

Story #1b

First, Change Yourself

“For out of the overflow of his heart his mouth speaks.”

— Christ (Luke 6:45)

“See the false as false - the true as true. Look into your heart.”

- Buddha

1. You have permission to Awaken. You may begin to move toward a new possibility before you see how to get there.

(The Teacher's Bill of Rights)

Do you want to take down this edifice - this master that is running your life - that is *your head*? Audre Lorde, in *Sister Outsider* (1984), said that if you want to dismantle the master's house, you can't do it with the master's tools. You can't fix your head, with your head. If you want to transform, isn't that going to your heart? So, you've got to use your heart to go to your heart.

Let me give you an example. It's back in the 1990s, a decade before the very sad bombing of the twin towers on 9/11/2001. I'm a training consultant to the Fortune 500 business community, currently at the World Trade Center in New York City. I'm on assignment to the World Trade Center Association of which there are 180 worldwide at that time. I'm entering the building and going through security. A little-known fact is that the day before - a decade before what we call, "911" - a car bomb had been set off in the garage of the twin towers. But the bomb did nothing to the building, it only hurt a few of the cars next to it. So, the increased security I experienced as I went through the lobby was simply to check our briefcases. No one thought that you could take down the World Trade Center. No one thought that anyone would bomb America on her own soil.

So, I tell this story to illustrate that we thought of the master's house in terms of the master's tools. In other words, we could not conceive of what was about to happen to the World Trade Center a decade later. The point is that if you want to make a change to yourself, don't use your head to make the change. Don't picture yourself as an impenetrable building that cannot be changed easily. Picture yourself as totally able to become something different. And that is the process of having *heart thought* - to picture things that are really outside of your possibilities, believe they are possible, and then ask your head how to accomplish them. A *heart thought* will ask the head and the gut how to do things. But, heart thoughts lead with the belief that new things can happen. You think with all different parts of yourself, but the heart must be in charge - the heart must decide.

So, now fast forward. It's now 9/11/2002, exactly one year after the bombing of the World Trade Center. I apologize for bringing this subject up because it is a sore topic for many people. I do it because I have an important point. I'm working in a school now. I'm not a consultant to the Fortune 500. I'm teaching in a school - an alternative school. It's my first week. I've switched careers. And I'm so excited to be with the kids, that that I forget that it's 9/11, the one-year anniversary of the twin towers. New Jersey and New York are on hyper-alert because there has been speculation that there may be another bombing. I'm teaching in a school in New Jersey, 40 miles from ground zero as the crow flies, across Lower Manhattan Bay, where the twin towers had been. I forgot all of this because I'm so excited about teaching. I do a chemistry experiment, blow up a balloon with propane and oxygen. Boom. The principal and the school go into hyper-alert. The principal comes into my classroom and quietly says, "Could you have sent us an email?"

In this moment, I saw my principal visibly getting ready to change himself in order to handle me. Later, he told me how he had to transform himself as he got to know me. He loved the way

I helped students with my methods of using a little danger to color outside the lines, so he decided that he would change himself to support me. We worked together for seven years. I had a wonderful time with him and have remained very close friends to this day. He did his job as well as I have seen anyone do a job. And this day, I saw him decide in the moment to follow his heart. You could see him supporting you and believing in you - before he knew how he was going to do it. And this is the genius of this man. He truly knew how to use what I call *heart thought*.

And that is how to change yourself. Move from your heart first, then think in your head how to do it. Well, that's it for today. I'll see you in one of those tomorrows.



References

Lorde, A. (1984). *Sister outsider: essays and speeches*.
Trumansburg, NY: Crossing Press.