

## "Why?" and "Why Not?" Cancel Each Other Out

Written by Nirmala  
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*Q: I was searching for truth and peace for quite a long time, but at a certain point I felt there was nothing to search for as everything is just happening of itself. I was the one who was searching, the search itself, and the nothingness that was found, all at the same time. Life is just what is. The question is: What meaning does spiritual teaching and pointing to the obvious have in all of this, if everything is just happening spontaneously? Everything has become so easy and simple, and yet there are so many teachers, gurus, and words making it complicated.*

A: First, I will answer your question very simply, and then I will use your question to, as you say, make it more complicated. I receive many forms of the question you have asked, where someone wonders something like, "If everything is unfolding as it should, then why would I go to work, try to understand anything, save the world, etc.?" Sometimes the question is in the form of "Why not?" For example, "If everything is always perfect, then why not just sit on the couch all day, why not quit my job, or even why not jump off a cliff?"

The best answer to any of these questions is the opposite question. Why offer spiritual teaching? Why not offer spiritual teaching? Why not sit on the couch all day? Why sit on the couch all day? The biggest perspective on life doesn't hold onto making anything special, but it also doesn't hold onto any resistance to anything. If everything is unfolding just as it should, why would that not include spiritual teachings and spiritual teachers and even words that make things more complicated? It is in the willingness to ask both sides of the question that things can become simple again. Of course, it is fine if you never go to another spiritual gathering or read another spiritual book. But it is also fine if you or anyone else does do these things. And while it may ultimately be ok if someone chooses to sit on a couch for the rest of their life, there is almost never a good reason to do so!

When we discover the truth that everything is already fine just the way it is, sometimes our ego latches onto this truth and uses it to question something we don't agree with or find useful anymore. There's nothing wrong with this, and I have yet to meet someone who doesn't sometimes use this bigger truth in this way. But when we are willing to ask the question in both directions (e.g. Why have spiritual teachings? And why not have spiritual teachings?), then there is a recognition of space around all possibilities and room for all kinds of spiritual and non-spiritual expressions. And, of course, this means there's room for you to enjoy the simplicity you have found, which appears to have little need for spiritual teachers.

So that's the simple answer: Why not? Or if the original question is, "Why not?" the simple answer is, "Why?" Since there is no reason why and no reason why not, these two questions

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cancel each other out and leave lots of room for everything else. If you just want to hear the simple answer, you can just stop reading here.

However, seeing that from the biggest perspective it doesn't matter what we do or don't do doesn't change the fact that we still have to decide whether to do something or not. There are several levels to truth, and while the biggest truth is that it doesn't matter what we do, from a practical level it may matter whether we go to spiritual gatherings like satsang or not, whether we go to work or not, or whether we brush our teeth or not!

These different levels aren't separate and are all part of one thing, so they do affect each other. And although they are not separate, they are different. So the truth that operates on one level is not necessarily the most important truth on another level. On the level of the Absolute—from the biggest perspective—nothing really exists and so nothing really matters. On the relative level of our existence, everything exists and everything matters. On this level, we get to create or choose the beliefs and values we will live by. If you want to be comfortable and well-fed, then valuing work and practical matters will serve you. If you want to be spontaneous and live simply, those values may not matter very much to you. If you want to deeply understand and explore the truth, then spiritual teachings may be of interest to you. If you want to live without subtle spiritual distinctions cluttering up your awareness, then words may not matter as much.

Contact with the biggest truth of the inherent perfection of everything tends to dissolve any rigidity in our values and beliefs. If ultimately it all doesn't matter, then what I choose to make matter on the relative level matters less. The ego creates the rigidity in our belief structures that we developed to sort and handle our relative experience. As we experience more and more of the ultimate perfection of everything, the rigidity of these egoic structures begins to dissolve. Contact with our true nature naturally allows us to hold our beliefs more lightly.

The dissolving of our egoic structures can bring the dilemma of what to do to a new, deeper level of questioning. If we don't hold any rigid views about what is right or wrong, how do we decide what to do? What guides us? At this point, many swing back and forth between hiding out in the Absolute perspective that what we do doesn't matter or returning to some old, rigid egoic view of what matters. There is another possibility. There is another level of our Being, and that is our essence.

Essence is the deeper, purer, subtler expression of our Being that includes such qualities as love, compassion, wisdom, clarity, joy, and peace. Ultimately even these don't matter, but on

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the more relative level, they matter much more than the daily concerns of life, including the practical question of what to do. When we are in contact with our essence and these wonderful qualities of our true nature, we are able to make choices based on wisdom, clarity, and loving kindness. This contact results in more ease, growth, evolution, beauty, freedom, love, and peace in our life.

When the question is about how to live from essence, spiritual guidance and teaching can serve. This is because spiritual teaching, at its best, demonstrates the flexibility to move between the different levels of reality and can evoke that same flexibility in others. Ideally, spiritual teachings also serve to help put you in touch with your own essence and inner guidance. Although it isn't necessary to have a spiritual teacher to develop more contact with essence, a spiritual teacher can be helpful. Ultimately, there is no reason to live from essence, and yet our essence exists and is here to help guide and unfold our life. Why live from essence? Well, why not live from this deeper place within you? Why not experience all the limitless peace, joy, and love available within you? If a spiritual teacher or teachings helps you do so at this point in your unfolding, why not use them?