

Natural Awakenings

Emotional Fitness: Awakening the Self to Consciousness

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By Kathleen Noone

*There's a wonderful scene in the classic movie, *A Tree Grows In Brooklyn*, where the father beautifully speaks of his observation that only during the holidays, do people behave so kindly to one another. I was about ten years old when I saw that film on a NYC-based television program called *The Late Show*. After the 11pm news, my parents would usually go to bed, and religiously I would sneak into the den to watch my favorite movies on the weekends. Holiday movies were some of my favorites.*

Even as a child I questioned the madness and pressures of rushing around during the holiday season. I saw that pressure played out in many ways. Not only in the excitement of Santa, the pretty stores with all the lights, and the laughter of people as they greeted one another, but the tenseness as people rushed to, or pushed their way around those beautifully lighted and decorated stores and sidewalks. It was always such a paradox to me. I still feel that way today.

The holidays, if we choose, can be an opportunity for greater introspection, not only of what we've achieved during the year, or even where we could do better, but how we have an opportunity to create a better way of being with ourselves and others.

It seems to me that Awakening Consciousness is just that...BEING. How can I be with myself in a better, more meaningful way? How can I nurture myself better? How can I nurture those around me in a more aware and conscious manner? Does it mean listening better, more carefully? Does it mean really looking at who you're talking to when engaged in conversation? Could it be the much-needed five-minute break from the noise of living that I have put off? Could my sister or brother need the, "Hi, I love you." call.

If you are on the outs, how about just the, "Hello, how are you?" call. Does it mean listening to what people are really saying? Could it sound like, "Boy, I'm sad today." "I'm scared today." "I'm tired of the pressure." "I thrive on pressure." "Where am I?" "What am I doing with my life?"

ANYTHING THAT GETS US TO ASK THE IMPORTANT QUESTIONS OF OUR LIVES IS CONSCIOUSNESS. □ Consciousness is tapping us on the shoulder and asking us to look in a different direction, a new direction, a new place and way of being.

The current affairs taking place on the world stage have showed us we can no longer create a meaningful world through old-paradigm approaches. We must be mindful of

who and what we are and what we contribute, both positively and negatively, to both the world around us, and the people we hold close in our hearts. With honest assessment, we can be in our lives in a much richer and more fulfilling way, consciously making choices that contribute in more meaningful ways to our family, friends, co-workers and environment.

So this holiday season, let's ask ourselves the important questions. No need to be shy, your Self loves you. Then allow the answers to come honestly. Listen with an open heart, and maybe, just maybe, the consciousness we aspire to can express itself throughout the year and not just during the holidays. With a grateful heart, I wish you a more conscious, loving holiday and New Year. And if you keep asking those important questions, welcome to a greater awakening.