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THE MARK

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LIVING AND BEING IN TIME

BY PETER HAAS

Hunger is a good indicator of time. If attentive, the time of day can be discerned in and by my body with the presence of specific appetites – appetites for breakfast, lunch, hors d'oeuvres, dinner and desert, and late night snacks. I can pretty much tell the time of day to the hour by my body's hunger signals for food.

As best I can tell, infants and children do the same. So, we start out as infants not on clock time, but on food time. Food and time go hand in hand. This is something we can feel during Lent as we take up the practice of more consciously eating our food, or even fasting from a meal or for several days.

Here are some additional ideas to ponder in service to this month's aim of being in time. See what lands for you.

Time is different. In the New Testament, three different words are used to describe time. The first and more frequent term is *chronos*, which relates to ordinary clock time. Think of the linear sequence of events our calendars

record and anticipate. The second term is *kairos*, which relates to extraordinary, special moments or seasons of grace that arise to provide an opportunity that is limited, and that requires our conscious response to come to their fruition. A third term is *eon*, which relates to the idea of an age or period of time, such as the iron age or the axial age. This is the word that is used to speak of eternal life – ages upon ages upon ages. Another way to think of it is a very large or long octave.

Time is a factor. This is one of the unique wisdom sayings of the Work. Yet time is not the only factor, in part, because of God's grace. Recall, for instance, the stories in scripture where time stands still, and where servants who work one hour are paid the same as servants who work eight hours. Thankfully, in the mind and economy of Christ, time is only one factor out of many factors. We might even think of the kingdom of heaven not as endless time, but as the fullness of time, in the sense that it is a reality or sphere of

existence beyond time, at least our kind of time.

Time is physical. One of the very practical and personal ways that we experience life in time is when we look at our physical, embodied existence on this planet. We are beings in time. We experience life and being within time. We notice that we are aging. We can observe the ways we have changed over and through time. We are visible records of time. Like the rocks and fossils of the earth, our body tells the story of our life-time.

Timelessness is a possibility. We are given hints on the spiritual journey of timeless experiences, of being beyond time, or perhaps the fullness of time. At the very least, time is certainly relative, if not ultimately real. Time is relative to our state of being and level of being, at any given moment or in any given lifetime. An instant in meditative ecstasy can seem like an hour. An hour in meditative prayer can feel like a moment.

AN EMBODIED LENT

Living in time. On our journey as a self-developing organism on this planet, we are invited to: awaken to wisdom and truth, hear the Word of God, and consent to God's presence and action in our life. We are urged to make haste slowly on the journey, to move through purgation into illumination and union. Or we may be called to experience freedom from samsara and all the illusions that life presents as options to happiness, but often leave us emptier than before.

All this occurs in the sphere of time. And so we become collaborators of time. We are wise to live in the awareness of the gift of our birth and the remembrance of our future death. How we live in time expresses our style of life. Are we miserly with time? Are we always running late? Or always running ahead? Are we impatient or slothful? Are we absentminded about the gift of each moment, or uptight that we miss the joy of simply being here now?

There are many different ways and styles of living and being in time. What is yours? ☸

Our Lenten journey begins on Ash Wednesday, March 2nd, with services at noon and 6:00 p.m. in the Sanctuary, in person and broadcast live. Our Lenten theme this year is "An Embodied Lent." Lent is a forty day season, not counting Sundays, in which we make particular aims that focus our attention on the body, whether through fasting, almsgiving or increased times of prayer and scripture reading. This unique season in the life of the church parallels Jesus' journey to the Cross and the events of Holy Week that consummate on Good Friday and are transformed into the joy of Easter Sunday. Fr. Thomas Keating reminds us that, "Lent is the season in which the church as a whole enters into an extended retreat. Jesus went into the desert for forty days and forty nights. The practice of Lent is a participation in Jesus' solitude, silence and privation."

To support your Lenten Journey, consider partaking in one of our multiple Centering Prayer retreats offered during this sacred season. You may register online at consciousharmony.org

Mar 2	Half-Day "Ash Wednesday" 1:30-5pm
Mar 14-20	7-Day "Lenten" at Cedarbrake Renewal Center
Apr 8-9	2-Day "Agony & Ecstasy: Living with an Aging Body"
Apr 16	Half-Day "Holy Saturday" 9am-noon

Also, consider using a daily contemplative Lenten reader, such as:

A Living Lent by Peter Traben Haas

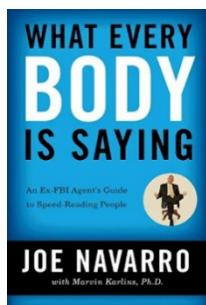
A Way Other Than Our Own by Walter Brueggemann

Journey to the Center by Thomas Keating

Pauses for Lent by Trevor Hudson


The Art of Lent: A Painting a Day from Ash Wednesday to Easter
by Sister Wendy Beckett ☸

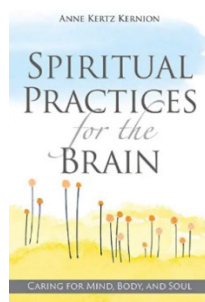
Book Look



Joe Navarro's very practical book, *What Every Body Is Saying*, illuminates the profound and impactful language that our body is speaking, whether we know it or not. It highlights our instinctive-moving center, particularly our postures and gestures. As with any type of practice related to the body, don't overdo it. Simply explore the wisdom of becoming more conscious and balanced in your own body life, body stance and body expression.

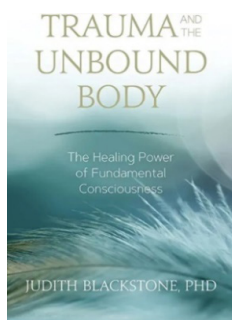
Have fun exploring the ideas!

Similarly, Anne Kertz Kernion's lovely and accessible book, *Spiritual Practices for the Brain: Caring for Mind, Body and Soul*, provides a basic overview of how the Work of Inner Christianity's teaching of three-brained beings can be supplemented by current scientific and biological knowledge. These spiritual practices are equally for the body as well as the brain. 




MARCH-APRIL COMMUNITY READING

This community reading is a perfect companion for our Lenten and Easter journeys.



Judith Blackstone's book *Trauma and the Unbound Body* is a deeply wise and compassionate resource that weaves meditative practice with the journey of integration of the body. It is a rare treat to see how insights in consciousness are inseparable to our embodied experience.

Of particular importance is the therapeutic sensitivity Blackstone brings to her work. In our community, we speak of the Divine Therapy that occurs with a Centering Prayer practice. May this book pair with this experience and give us all a common language to speak of our healing and transformation. 



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*Now and always may Christ be magnified in my body,
whether by life or death.* Philippians 1:20

ANNUAL AIM: ARISING AS EMBODIED LIFE

JOURNEY WITH TIME BY VAN R. HOISINGTON JR.

There is no part of us – neither wound of soul, personal failings, or sins – that is not of great value in helping uncover our true selves. ... We thus become excavators of our own truth, digging through the rubble of our anguish, confusion, and missed opportunities for the keys to where and how the spirit has been repressed or denied. Our life – in all of its wonder and pain – is our teacher. It is through the process of spiritual awareness, love, and humility that we discover holiness within.

Beverly Lanzetta, *The Monk Within*, p. 120

There can suddenly be opened within the heart or in the mind a realm of experiences that is not the external world (though it may interpenetrate it) and we are then bathed *in the light of meaning* – in that light without violence, which is pure experience, luminosity without shadow, in which the hardness of self vanishes. We *see*: with the authority that meaning gives us.

Maurice Nicoll, *The Mark*

I will restore you to health; of your wounds I will heal you.

Jeremiah 30:17

There is a time for everything.... Ecclesiastes 3

This essay is a snapshot of my current relationship with time and how it came to be. My prayer is that it might serve in some way for anyone who takes the time to read this.

On looking back, it seems to me that for most of my life, my relationship with time could be characterized as adversarial. I was always trying to get things done and time seemed to be working against me. Looking back, I see myself usually running out of time or not having enough time to do the things I wanted to do as well as the tasks that I felt I had to do. This pushing against time goes back a long way and permeated almost all

aspects of my life.

I have early memories of needing to get where I was going and get there fast. In first grade in Long Beach, California, I walked a couple of miles to school every day. Only I didn't walk, I ran. I became a fast cyclist in junior high and high school. Driving was the same way and fortunately no serious problems came of it. A lot of energy was spent trying to reduce the amount of time used during any journey.

There was also the tendency for filling my schedule with as much as possible. In college, I enrolled for more course hours than could be credited in a semester. The dean himself informed me of

this mistake. I took on multiple hobbies as my work responsibilities increased while enrolled in graduate school. All this was underway while growing a family. I was married at age 24 and had four children by my 32nd birthday.

I imagined that time was a flow and I was swimming against it. Time was a one-way force that came from the future and went rushing past with a speed that never let up. It only took from me without seeming to give back. It was constant and completely external.

This was not the whole picture. There were also occasional moments or glimpses of time being something else. While living in Colorado, I backpacked often enough to take in the timelessness of the mountains at 10,000 feet altitude. Flyfishing could draw me out of time as well. And of course, rocking in my chair with my babes sleeping in my arms would feel timeless. The funny thing is that I would treat these moments as not being reality, seeing them as a sidestep somehow from what was really going on, sort of cheating time. Time was out there, and it was taking note of my absence, and would wallop me when it had the chance!

There was a new experience of time a few years after my

fourth child was born. I quite suddenly found myself divorced and inhabiting an unfurnished rental house with all my belongings in a pile in the garage. At that moment, I had nothing to do. Everything I had been busy doing had abruptly ended. It was quite a shock. Among the many crazy thoughts that can go on in such a state, one was “I wonder what time will bring.”

Wondering was a very powerful and new way of opening to possibilities in life and around my relationship with time. At that time, I was not fully aware of this change in perspective. Only with hindsight and this act of writing it down does it get the weight it deserves. The idea of something within me affecting time began to seep into my being. My movement against time, until then, was automatic. It was hardly conscious. Now, because of this pause, I started to perceive more options, realizing that I could choose my actions with a bit more awareness.

Ever so slowly, my choices led to an awareness of time having an internal component, even a feeling aspect. I was attentive to, again bit-by-bit, what effect my choices had on my relationship with time. One trait that fell away was the feeling of the opportunistic cost of

time. Previously, I tended to keep score, as if that were possible, of what I was giving up when I did anything. By going to one place, I had given up going somewhere else. By doing one thing, I had given up doing something else. Therefore, I was frequently not present wherever I was because a part of me was keeping track of the other options. By increasing this awareness on choosing what to do, I no longer fantasized about other timelines. I was simply doing what I had chosen to do.

One choice I made was to attend a Family Constellation workshop, which had a powerful effect of deepening my internal sense of time. These workshops are a type of therapy for individuals and are done in a group setting. My takeaway from the workshop was a very keen awareness of how my entire life was being carried around with me all day every day. Beyond just having memories of experiences, it was possible to have a relationship with that “past me.” I was able to develop a strong sense of compassion for my younger self. The workshop also created a picture in me that this sense of me, or “past me,” could extend back to my family of origin, not just the relatives I was aware of, but the many more who

came before.

I found myself moving into a time sense that was not at all like the two-dimensional flow I had experienced for so long. This sense of time moved with me as I moved through time. My past, and all the past before me, was present with me at every moment. Also, then was the sense of my family to come. All of it could be traversed, prayed for, and loved at any moment in my “day-to-day time.”

Then, as one thing leads to another, a sense of compassion and presence for my internal past and future life started to move into my relationships with others in day-to-day time. I realized that I could set an intention to be more present with those around me. In my younger days when someone completely stopped what they were doing and seemed to devote their full attention to my existence, it would make a big impression on me. Extending their compassion into my life seemed powerful. And I have discovered that having a true compassion for my “past me” enables a deepened compassion for others.


Standing at any point in time, I have an internal time that intersects with day-to-day time. I have wondered if that intersection is a version of “now” – my past meeting

with “the past” and my future meeting “the future.” Wondering about this along with the wonder I felt right after my divorce has led to a sense of curiosity. Curiosity, as I’ve experienced it, leads to openness and acceptance. It also gives me a feeling of presence. For instance, being curious what a person is about to say versus “knowing” what they’re going to say, then, I feel present and connected in the conversation.

To maintain a balance at this intersection of the two timelines, I not only need to make a choice and create an intention, I must also follow up with devotion and considerable energy to even attempt to stay at this point. I get pulled off by many things, such as not staying curious, by not feeling compassionate or simply forgetting this intersection. The way back is always prayer. When fighting time or worrying about what the future holds, I stop everything and pray. I call this little intersection of timelines prayer time, because that’s always what it takes to get back there.

It was only a few years ago that I came to The Church of Conscious Harmony and was introduced to the Work of Inner Christianity. I began to learn of a new way of seeing my

experience with time. A nice bit of self-discovery has occurred by allowing uncritical observations of my changing relationship with time. Although some of the key turning points may look like external events, it was the internal changes that stay with me, and even those changes are not static. I discover new ways of re-experiencing these events that then reveal new feelings and translate into an evolving way to better know myself.

This is all well and good, but how can I know if any of this makes a difference in the world? I have faith that my prayers for my family of origin are heard and helpful. During my days, I try to sense any signs of verification. A recent example is when speeding along a highway to catch a flight, trying to make up for being 30 minutes behind schedule, my eldest daughter mentioned that I did not appear stressed. That’s a positive sign, because she’s known me for over thirty years and has seen me very stressed about being late more than once. If staying connected with those I love, even when we’re late and in a rush, can come from being more aware of my relationship with time, then it’s worth the effort. My wish is to continue observing and being with time. 

ELDER WISDOM: HONORING OUR FATHERS AND MOTHERS

FORGIVING

BY DEBORAH JEAN HARDING

Essence doesn't have an age! I am 71 years old and do not feel like an elder at all. I can however embrace wisdom sharing, and am ever so grateful for those who have transformed my way of thinking and being.

I'm dying of cancer. I was diagnosed with late-stage terminal cancer six months ago. One of the things with cancer is that it's taken lots of things from me, such as my strength, eyesight, hearing, processing, and ability to focus. My mind is on vacation. It's definitely taken my hair, which revealed much vanity since I didn't lose it during my first bout with cancer. While cancer has taken all these things, it's given me more than it's taken.

Looking in the mirror, I see a very frail, bald, hairless woman staring at me who looks like she has been in a concentration camp. I recalibrate to be here now. I continue observing. This moment is not of despair, not of resentment. I picture my friend Stella and feel her inspirational influence on my life. Gratitude and love radiate from my heart.

In 1978, as a professional musician, I was working on a cruise ship during the week. When I wasn't

in rehearsal or on stage, I was a passenger on the ship. One day, as I was basking in the beautiful Caribbean morning, I was awakened by two women sitting down next to me talking. As I opened my eyes, refocusing in the bright sunlight, I noticed my neighbor's red fingernail polish and a blue tattoo on her arm. It took a few minutes to realize I was looking at someone who had been in the concentration camps during World War II.

My reaction was very strange because I immediately began sobbing and repeating, "I'm so sorry." Finally, I had the courage to look into her face and she grabbed me. With her arm around me she said, "It's okay" and she began comforting me.

Over the next week, Stella and I talked about everything and became immediate friends, even though she was 40 years older than me. We shared about our lives, she about her family, daughters, and husband; me about my music and travels. It was the last night of the cruise when she shared what had happened to her in Auschwitz. The Nazis had come in the middle of the night and taken her family from their home when she was 12. One by one, I listened to

how her family died. Her brother was exterminated because he had a bad foot and couldn't work. Her mother died that winter of pneumonia, but Stella always believed she died of a broken heart because she couldn't protect her own family. Her dad had been shot. Of her entire extended family, she and a cousin were the only survivors.

I asked how she survived and listened with full attention. She gave examples of how she took on the best traits of her family, to honor and carry on their place in the world. Her brother was very playful, so every day she would make up a game to make her mother laugh. Her mother was very well read, so she listened to the stories of the older people in the camp and related them to her mother. Her father was hard working, welcoming and generous, so she was as giving to others as she could be. That's certainly the way she was with me the day I met her! The hardest thing for her to talk about was the sexual abuse that began after her mom was gone.

I rambled on about not understanding how she could be so joyful and love life so much and carry on, and how I would be so

NEW LENTEN OFFERINGS

bitter and angry and would probably want all those people dead. This is exactly what she said to me, “The Nazis were all about taking. They took our homes, our wealth, our families, our belongings, our hair, our rights and finally they took most of our lives. They do not get one more thing from me. I will not give them one second of my joy, of my thoughts, or my passion in life. They do not get one more thing from me. I want my life to be for giving. Not for taking.”

My mother had married a Jew. His father, like Stella, was this gracious generous man and his mother lost most of her relatives in the Holocaust. When my half brother and sister were born, I not only felt connected with the Jewish story, but now I was family. This is likely why I felt such a strong reaction to and connection with Stella.

The wisdom learned was in surviving something difficult, you have to be very present in the moment, you do not dwell in the past. She worked very hard over the years with numerous groups to educate about the Holocaust and make sure it didn't happen again, but she didn't carry bitterness. She just refused that. What you hate, consumes you like a cancer. It will eat you up. It will take your life. A lot of what I learned about surviving cancer, I learned from Stella. Staying in the present, in

Easter, with its grace of interior resurrection,
is the radical healing of the human condition.

Lent, which prepares us for this grace,
is about that which needs to be healed.

Thomas Keating, *The Mystery of Christ*



Please join us for any or all of these special Lenten offerings.

LUX DIVINA: LENTEN VESPERS

Fridays, March 4-April 8 7:00-8:05 pm, in-person and online

Hosted by Oblates for the Community

We are invited to pause with intentionality each Friday evening during the season of Lent to abide in silence, prayer, Communion, chant, beauty, to nourish our being, and to Self-remember in Christ.

SPIRITUAL WISDOM FROM THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

Fridays, March 4-April 8 12:05-1:00pm, Zoom only

Led by Peter Haas

Deepen your understanding and experience of the Lenten Journey and Holy Week through a study of core sacred teachings of mystical theology. The aim of this class is to provide an introduction to the profound and life-nourishing insights embedded within The Gospel of John, with a special focus on Jesus' final teachings recorded in chapters 14-21, including the Holy Week events commonly referred to as The Passion. The class is open to anyone who wishes to earnestly study and deepen their Knowledge, Being and Understanding.

Please register for this class online at consciousnessharmony.org

the now! Cancer doesn't get to own me. I'm perfectly open to a miracle, and I got one the first time around. Medical statistics are funny things. Compared to most cancer patients, I was healthy. I worked out every day.

Looking in the mirror, seeing that image of a woman in the concentration camp, and remembering Stella transforms this observation towards forgiving, living and loving life in this present moment. ☸

LIVING THE WORK OF INNER CHRISTIANITY IN DAILY LIFE

DIFFERENT KINDS OF MEMORY

BY NATHAN JONES

Work Idea: Memory in the Work Centers

In the Fire Academy, it was necessary we learn to get fully bunkered out and on air in 55 seconds. In order to do this, we would practice again and again until it became muscle memory. Take off station boots and step into firefighting boots, don pants, pull up suspenders, tighten suspenders, tighten pants, hood, jacket, zip jacket, air pack, shoulder straps to air pack, waist belt to air pack, tighten both straps, turn on air bottle, put on face mask, attach air pack to face mask, sharp inhale to start air flowing, don helmet and clap hands to have your proctor stop the clock. Then, we would doff our gear, reset it and do it again. Mostly daily, sometimes for an hour, sometimes for weeks, again and again, the same drill. It was understood that it needed to be beyond our Emotional or Intellectual memory (to use Work language, not fire). We couldn't really want nor have feelings associated with the process of getting turned out. Mistakes happen with over thinking, and


there isn't time to think through the process. It was understood, it is a skill that must be imprinted on the Moving center. Now, I could probably get turned out while giving a eulogy. My Moving center just does it.

Once I made Lieutenant, I was given a Thermal Imaging Camera (TIC) to bring in fires. It allows us to see through smoke and fire in a sense. Instead of relying on light, it picks up heat signatures. In a zero-visibility environment, a person on the floor will give off a different heat signature than the couch or table. It is an excellent tool and allows us to expedite searching, finding fires in walls and attics, and generally moving more quickly to enter and exit situations that tend not to be good for our health. The problem is I can't remember it to save my life. Try as I might, it is not programmed in the Moving center. While the body automatically gets all the gear on, I'm easily reading the text to the call – light smoke, dark smoke, one story residential, fire on the Charlie side, apartment complex, everybody evacuated

structure, cars in driveway, etc. – and painting a mental picture. My Intellectual center needs to remember the TIC; but, alas, it has failed more regularly than not. Oddly, and uselessly, it is more likely I clap my hands than grab the TIC. On its face, this is completely absurd. Yet the Work speaks to us of these different types of memory. All three centers have their own memory. The Intellectual memory is different from the Emotional memory, which is different from the Moving Center memory. It further breaks the Memory down into the negative part of the Emotional center and again into divisions of centers. For now, it is just important to know that there are different types of memory associated with each center and try to observe them. We dial a phone number from a different memory than we would build a table. We remember a sad song with a different type of memory than we remember a trail. As far as my TIC is concerned, I now secure it to the gear I know I will remember. When I am at the front door of a house and think “now would be a good time to

OUR MONTHLY PRACTICE:

EATING SIMPLY AND SLOWLY

A profound Work idea that runs throughout much of Gurdjieff's teaching is the theory that everything is eating something. The season of Lent provides an ideal time for us as individuals and as a community to share in the practice of conscious eating. To that end, we are each invited to simply notice when we are eating quickly, and slow down. We are also invited to choose simpler food choices, which could mean lighter foods, higher quality foods, and less food. Perhaps this approach is a more moderate practice than fasting from a meal or several meals. See what you can discover about your relationship with food by practicing eating simply and slowly this month. If you are in a family, explore how this might be applied to your situation, and with the unique challenges and blessings family life brings for your mealtimes. 

MARCH SERMON SERIES


AN EMBODIED LENT

March 2	An Embodied Lent	Mt 6:1-6, 16-18
March 6	Body and Food	Lk 4:1-13
March 13	Body and Energy	Lk 9:28-36
March 20	Body and Drink	Jn 4:5-42
March 27	Body and Sight	Jn 9:1, 6-9, 13-17, 34-38

have the TIC," it is there dangling from my air pack like magic.

Work Source: "I would advise you to see where your memory is good and where it is bad. All memories have their uses. The main point is to realize there are many different kinds of memory and that these different kinds of memory have different qualities." *Commentaries*, p. 583

Application: Attempt to observe a memory from each of your three centers: Emotional, Moving, and Intellectual.

Further Resource: *The issues are in the tissues.* Interestingly, memories and emotions lay dormant in our bodies. Know that as we journey deeper we can expect to confront them again. 

MARCH CALENDAR

For more details, visit
<https://consciousharmony.org/>
or call 512-347-9673

SPECIAL EVENTS

Centering Prayer Retreats
Mar 2 1:30-5pm
Mar 14-20 at Cedarbrake
Register online

Lenten Services
Ash Wednesday Service
Mar 2 noon-12:30pm
Lux Divina: Lenten Vespers
Mar 4, 11, 18, 25, Apr 1, 8 7-8:05pm

Spiritual Wisdom of the Gospel of John:
Facilitated by Peter Haas.
Fridays, Mar 4-Apr 8
12:05-1pm CT Zoom only

MONTHLY

Caritas Donations
1st Sundays
Bring non-perishables to CCH or
donate to caritasofaustin.org

WEEKLY

Sundays
*Centering Prayer & Lectio Divina 8-9am
*Intercessory Prayer 9am
†Worship Service 10-11:30am
†Youth Program (preK-12) 10-11:30am

Wednesdays
†Contemplative Worship Service 6-7pm

Thursdays
*The Journey School Class 7-8:30pm

Saturdays
*Scriptorium noon
*Compline 9-9:15pm

DAILY

†Centering Prayer Service 7-7:35am

*Please join these services, groups, and classes via online video conferencing. Contact the website for accessible links and more information.
†Open for in-person at CCH



THE CHURCH of CONSCIOUS HARMONY

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LENT

*Have mercy on me, O God,
in accord with your merciful love;
in your abundant compassion blot out my transgressions.
... Behold, you desire true sincerity;
and secretly you teach me wisdom.*

Psalm 51:3, 8

The Gospel calls us forth to full responsibility for our emotional life.
We tend to blame other people or situations for the turmoil we experience ...

If we do not assume responsibility for our emotional programs
on the unconscious level and take measures to change them,
we will be influenced by them to the end of our lives.

As long as these programs are in place, we cannot hear other people
and their cries for help; their problems must first be filtered
through our own emotional needs, reactions and prepackaged values ...

The heart of the ... work of Lent is to face the unconscious values
that underlie the emotional programs for happiness.

Thomas Keating, *The Mystery of Christ*