



Thank you, Stanley

By Terry Cooper

It is fitting that the man who wrote the book titled "living your dying" died as a fully intact, late life, ageing adult, with all of his faculties and being himself. Stanley laid down on his couch one afternoon to take a nap and did not wake up. Stanley died like Stanley lived, without drama or fuss, in an ordered and organized way. He often said, "the body knows how to die".

What Stanley did or didn't know about his dying doesn't really come into the picture, this is how he did his dying. He understood more than anybody the uniqueness of each individual, how their body lives them, as well as how they lived their bodied life.

"It is a democratic relationship" he would say, a mutual consultation and feedback of back and forth, discussions and give and take responses, an intimate dialogue of felt knowledge and cortical response both voluntary and involuntary, created and unbidden.

The greatest gift I received from Stanley was how to have a relationship with myself, how to be present, and how to engage brain and body in a cooperative effort to respond to and manage all aspects of my internal and external bodied life. However much we might concoct stories, thinking we had discovered the whole truth about something, Stanley would open the frame and bring you back to your humanness. His intent, always to give you something of yourself rather than reinforce your abstraction of yourself.

He taught me the skills to be with how I experience myself, how to learn from myself, how to influence and shape who I am and who I become, to be a full participant in my own making, which is the most empowering skill to learn. I believe this to be one of Stanley's greatest contributions to the world of personal growth and development, and the missing link in many other therapeutic approaches.

The 'how exercise' Stanley formulated goes right to the core of how we function and who we are. It is an eloquent and simple methodology which, when practiced draws our attention to what is, and not what should be. Through the use of the how exercise our relationship with our self becomes receptive rather than seeking, attending rather than analyzing, eliminating judgment and interpretation, patterns which so often become a premature closure reducing what we can learn from our experience.

I learned from Stanley how to value myself and how to be my best friend and counsel. This was not my goal, it was an outcome of learning how to accept and engage with myself, to talk with myself

about myself, to differentiate and regulate experiences and to give myself more form or less form, to be in charge of myself and not become a victim to my own personality or anybody else's.

The day I heard of Stanley's death I cried on and off for most of the day. The day after, I woke up feeling full of Stanley and at peace with his departing. I am thankful for having been left so much; so much of him in so much of me.

Thank you, Stanley. Thank you for all the effort, passion and giving you brought to our worlds and for all the green pastures you took us to.

Love from your friends in London, England.

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