

PLUGGING INTO NUMBERS: TWENTY

By: Val Ryan

Life is a web of relationships that sways to and fro in a dance that is the universe. This interconnection is expressed in the number twenty as 2 (duality) and 0 (space). We bond with one another on a continuum and from time to time detach, re-evaluate and gain perspective; one that stems from an inner voice only heard when we become silent. Unfortunately, this silence is getting harder to reach as nature's duality is being overtaken by dualism. If we see things as only black or white, good or evil, us or them, we lose our individuality, our humanity and the distance between us grows. By maintaining our own ideas regardless of their popularity, it's possible to reverse this trend and find a place in the spectrum that isn't dictated by external cues. Recognize that within you lay a multitude of complexities and contradictions. When combined with personal experience and unwavering respect for others, balance is achieved.

The belief that everything lies at one end of the continuum or the other is to misunderstand duality. Duality refers to the paradox that is inherent in each person, place and thing. "Light is not independent of shade, nor black of white. There are no opposites, only relationships... existence is not mutually exclusive." so states the Lankavatara Sutra, from *Buddha*

Speaks. When life is seen as linear, it pits one view against another and is the antithesis of the natural range into which all things fall. Travel west long enough and far enough and you'll end up in the east. With so many outside influences vying for our loyalty, it's difficult to be still and true to oneself. However, we're equipped with an inner guidance system that tells us right from wrong. Following our conscience leads to just and dignified decisions. Who we are and how we feel when the chaos of the world is quieted, is what we will project. If we feel strong and loving, we connect in strong and loving ways. If we feel alone and alienated, that's what we'll experience, no matter where we go or whom we encounter.

Issac Bonewits, a leader in the Neo Pagan community states "Dualism is the invisible water that we fish swim in, and it distorts and truncates all efforts to come up with complex solutions for the complex problems that real life presents us." Taking the position that it's us or them, we allow ourselves to be stereotyped, marginalized or otherwise labeled. We abdicate our role as individual thinkers in a society founded on the principles of free speech and thought, giving fear mongers the authority to decide what is morally and ethically sound. Dualism has become the new religion and it divides us along lines that when scrutinized closely have no basis in fact. No one is absolutely right all the time and no one is absolutely wrong all the

time. To deny this reality is to deny our humanity. It leads to acrimony and a further distancing of one from another. The mind is capable of holding many paradoxes and it's this mystery that keeps us pondering the big questions. Give yourself time to consider the gaps, let them to be chasms if necessary. And then stand your ground when facing those who seek to obscure or otherwise diminish your indivi[duality]. Don't settle for any alternative that requires you to forsake your rights, responsibilities or beliefs.

We have the power to choose what will be the greater influence, our own hearts and minds or that of others. It's okay to admit when you're wrong. To make mistakes, learn from them and move on. Dad used to say Mom would rather be right than be happy. That's the saddest thing I've ever heard and unfortunately, it's probably true for a lot of people. I don't know about you, but I choose connected, balanced and happy.

Comments or questions? Contact Val Ryan at 803.750.7117 or ryanmystic@earthlink.net

Ask about the FREE Dream Workshop on April 23rd.