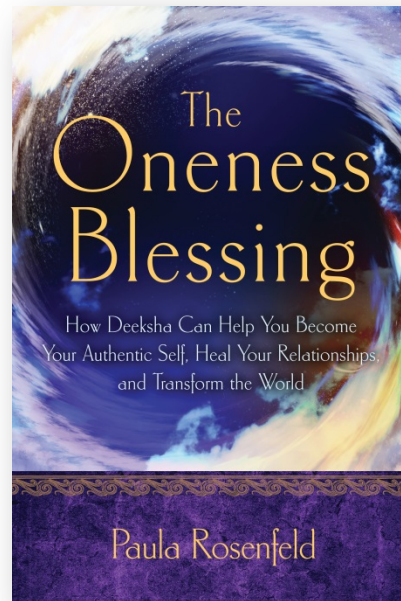


ARTICLE

The Oneness Blessing

A Simple Daily Ritual that Prevents Emotional Reactivity

By Paula Rosenfeld
(1450 words)



We all have emotions, all kinds of emotions ranging from happiness to rage. Yet many of us have been conditioned from a young age to control, repress, and hide what are considered unwelcome or inappropriate feelings. Sometimes we're encouraged to conceal even loving feelings and, especially, sexual feelings, based on the conditioning we've had from our parents, schooling, religion, or culture. Yet, how many of us have been taught healthy ways to deal with feelings? Much of the time, we're trying to be even-keeled, and are able to do that until someone or something triggers us. We can attempt to be masters of self-control, but if a volcano of previously repressed anger erupts, the impact of its force can send people running in terror from us!

Unfortunately, we learn how to hide feelings even from our self; we take pills, drink, or overeat in an attempt to numb them. When the strategies for suppression fail, as they eventually do, we must summon the courage to face the fear, sadness, and anger that happen in the course of everyday living.

Until we face feelings head-on, our suppressed emotions will eventually find a way to release in some manner or another. Either we're triggered into expressing feelings reactively by external events, or the stifled emotions might evolve into illness, addiction, or chronic patterns of pain like backaches, stomachaches, and headaches.

To have emotions is to be human. Emotions are energy that reflects our perceptions, experiences, and thoughts. Feelings are a natural by-product of engaging fully with life. The energy of emotions is meant to move freely through us, not to be repressed.

The key to figuring out what to do with all these feelings we have is to realize that we are not our emotions. We are beings who experience the continuous flow of emotional energy in our

body. If we cultivate awareness of what's going on within, we observe our emotions arising and feel their energy in our bodies. When we do this internal process, we begin to "witness" emotions rather than identify with them. We see that emotions are just energy that arises and moves through us. Feelings do not define us.

Regular meditation is a powerful tool for cultivating this inner awareness. The awareness creates a little space inside, which allows some choice to emerge. Instead of just continually reacting to life, we are able to take a little step back and observe it, even with all its unpredictability and complexity. We're no longer feeling acted upon and merely reacting to life; we are *conscious* participants in the unfolding dance of life. We have a choice in how we want to express our self.

Until we have the awareness, emotional reactivity usually runs the show. Typically, in an effort to manage and control uncomfortable feelings that are triggered, our mind automatically takes charge and hijacks the feelings that arise. The mind seizes control and spins a convoluted tale of blame that successfully distracts us from the physical sensation of feelings. We get caught up in the mind and lose touch with the body. Feelings get shoved into the realm of unconsciousness.

Under the mind's domination, we believe the story we've created about the events or people that emotionally triggered us. For instance, if someone offends us and we feel hurt, the hurt feelings get turned into a story with inner mental dialogue that might sound like this:

"How dare she say that to me! Boy is she a jerk. I don't deserve that. I never want to talk to her again..." On and on the internal conversation goes in an attempt to blame another for the hurt feelings or fear invoked in us. The payoff is that we don't have to fully feel the hurt inside. It's much easier to focus on blaming another than to feel pain or fear.

When someone triggers us emotionally like this, what's really occurring is the reawakening of a previous emotional reaction that's been repressed. Some time, usually in childhood, someone hurt us badly and we never fully processed the feeling. The feelings got stuffed down. Maybe our parents trained us to be tough, or behave ourselves and keep quiet, or not to be so sensitive. That parental message often is "don't show your feelings." To a child, the message could be interpreted as "don't have feelings or we'll consider you weak." This is one way we learn to push down and push away from fully experiencing feelings that arise.

If that old message got conditioned into you, any reawakening of "you are weak" or "you are bad" is quite painful. It's in the file with all the "you are not good enough" messages that we often acquire while growing up. The re-triggering of that energetic wound shoved deep down inside can be pretty darn uncomfortable.

The automatic impulse to avoid our feelings wreaks havoc in relationships. No wonder

communications get so muddled! Everyone begins to live in their old mental stories and true connection with another becomes littered by projections and misinterpretations of reality. Reactive conversations with others have more to do with our past wounding than current reality. Repressed emotions are powerful blocks to authentic connection.

The key to good communications and heart-felt connection with another is for each person to do their inner emotional processing. All that's really needed is to spend a little time each day fully experiencing our feelings. When we do this simple ritual, it's like taking an inner shower; we're cleansed of the energetic residue and blockages that becomes lodged in the body's natural energy flow.

Ideally, the flow of energy within us gives rise to states of openness, clarity, grounding, and feeling in sync with the flow of life. This is similar to how you may feel after a great yoga class or session of energy work. You might feel this after a good, cleansing cry, or when you're fully immersed in an activity you love. There's a sense of inner freedom, connection to life, and perhaps unconditional love for others. This state is each individual's birthright; an authentic state of inner peace and equilibrium.

When we're clear inside of emotional blockages, we express our true selves. Communication with others is going to be authentic rather than based on stories, distortions, and false images. If you find yourself communicating reactively, it's a sure clue that the other person has triggered a re-awakening of emotional blockage. You might internally thank them for offering you an opportunity to become aware and free of the chains of the past!

Each time we turn inward to fully feel emotions, we have an opportunity to gently release those energetic time bombs. Letting go of the *resistance* to feeling the emotional energy in our body is an extremely powerful tool for transformation; it's quite magical in fact. One minute you're in terrible emotional pain, and the next minute there's freedom, for as you stay with the feelings, you lighten up. You might have insights or memories from childhood pop up. When the blockage fully releases, you will find yourself joyful.

Here's a simple process for getting in touch with the underlying feelings associated with emotional triggers: Find a quiet place to sit for a while. You can start with 5 minutes and expand the time as it fits in your schedule. Set a timer so you can relax fully and let go. Turn inward, slow down breathing, and allow yourself to feel any pain or discomfort in your body related to emotional triggers that have occurred. Focus on the areas where there is discomfort, and allow yourself to fully feel whatever you feel. Give yourself permission to let go of resistance to fully experiencing the feelings. Stay with this until the sensations lift. If they move to another part of the body, move your focus with it and breath. Keep breathing!

Sometimes this process takes only minutes. Sometimes a blockage requires numerous sessions of internal focus to completely transform, for some emotional wounds are very deep and old.

Be patient and kind to yourself as you practice this process. It can bring amazing changes into your life.

Not only does this practice lessen emotional reactivity, taking responsibility for releasing emotions internally opens us up to greater love and connection. Being connected to the flow of life, and to our center, delivers our greatest good to us with ease and grace. It frees us from long-buried pain, and allows our true self to be seen and deeply loved by others.

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