don't understand how they could possibly know that. Maybe what's going on is they're tuning into very, very subtle signs some of them mundane or some of them in conformity to what science tells us is possible to know and some of which may not be.

People might be able to tune into hints or evidence that is beyond conventional understanding and then they like say something that is amazing. So I'm not sure if intuition can really be distinguished from inference. Not sure if it can be distinguished from inference sometimes. I know people who've studied Chinese medicine. My one friend was studying with thought think it was the Leon Hammer or maybe John Shun or somebody who like someone could walk in and just by looking at him he would be able to say, "oh yeah you had your gallbladder removed three years ago," or just by feeling his pulse would say, "you got divorced seven years ago," or "the middle lobe of your left lung or something is as a tumor on it," like that specific and even more specific than that. So is that intuition? No. Well I mean it's not like this magical thing, it's because they have developed a fineness of perception that is inaccessible to people who haven't made that study and to even make it a study you have to already depart from the conventional Western account of what is and what's possible and this gets us into miracles by the way. So is that a miracle when someone can look at you and tell you how long ago your gallbladder was removed? Is it a miracle when my ex-wife saw a palm reader in Taiwan who told her with such incredible specificity things from her childhood that it's like how could you possibly know that? He's like, "you didn't do well in school on the certain exam because you were eating beef" and she had this memory of snacking on this beef snack and like blowing off her homework or something like that. It was something that specific. What is intuition? Is it this thing that just comes to you or is it the coalescing of observations that we may be aware if, we may not? When you observe something long enough it becomes second nature to you. The example that Wade Davis describes of these Polynesian navigators who without any instruments can navigate vast distances and find islands in the midst of expanses of water, like a needle in a haystack kind of thing, and it's not that they have some mysterious meaning. It is and is not mysterious, but it's that their understanding of waves and currents and wild life and which way the birds fly and what the clouds look like over certain land and I mean all of these things that were perhaps learned consciously at one point, but have become second nature and just a way that they see the world. It's this coalescing of observation and inference into OK, I see something. So seeing is something that we learn and as we expand the scope of our notice and gain familiarity with little, little tiny distinctions, then our seeing becomes more powerful. So this is something else that we can call intuition that I highly respect and it seems like a miracle. Miracle being... and so this is a definition, I do like some definitions, and I like to say that a miracle is something that is impossible from an existing story of the world, an existing story of what's real, but possible from another one, from a new one, from an unfamiliar one, especially from one that is inviting us into it. Once you're in that new story it no longer seems a miracle to us, to someone who's doing Chinese medicine every day and deeply practiced in it and feeling pulses 10 or 20 times a day. My one friend his teacher said, "until you've seen 10000 patients you can't even call yourself an acupuncturist. Forty thousand patients, then you are a master. So each one, each one paying close attention, each one incrementally expanding your consciousness through the apparatus of attention, you're seeing increases and it looks like a miracle, but to them it's not a miracle anymore than it's a miracle that you can discern... I don't know, like if you live in a city like you can see things that somebody from the country can't see just because you're accustomed to seeing it. So yeah, a miracle is something that violates your story and tells you that there is a bigger story. It's time to reshuffle the pieces with which you construct reality because here's a new piece or you could just cast it aside and pretend it didn't happen. Maintain your existing reality, which is what people usually do. How many people radically reshuffled the reality because UFO disclosure happened in December 2017? In the New York Times government officials confessing that the government has decades of reliable observations of unidentified flying objects and that it's been covered up. Like do you even know that that happened, that that disclosure happened in

the New York Times? No, keep that one out because if you take it in what happens to your edifice of self and world? To have that openness, to have that non attachment to what you thought you knew, what you thought was real, who you thought you are, because when reality breaks down self breaks down too because each prompts the other up. We only know who we are in relation to what is. So often we don't let miracles in. We don't accept the invitation that they offer, but they keep knocking at the door and as the edifice of self and world that we inhabit becomes less and less comfortable, as we grow into it and press against its confines, we maybe become more receptive to the invitation that miracles provide.

L.B.: I don't know how you define this, but I want to ask, do you believe in magic?

C.E.: Magic. I really, really love sleight of hand magic. You know I'm such a good audience; I'm like "whoa!" I have a distant relative who does card tricks. He's really good at it, but like stage magician level of skill at it and I have this theory that these stage magicians who could do seemingly impossible things that they're actually doing quote "real magic" and pretending that it's only stage magic. I confronted one with this one time and I was expecting he would deny it and be like, "see, you're denying it, that proves it," because part of the act is to deny, is to say, "well, this is just stage magic." It's a way to hide that they're really doing real magic and I was going to kind of joke with him like this you know because it's obviously a non-falsifiable contention. If denying it only proves it there's nothing that they can say, whether they confess or deny it's still proving it right. So it's like this is kind of a joke, but instead of doing that and playing along with my little game it was like this entity took him over and he glazed over and he started saying this self absorbed nonsense. It was trippy and I was flabbergasted. I'm not sure what real magic would be, but I think any useful working definition of it would have something to do with the direction of attention, misdirecting people's attention, channeling people's attention away from one thing onto another thing and essentially channeling them into a different reality. A good stage magician is weaving a story of here's what's real and engaging your attention in conformity with that story. Isn't that similar to what politicians do, weaving a story and directing your attention to things that are aligned with that story? Is the manipulation of individual or collective consciousness, is that actually what magic is? We can see a lot of if so if you accept that as magic, then we can see a lot of black magic happening today, used to create realities that are poisonous to the world. So do I believe in magic? This is related to Miracle 2, but I would say that if you're talking about the manipulation of reality through the direction of attention and the weaving of narrative, then yeah I believe in magic, but not the kind of Harry Potter stuff where you wave a magic wand and something happens. Also there are causal mechanisms and properties of materiality that are in blatant contradiction to what I grew up thinking was real and I have even witnessed and experienced some of these things and I have friends who I trust who have experienced much more dramatic things, including my wife. Qigong masters and people like that like taking a light sewing needle and throwing it through a pane of window glass, "pop" right through there. Is that magic? It's not something that just happens in their world view. There is an explanation for why that happens and there is a whole causal framework by which it would be expected that if you direct that chi in that way it's going to happen. So you know what is that magic or isn't that magic. So I don't know, you can call whatever you want, but I could definitely say that there are phenomena that wildly contradict what we think is real.

L.B.: That reminds me of a good friend of mine who was like, "man, if we're mostly empty space I wonder if I meditated for long enough I could line all my particles up with the wall so that I could just walk through it?" The needle thing is kind of similar.

C.E.: Yeah I could talk about lots and lots and lots of examples of that kind of thing. Then the question comes up, what does a skeptical mind want then? The skeptical mind wants to establish whether they are real or not, whether they actually happened. That quest to establish certainty, proof and actuality comes from a worldview that holds reality as being an external objective thing. You might understand it differently and say when you enter that reality than it actually happens and when you're not in that reality it doesn't actually happen. This really messes with the mind, the mind of separation. How do you enter that reality? You have to let go of something that conforms you to this reality because, again, self and reality are intimately linked. To enter a different reality you have to change. Something that you held dear maybe has to be shed and maybe this takes time. That's why you need to practice. I did this Qigong practice for a couple of years that involved striking my body with objects in a prescribed way. Initially there is like no way I can wail on myself with this brick you know, like forget it. But over time you start with open hand and then the fist and then the wooden block and then the edge of the block you know and then the end of the block and then you do the brick and then eventually it's like you migrate into a reality in which you can actually do that. Or is it that your body just gets tougher and tougher. This is hard to distinguish and you know you could make measurements of your of your anatomy and so somehow that it's your body that's changed and it can get... this whole issue can get rather complicated. I'm not going to go into the intricacies of it but just to say one we'd understand it is that this practice opens the mind to a possibility that seemed impossible before. So yeah, it's an induction and one thing that the Qigong teacher said is that the advanced practices that seriously violate consensus reality; those cannot be demonstrated to the normal public because their attention would dilute the field. It would dilute the reality in which those things are possible so they can only be demonstrated in special circumstances to people who have already done a lot of the practices. Of course that explanation also conforms to the skeptics view, "well of course you're not going to demonstrate because it's not real." This is an empirically indistinguishable distinction. You cannot, from the skeptic's position, there's no way to decide which of those two, whether it's his story or the Qigong teacher story that is true and in a way the skeptic is right. It's not real. It cannot be demonstrated because it's not real. If you understand that reality is a relationship, for him it isn't real. It actually isn't possible, it actually isn't happening because actually is a relationship, not a universal objective backdrop against which things happen. That's Cartesian reality. That's the Cartesian story and it's absurd. It's not true even in physics it's not true. You cannot say, "well the uranium atom, there is an objective reality about whether it decayed or not." You can't say that it decayed from one observer or not for another. Oh yes you can. In quantum mechanics it's nonsense to say that before you measured it, before you entered a relationship in it, this electron was already in one polarity or another, in one position or another. You can't say that. Believe me physicist tried to find some way that you could still say that, to hold on to an observer independent reality and in order to hold onto that you have to give up all kinds of other things. Causality for example or the speed of light and you entered a time travel and shit like that, like you cannot. Anyway long story short, the interpretation I'm offering of that it is real and one reality and not another reality, this is at least consistent with at least metaphorically consistent with quantum mechanics. I'm not saying that quantum mechanics proves this because they're also all kinds of issues about how the quantum level interacts with the macro level and so on and so forth and quantum effects canceling out in the macro and I mean it's a long conversation, but it no longer seems so far fetched as it did in a Newtonian universe that reality is observer dependent, that it is a relationship and that something could and that actually "we're really" doesn't mean what we thought it did. So yeah, what's magic to one person is reality to somebody else and then we might begin to study the process of migrating from a reality to another. I gave the purposeful example, the example of a purposeful

migration through a Qigong practice, but often it happens through an unconscious process where one's being, in a certain reality, has matured to the molting point where the self and the world molts, metamorphosis into the next thing and in that transitional phase all kinds of amazing things happen.

L.B.: Yeah that makes me think about the very trippy experience of when your perspective goes through some kind of radical transformation or you're exposed to something radically new. Then all of a sudden you seem to be surrounded by it and it's like where did all these people come from who agree with this?

C.E.: Yes like you migrate into a different universe.

L.B.: I'm like, is this a reality tunnel where I'm just suddenly finding these people because they're hanging out with each other or am I in a different reality? It feels like I've gone through some kind of rabbit hole sometimes. Have you experienced that? What do you think about that?

C.E.: Yeah. You know the story of separation has a way to account for all of these things. Yeah those people just hang out with each other. They're reinforcing each other's beliefs. You're attracted to them to reinforce your beliefs because you seek outward confirmation of what you would like to believe. People who don't resonate with those beliefs you're not going to want to have relationships with them. You can explain it in different stories and then it comes down to well what's actually happening? Uh oh, same problem here, so instead of what's actually happening another way to look at it is what story am I living in and how do you choose? We're not waving away the feedback of a world that seems external to ourselves like there's such a thing as the world hits back, you know. Things that don't fit into your belief system happen. So yeah, to put this in a neat metaphysical package is really risky. Everything I've said is just the very, very tip of a vast mystery and the process of migrating from one reality to another includes all of these mundane things. It's not separate from it, it's not either. It's people associating with people who agree with them or it's you've migrated into another reality where these people pop up. It's not either or. The mundane is the instrument of the mysterious. It's one universe. Someone told me a story. She wanted to get into film and she wanted to especially meet a certain director and work for him and she had no idea how to do that. She was taking gigs and stuff like that and so she got a call, "oh there's a gig," and they gave her the address. So she gets into Uber or whatever, I can't remember how long ago this was, and she types in the address and she goes there and there's someone waiting on the curb, waiting outside this building and she says, "OK I'm here. When do we start?" It turns out that it was the wrong address and it took her to the very director that she wanted to work for. So on the one hand there is a totally acceptable mundane explanation for this. She typed in the wrong address and this is an area of Los Angeles where you might expect to find such a director. You can explain it, it's not like those things didn't happen, but they don't invalidate the perception that there's a mysterious intelligence operating here and you could say that that it's just coincidence and that we only hear the stories about the ones that seem amazing. It's called The File Drawer effect. There's a kind of a selection bias that makes the world seem more miraculous than it really is because you don't hear the story about the time where you've typed in the wrong address and ended up you know at McDonald's and nothing happened. That is one of those non falsifiable explanations. How could you falsify that? Any example that you give can be explained by that. So again we're left with a non evidentiary choice of what reality to believe and so this comes down to how did you choose what to believe? If you cannot rely on the facts, if you cannot rely on one story being logically inconsistent and the other being logically consistent, both stories fit the data points. So what

do you believe? How do you make that choice? And there are two questions embedded in that, how do you actually make the choice and how should you make the choice? What would be a way to make such choices aligned with your growth and into whom you want to become? I would say choose the one that is consistent with whom you want to become. If you have two stories then which world do you want to live in? You might notice that both of them resonate with you in a certain way. That maybe the nihilistic story, for example, it was all just coincidence, story. That is an expression of an unhealed wound or of a state of being that you carry that's not done yet. So it has a pull on you and what needs to happen for it no longer to have a pull on you? What needs to be healed? What's it really about? These are non-trivial questions, but you can feel the pull of something that you're afraid to believe it. Maybe part of you wants to stay comfortable and not believe it because if you believe it, if you dare to believe it, what if it's not true? What if your intuition of this more beautiful world is crushed? Better not go there. Better stay cynical. But you can feel the pull and maybe you can feel a readiness to step into that that's growing inside of you and maybe you need some help to become ready. Maybe this isn't actually a choice that you can make until you're ready to make it. And so we can offer ourselves in all of our contradiction as in an attitude of prayer, "help help help me." Here's why I want to go and I cannot do it myself because it hurts too bad it. This idea that we can do it by ourselves, that contradicts the understanding of self that I call, after Tich Nhat Hanh called "interbeing" because we're not separate selves and we need help from other beings, from each other and we can collectively hold a new story. I'm getting rather tired. If I keep going I'm going to be up all night.

L.B.: Good move in the direction of wrapping it up?

E.C.: Yeah. I mean I could do maybe one or two more.

L.B.: OK, one or two more.

E.C.: How many more do you have?

L.B.: Fifteen.

(Both laugh)

E.C.: I'll do one more now and we'll see. We have to change the card anyway.

L.B.: Ok, I was going to ask about synchronicity because it sounded like you just gave a synchronicity story with that person Uber-ing to their director, but with precious time the question that I'm extremely, intrinsically curious about is if you are afraid of death.

E.C.: Yeah. You know the story of death that I grew up in is horrifying. It has a big presence and I don't know how to heal from that. I mean I think it is like a biological fear of death that's really healthy you know, helps keep us alive stops us from doing stupid shit you know. So fear is not necessarily a bad thing. Fear is a way to maintain a boundary and a cocoon in which to grow so I'm not like anti-fear. But yeah there's like a dread that is not just me, this idea that you're this candle flame that gets snuffed out. It is a debilitating belief and you can kind of pretend that it's not there and try to make it go away. Even though intellectually I no longer believe that, in a way you can't escape your birth religion. You can rebel against it, but you can't escape it or not very easily. And that dread goes along with other aspects of the experience of self in the age of separation. It's part of a larger dread, that of being alone, of

being alienated, of living in a dead universe. It's part of a full on state of being that is the hallmark of our time. I don't believe it. I don't believe in the premises of that fear, but what is belief? I say I don't believe in it, but on some level I do and all I can do is ask for help from powerful unseen beings who will help me even if I don't believe in them. How do you get help from those beings? You have to at least take a step into the world in which they exist and start acting as if they did exist, acting as if every act is witnessed. Acting as if you live in a living universe where we're not alone and you can follow a thread into that universe. There's a beckoning to it. There is a way offering itself that feels like a good next step into a ceremonial way of living, a prayerful way of living. So it's really about following that step and with each step more help becomes available to take the next step. That's the only way to overcome that fear. That make sense? Yeah so it's really an orientation towards what's the next step for me into a living universe and that kind of goes back to "what's the point of all of this?" It's to expand life. So any step that you take it's to be more alive and bring more life to the world. That's what I offered is maybe the point of it all. So any step into a living world that will magnify our capacity to serve a living world where we're stepping into a reality that is more alive. It not only enables us to be of better service, we're actually changing reality into something more alive through accepting the invitation into that next step and so to recognize our desire to do that and our willingness to do that and to prepare to take that step and to accept an invitation, that would be my advice if you are influenced by that fear and by not just the fear of death, but by the weight of despair of being alone, of the mechanical universe. There is a step being offered to you that you can recognize when you give attention to your desire to make that stop. It all comes down to attention. Maybe you can notice that desire right now. There it is and we turn to that, give it attention, the desire to take a step into a living universe. To act in accordance with the knowledge that you are being witnessed, that you are being heard, that you are being seen, that every act matters. To do things beautifully even when the rational mind can't say that it's going to make a difference, it's appreciated. Maybe you have a spark of that knowledge. This is what ceremonies built from.

L.B.: I liked what you were saying about listening to an invitation into a living universe and it made me wonder if you pray.

C.E.: I probably pray just as much as you do. Yeah, what is a prayer? It's words spoken with the awareness that something's listening. That a sacred beings listening. So people who live in a world full of sacred beings treat every word as a prayer. If they are self-possessed, if they're paying attention, every word a prayer, every act a ceremony, every walk a pilgrimage and you don't often meet people who fully embody that, but whether we know it or not it's true, that sacred beings are listening to everything that we say. So words spoken with that awareness, those are prayers and you could have other definitions, but that's what's coming to me right now.

L.B.: How do you see creativity? What do you think it is?

C.E.: I would say creativity is in alignment with the creative principle of the universe. It's not something strictly speaking that we do ourselves. We are creative beings as part of a creative universe, but we cannot lay claim to the creations. I don't know. I guess there's so many different ways that you can use the word creativity. So what are you really wanting to know here?

L.B.: If I or me in combination with a team of people come up with some new idea or a new discovery or something amazing a story comes out. Did we do that by using our brains in some advanced way or is beyond that?

C.E.: Well I would say that the idea uses our brains. That quote "New Idea" finds somebody who's receptive to it and if it doesn't find you it'll find somebody else unless it's not the time for that idea to come into currency. So a lot of where you're calling creativity is receptivity and as I was seeing the creative function is something that is beyond an individual person. Yeah, we can make ourselves available as instruments for creation, let's put it that way. Certain inventions, they were going to happen and they found one person or another person and sometimes you get somebody extraordinary who invents things whose time has not yet come, like Nikola Tesla. His first wave of inventions, they were just a little ahead of their time. If he hadn't invented them it would've taken 20 or 30 years for them to have been invented. I think. They were close enough that they could be accepted, but then he went into a second wave of inventions that were too far ahead of their time to his misfortune. So this can be a little bit messy, but the system works pretty well, that the receivers for the ideas appear when the collective consciousness is ready to entertain those ideas. It's a bit messy and sometimes people bring in ideas that aren't really supposed to be there for a hundred years and sometimes they get discovered a hundred years later. Yeah, but I would say that it's about receptivity. Some of us are constructed to be receptive to some ideas and not others, like your father for example. Inventions, they find him and he makes himself easy to find because he's thinking about these things you know, he's like the guys who's wondering, "could this thing be done better?" so the idea can then find him. Something else?

L.B.: Yeah, what you said about yourself being an antenna.

C.E.: Yeah, like I hold an inquiry for a long period of time and it makes me attractive to the information that that inquiry attracts. I believe that you can find the answer to any question if you hold it in your mind long enough or I mean sometimes it's more of a matter of it's holding me and it won't let me go. That was the genesis of *The Ascent of Humanity*, my first real book. Yeah, there is a question that wouldn't let me alone, what is the origin of the wrongness?

L.B.: Yeah it's kind of what brought us here in some way. Like I honestly tried to not ask you about metaphysics cause I was like I don't think you want to talk about it.

C.E.: No, this is good. I'm enjoying the conversation.

L.B.: Me too. I was kind of nervous to ask about it. I've tried really hard to think of other things and it just wouldn't leave me alone. It hasn't my whole life. Why am I here? What's the point?

C.E.: I think my endurance is really flagging now. It's hard for me to say, I mean I might be able to do a couple more.

L.B.: Okay. I'll go to like a universal kind of question that can wrap this up. Which is that nagging question of how can little tiny me in my little corner of the universe with my big dreams fit into something that matters?

C.E.: Well you mentioned before the Holographic Universe so little tiny you is a holographic map of the entire cosmos. So any change that happens in you in and in your sphere correlates

to a change happening on a much vaster scale. I could talk about morphic resonance which is an alternative lens on the same principle, maybe with some slight differences, that the changes that happen in your realm, the things that you initiate contribute to a field of change that allows them to happen more easily everywhere. The mechanisms by which this is translated, the local is translated into the universal, are in part mundane and in part mysterious, could be as simple as something goes viral. Your act of magnanimity is witnessed by somebody, they put it on YouTube and it inspires magnanimity around the world. Your kindness, your generosity inspires it and that's one way that morphic resonance can propagate, but it doesn't have to be that way. It can be according to mechanisms that we do not recognize conventionally. Another way to look at it is that you asked about prayer before. Another way to understand prayer is that actions can be prayers because they are a declaration of what world you want to live in. Every action that you take is a statement of, I'll say it again, it's a statement of the world that you want to live in and it is a beckoning of that world. So an action that is based on selfishness beckons a world where selfishness is the rule. An act of generosity beckons a world in which generosity is the rule. So you're making a declaration not only of what world that you want, but what the world is because these choices reflect a belief system and you can say that they reveal a belief system and they reveal what world you have chosen to be in. When you gain some conscious awareness of this, then you can bring intentionality into the choices and recognize these actions that you're choosing as a prayer and an invitation to a different world. Again it's which ones are you ready to take? Which ones are a step toward the world that you really want to live in? And so that's an alternative formulation of the holographic principle or of the principle of morphic resonance. There are many ways to understand it and you can pick whichever one works for you. I kind of like the every act as a prayer frame, it's a bit more poetic to me. Imagine, if you want to be religious here and frame things, I'm not a dualist, but sometimes that's a story too, that there is God out there and sometimes some concepts are easy and eloquent and beautiful when they are translated into that vocabulary. I can speak that vocabulary really well, I'm very comfortable talking to Christians and translating these things into that vocabulary. Not everything translates, but a lot of it translates so to translate it into that there is God and you're praying, you're saying, "I want a world of peace, of love, of kindness. I want the rainforest to thrive. I want the prisons to empty." I want all these things and God's like, "OK, that's nice," but then you're taking actions that are inconsistent with that world. So God is like, "hold on here, I'm confused. What do you want? You say you want this and then you say you want that." It's a truism that actions speak louder than words. So maybe I'll give you a little bit of all of each of these things and so you are then occupying a reality in which on one day it seems like you live in a generous universe and the next day it seems like you live in a stingy harsh cruel world and it's because you're sending mixed messages. You're praying for contradictory things at the same time. So if you want to organize reality then maybe you need to make your prayers more consistent and assuming understanding actions as prayers, choices as prayers, you want to make a consistent declaration of the world that you want to experience. This gets back again to the intimate relationship, between self and world, between self and reality. Yeah. There might be just one more thing I'd like to add to that. So continuing, there is God, a little confused and then you take a course of action that really demonstrates that you mean it because you are sacrificing a lot. You are so dedicated you'll do anything to make this a reality. You'll chain yourself to the machine. You'll risk your own security. You'll make these sacrifices. That is a much more powerful prayer. It's a really strong declaration, the declaration that is established over years of sacrifice and dedication and risk, risk to things that have been precious to you. It's like yeah, that demonstrates that I really mean this. We can trust that this prayer is heard and will be answered although it could be not in the form that we think. Because the mystery is so deep,

mystery upon mystery upon mystery, it may manifest in five hundred years. The prayer that is issued by the invisible humble people, the small tiny little me as you put it, doing things that are unrewarded and that seem to be pointless in the grand scheme of things. Those are the really powerful prayers that will create an entirely different world in five hundred years or five thousand years or in some other reality that... I mean even to force it into linear time is a vast oversimplification. Really what I'm saying is that everything matters and the choice is endless and ongoing. So the negative prayers that you've issued through choices that you regret, there will be opportunities to choose differently. As a result of those choices play out they actually create the opportunities to choose differently. Because the fundamental tendency of the universe is toward greater and greater complexity, is toward more and more life. So if you make choices that are anti-life, they create conditions where you get to make an even stronger declaration for life. That's part of the generosity of the universe and so if you are in a state of adversity you might say, "wow, here's a chance to make a really powerful prayer." It's those moments where I don't know like if you're a parent you know and you think you're fed up and you've had it and you're just going to start yelling at that kid and no one's going to even notice and there's something, a moment where you have that awareness and you choose differently in that state of adversity or when you are in a situation of scarcity and you still make that generous gift, those are magnified. Those are the powerful prayers. That's what Jesus was talking about. You know whenever the woman and the two farthings or whatever he said like the poor woman giving those two, that is a very powerful act. Yeah, because it's a strong declaration so our anti-life choices carry the seeds of the opportunities to make powerful prayers.