



Hello there,

I am looking forward to your participation in The Path of the Heartwalker: Mastering Respectful Confrontation on July 4-6, 2014. I would like to help you prepare for the weekend with some things to contemplate and write about, as well as share with you some logistics.

THE LOGISTICS

Check-in at Omega is between 4:00p.m. and 6:30p.m. Dinner is served from 6:00p.m. and 7:15p.m. and there is an Omega Welcome & Orientation at 7:30p.m. Our workshop will begin at 8:00p.m.

The work in this course will be physical at times. Take the time to prepare yourself by eating well and getting enough rest. I also recommend you do some stretching and some light aerobic exercise, like walking.

Please bring:

Clothes that you can move in easily since we will be doing physical exercises. If you don't want to go barefoot, bring warm socks or slippers that you would wear indoors.

A journal. One you already use or one specifically for this course.

An object or two that has meaning for you to place in the space.

THE PREPARATION

Take some time to answer the following questions and send them back to Omega before **BEFORE TUESDAY, JULY 1.**

Mail to:
Omega Institute for Holistic Studies
Attn: Registration Dept
150 Lake Drive
Rhinebeck, NY 12572

Or scan and email:
classapplications@eOmega.org

Think about them before you actually write and send it, and feel free to say as much or as little as feels comfortable to you. The more honest, personal and detailed you can be, the more you will get out of the workshop. My suggestion is that you actually start journaling now about anything that



comes up - issues, feelings, questions, concerns - pertaining to this workshop and its subject matter:

Full Name

Name you would like to be called

Email Address

Cell Phone

Date of Birth

Do you have any physical injuries? Any other information I should know concerning your body? Do you take any medication?

What are your intentions for the workshop? How would you like to be different at the end of the weekend?

What does power mean to you? When do you feel like you are "in your power"? When have you "given away" your power in the past?

If you had to say what your unique powers were, what would they be? See if you can list at least three.

In which areas of your life do you exert your assertiveness and self-confidence? In which areas of your life do you feel challenged to assert yourself, express your needs and opinions.

What are some concerns you are having about the workshop?

Plenty to keep you busy. Below is a summary of what Respectful Confrontation means to me and a number of the principles and issues we will be addressing in the weekend. Please take a moment to read it. And you may want to read my book *Mastering Respectful Confrontation*.

So, there you have it. I'm really looking forward to exploring this work with you. I honor your adventurous spirit and courage.

From the heart,

Joe



RESPECTFUL CONFRONTATION

I assert that the only productive way to avoid or resolve any conflict – whether they be with loved ones, business colleagues, adversaries or nations - is through the use of Respectful Confrontation.

Anyone wish to confront me respectfully on this???? I hope so.....

Here's what I believe:

Most of human interaction is still at a level of unconscious reaction, or habit. This means that when we find ourselves in a situation that presents challenge or the possibility of conflict, we automatically switch into a pattern of defense. These patterns are often ones that we have learned from our parents or surroundings, and usually lead to further misunderstanding and conflict. They often look like 1) FIGHT which puts us into a mode of ANGER, or 2) FLIGHT which puts us into a mode of AVOIDANCE, or 3) FREEZE, which puts us into a mode of SUBMISSION.

All three unconscious responses may lead to a temporary solution to a problem or challenge. However, what actually happens is that the tension and suppressed feelings continue to build, the issue at hand is not resolved, there is a feeling of betrayal of self, and more distance is created within the relationship. Eventually, all this unresolved tension and unexpressed frustration will lead to an explosive conflict, resulting in destructive behavior, aggression and possibly the breaking down of the relationship.

The purpose of **RESPECTFUL CONFRONTATION** is to **move out of unconscious reactivity and move into conscious response as a way to avoid conflict.** This requires courage, the ability to listen, persistence and flexibility. By staying present and aware in the face of a challenge, or a possible emotional attack, one avoids the defensive pitfalls of Fight, Flight and Freeze and opens to a fourth option, the Dance of Give and Take.

At that moment, the individual overrides defensiveness, and commits to listening to the other's pain and needs with compassion and understanding. Subsequently, they muster up the courage to express their own pain and needs, **moving into a place of vulnerability.** This process goes back and forth, with both individuals switching from assertiveness to flexibility, continuing this dance of leading and following, until both have cut through the confusion. This results in a peaceful, productive solution to the issue at hand, avoiding an escalation to a conflict, leaving both individuals feeling as if their needs have been met and that they were both acknowledged for who they are.

Ironically, when one dares to break down their own barriers, they discover that **their true power is revealed.**

By mastering this approach, we begin to see all confrontations as a healthy part of communication; more importantly, a useful tool for one's own development and the growth of all relationships - both personal, professional and societal. We also realize that when we feel confident that the goal of respectful confrontation is peace and the health of a relationship, we muster up the courage and wisdom to know when being nice and receptive is necessary, or when being fierce and assertive is more appropriate. **Both are aspects of compassion and true understanding,** and can be used to avoid aggression and conflict.



The Four Pillars of True Power

Many of us spend a lot of our time developing our physical strength. We are inspired to work out, to build a strong, athletic body—but is being strong the only sign of our true personal power? And in other areas of our lives, many of us take on a tough or bitchy demeanor as a way to fit in, to succeed, to survive. What if physical force was only one aspect of power? What if we could find a way to truly feel we are powerful in a way that includes *all* aspects of who we are—physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual?

Look at our top athletes. Can a gymnast win Olympic gold with pure strength alone? No, he/she needs focus and grounding as well as a strong body. Can a wrestler succeed only with brute force? No, he/she needs flexibility, both physical and mental, to really achieve. So, let's reframe power. Let's say that in order to be truly powerful, you will need to have not only physical strength and courage, but will also need to develop focus, grounding, and flexibility with the same amount of effort and diligence.

Focus

Focus ensures that all your power and efforts have the impact you would like, as well as overcoming all the distractions. It requires concentration, diligence, and precision. What is the benefit of developing strength, intelligence, or talents if you can't find a way to channel it into something productive? How effective are you if you can't zero in on your target or goal? How many times have you been misunderstood by others even though you thought you were perfectly clear? When you explore focus in this way, you discover that it has an energy of its own which can enhance all your efforts.

Flexibility

Let's look at flexibility. There is a saying that comes from Taoism that asks: "Which is stronger, a mighty Oak tree or a blade of grass?" And the answer is: "In a monsoon, the tree will break like a twig but the blade of grass will yield and remain standing." Here you see that while, in some instances, strength is called upon, in other situations the use of strength will only result in you snapping like a twig. Sometimes the one thing that will get you through a tough time is a bit of give and take. You can probably think of examples of this from your own life; and I can think of some episodes in past relationships where I really learned that lesson!

Grounding

Grounding offers a different kind of power than either physical strength or flexibility. Grounding is a connection to the Earth, to others, and to a part of you that transcends your everyday view of yourself. By developing the power in grounding, you develop a sensitivity and sharper awareness of your surroundings, as well as a self-confidence that makes you less likely to be persuaded by others. You may be thinking: How is sensitivity a sign of strength? Well, think about the times when you "felt"



something that couldn't be explained, acted on it, and then in hindsight realized you made the right choice. That is the strength of sensitivity that comes from grounding.

True Strength

And let's not forget strength, also essential for establishing authentic power. This does not only include physical strength, but also courage. Courage to face fear, to persevere even when it gets tough, to dare to reach out to others for help and real connection, to speak your truth, and – more courageously – to hear other's truths.

So here's the formula: True power means having proficiency in focus, grounding, strength, and flexibility. And the sign of a truly powerful person is someone who has developed all four equally. Think of the legs of a table. It doesn't matter how long the legs of the table are. What is important is that the four legs are the same size or the table will tip and teeter. The same is true for us. We are truly powerful in body, mind, and spirit when we have developed an equal level of skill in focus, grounding, strength, and flexibility. Actually, you might say that someone with a moderate yet equal development of all four qualities is ultimately more powerful than someone who is only physically strong.

As we open to new ways of developing strength, we actually see how much power we already have. As we add mental focus, emotional flexibility, and spiritual grounding to our physical strength, we notice that things seem to flow, and we walk through our lives with more energy and ease. Now, who wouldn't want more of that?