self-Obsolescence

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Toward the end of a twenty-year career with Hewlett-Packard, I was asked to establish a 200-million-dollar strategic alliance with a German software company. Over a three-year period, and prior to my involvement, that inter-company relationship had been deemed impossible by both companies. Consequently, I was forced to dig deep within myself, leveraging off of fifteen years of prior work in alliances and drawing from relationship-deepening insights gained from my studies of *A Course in Miracles* (ACIM).

After three more years of concerted effort, in both companies, we established and publicly announced our alliance. During this same three-year period, while living in Heidelberg, I was focused on living a more spiritual life, based on study, meditation and the embodiment of practical spirituality.

This counter-intuitive practice of self-Obsolescence had immediate impact, and its power has become increasingly apparent over the subsequent two decades of reflection and application. Initially, my focus was on giving freely of my wisest and most insightful ideas. I strove to make it so people didn't *need* me. As a result, they *wanted* me. Eventually it turned out that my informal power and virtual presence grew and grew, such that it ended up exceeding that of a Senior Vice President at HP. Even though I was at a low level of the organization, this Sr VP called me one day, asked for my permission to do something, I denied his request and instead gave him an assignment. The next day he called back to report his completion of the task, and asked again for my permission – I then granted it. How was it that I denied the request of a Sr VP, gave him an assignment, and he reported back his completion of my assignment to him? How did that happen? This article attempts to answer that question.

There were other acknowledgements of this practice's empowerment of self and others. I was awarded stock options, a pay raise and a promotion. Then, I voluntarily left HP. I had been both empowered by and emboldened by the confidence that was instilled into me by this practice.

The slide below summarizes my current understanding of this practice and it is incorporated in the consulting and training services I offer to major multi-national corporations. (Note: Divine Self is also known as the Authentic Self.)



https://spibr.org/self-obsolescence.jpg

At first glance, the slide seems to simply summarize what ACIM describes as two thought systems. More than that, it is about two unique and opposing personal identities that we each carry within us, throughout our days. For me, it also represents how I have grown spiritually, over a lifetime.

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In my family of origin (an interesting phrase), my three brothers and I were very successful competitive swimmers. In retrospect, it seems like the love we received at home was dependent upon how well we did in the pool. At the time, being collaborative seemed to be a weakness. And today, I jokingly talk about my "competitive spirituality", which often solicits nervous laughter from others, as they realize that they too suffer at times from this malady.

In the world of business, we often hear the phrase "knowledge is power, so horde it". Actually, the reverse is true. As discussed earlier, by giving something of value (i.e., our most precious and powerful ideas), value gets returned. We are personally empowered as we empower others.

I have experienced and studied addictions for the past few decades. And, I define an addiction as anything we use to avoid facing the truth, mostly to avoid facing the truth of who we are. In humanity, there are two pervasive addictions – *complexity* and *drama*. When I mentioned to others the idea that we are all One, I often hear the argument, "It cannot be *that* simple"; we seem to love complexity, at least the ego does. And, what is it that attracts us to spend countless hours on the internet, reading the news or interacting with social media (e.g., Facebook)? It is to feed our addiction for drama, "Just look at what's going on in the world today!" we lament. Then, when we are with others, we compare notes with each other about the world's woes.

When there are issues in our intimate interpersonal relationships, the ego wants us to attack the other and to blame them for our problems. Our Divine Self reminds us that relationship itself is a third something, that lives in-the-between and is itself powerfully creative. It suggests that we might co-front (co-face) what is *in* the relationship itself. We do that by listening (which is an act of love), and entering into deep and authentic dialogue. Then, with the other, we see the problems more clearly, along with the emergence of a practical set of recommendations.

Increasingly in the world today, people and companies are more and more concerned with what they can *get* from each other. This is a transactional perspective, not relational. Focusing on the relationship does not ignore the need for transactions, it complements it. Our Divine Self tells us that the more we deepen relationship, the richer the transactions. Like many things in life, this is not an *either/or* situation; it is *both/and*.

The distinction between grandeur and grandiosity is an important and subtle one. Grandiosity says, "One of us is better than the other, and the sooner we figure that out, the better". Grandeur says, "You are absolutely great, and so am I; we are both great; we are all great".

It is all too easy for me to get into a victim mindset. I am a recovering drug addict with two children who have degenerative neuromuscular disorders that destroys their bodies and shortens their lives. I'm struggling to fulfill my purpose and passion in life, and currently have financial challenges. I could go on-and-on … The point is that I can be in a state-of-mind filled with fear and angst. Or, I can look back on my life and see how things have always work out, for my greatest good. Why would this trend not continue? With this divine perspective, I come to realize that all of my seeming curses and afflictions bring with them amazing gifts, blessings and insights. What do I want to receive from the Universe? It is based on what I am willing to give to the Universe.

The idea of there being two selves within each of us is not a new one. It comes up in psychology, religion and spirituality. It is not, however, a battle. Complete obsolescence of the egoic self is not needed; moving in that direction is, in order to put the ego in its proper place, and teach it how to be under the loving direction of the Divine Self.

This practice is related to a fundamental dualistic-eliminating idea in *A Course of Love*. That the house of illusion (where the ego self lives) is in the House of Truth (where our Divine Self lives). Our Divine Self should be in charge of the ego. Not to eliminate it, but to give it direction and purpose.

What thought system do you choose? Who do you think you are? What kind of world are you creating? This is all the same question, with One answer.

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