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News and Spirit

Ways to Conquer Negativity in Our World

There was a time, on a hillside in Galilee, when Jesus gave his followers some very simple instructions on how to live a good life. Here's what he said:

“Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, or what you will put on.

“Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them.

“And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life? And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.”

And then Jesus adds:

“Do not worry about tomorrow—for tomorrow will care for itself.”

So there, my friends, is the Lord's recipe for a good life: Trust in the Heavenly Father and do not worry.

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But we know if there's one thing that flies in the face of what Jesus taught, it's the daily news.

Jesus wants us to be loving, peaceful, and trusting. The news wants us to be frightened, distrustful, and angry—sometimes angry enough to wage war.

The news exposes us to the worst of mankind—the needless bloodshed, heartless acts of violence, the terrible economic threats that undermine our sense of peace and security.

The news and its effects on us has been important enough to be addressed by several spirit teachers over the years—those channeled here at New Era by the Rev. Anita Rutter, and others such as White Eagle in England. These spirit teachers and almost anyone who've been involved with spiritual development are well aware of what negative news does to the vibration. It lowers it dramatically and fills it with fear and discord. The effect on the vibration is so negative that it can activate the Law of Attraction with undesirable results.

One of my favorite spiritual writers is Ralph Waldo Trine, a philosopher and spiritual writer in the early 20th century, who wrote:

“The mind dominated by fear opens the door to the very conditions it fears. Fear and lack of faith go hand in hand. The one is born of the other. Tell me how much one is given to fear, and I will tell you how much he lacks in faith.”

Urging students here at New Era to be wary of a negative vibration, Anita Rutter's main Spirit teacher, Doctor Martin, once said:

“Try not to listen to those who preach the negative concerning all of the disasters that could take place and consume you, or try to get you to dwell on past tragedies and disasters. You might ask them: do they want the negative things in the past to happen again?

“You can tell them they are putting these negative things into the vibration because they are continually speaking about them. Through the Law of Attraction, past conditions can happen again. Why draw yourself into a cycle where you are living in the past? That is something to think about.

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I'd like to spend a few minutes this morning talking about the news media. The topic can have political overtones, which makes it a challenging thing to discuss. But, trust me, I have no political ax to grind here. I spent a number of years in my career working as a reporter for newspapers in the Midwest and New England and as a contributor to the New York Times and Newsweek magazine.

True, the news business has changed a lot since I was involved in it, and it was the nature of those coming changes that prompted me to change professions.

My goal this morning is to offer a brief assessment—not an indictment—of some aspects of the news industry so we can get a clearer grasp of its effects on us. And, to better understand what Spirit tells us about the news.

I fully understand that it's worthwhile to be aware of some of the news—some of it can save our lives. That's not what I'm talking about here. I'm talking about the steady drone of negative or sensationalist stories, the contradictory research findings, articles with no substantiated sources for their information, and news that's here today and gone tomorrow. This now is the majority of news stories we encounter day after day.

A moment ago, I mentioned how the news industry has changed in the past few decades. Here's a quick summary of what's happened:

Back in the mid 1960s—the era when JFK was assassinated, when we entered the Vietnam War, and men walked on the Moon—we got our news from common sources. There were several large, reputable, and respected newspapers. And there were the TV networks with trusted anchormen like Walter Cronkite, Chet Huntley and David Brinkley. By the end of the 1960s, the nature of news was changing, and many more people were getting their news from television.

Partially as a result of coverage of the war in Vietnam, plus a tumultuous political scene with the likes of Watergate, the printed news and broadcasts reflected much more arguing, disagreement, and dissenting viewpoints.

When this happened, the owners and executives of news operations discovered something important: When the news was angry or frightening, ratings went up.

Now here's one thing to keep in mind about television ratings: They aren't simply a popularity contest. Higher ratings mean more people are watching a particular program or network. And the more people watching, the more money a network can charge for advertising because its "reach" is greater.

So, higher ratings mean more money—usually a lot more.

Something else to keep in mind is that medical researchers in the 1980s looking into our growing epidemic of stress-related diseases found that certain types of news are highly addictive. Seeing people angrily argue back and forth, news of terrible disasters, reports of violent crime, predictions of terrible illnesses or economic collapse—all of these cause our adrenaline to flow, creating an addictive fight-or-flight response in viewers. And because of the addictive nature of adrenaline, viewers will keep coming back for more.

Since the year 2000 especially, the growth of television and the Internet has had a serious economic impact on newspapers. Many have closed their doors, others have been bought up in a large-scale industry consolidation, newspaper ad spending has plummeted, and many thousands of reporters and editors have lost their jobs.

One thing a lot of people may not realize is that the newspapers historically provided much of the news content to radio and television. But with far fewer men and women to gather and report the news, there has been a marked shift toward less "hard news" and much more content based on opinion and speculation. It may sound like news, but it's really a lot of conjecture—the louder and angrier the better because then the ratings go up, the ad dollars go up, and the pay given to network news executives goes way up.

Welcome to the earth plane.

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I recently found an article in the British newspaper The Guardian that speaks directly to the result of these changes in the news industry. I want to cite just four of them directly from the article.

First, news is toxic to your body. It constantly triggers the limbic system. Panic-promoting stories spur the release of cortisol. This deregulates your immune system and inhibits the release of growth hormones. In other words, your body finds itself in a state of chronic stress. Other potential side effects include expressions of fear, aggression, and desensitization.

Second, news inhibits thinking. Thinking requires concentration. Concentration requires uninterrupted time. News pieces are specifically engineered to interrupt you. They are like viruses that steal attention for their own purposes. News makes us shallow thinkers. But it's worse than that. News severely affects memory.

Third, news works like a drug. As stories develop, we want to know how they continue. With hundreds of arbitrary storylines in our heads, this craving is increasingly compelling and hard to ignore. Most news consumers—even if they used to be avid book readers—have lost the ability to absorb lengthy articles or books. After four or five pages, they get tired, their concentration vanishes, and they become restless. It's not because they got older or their schedules became more onerous. It's because the physical structure of their brains has changed.

And fourth, news makes us passive. News stories are overwhelmingly about things you cannot influence. The daily repetition of news about things we can't act upon makes us passive. It grinds us down until we adopt a worldview that is pessimistic, desensitized, sarcastic and fatalistic. The scientific term is “learned helplessness.”

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We know that a large part of our spiritual development hinges on how we view the world.

Do we inhabit a world where love, compassion, and peace exist? Where we recognize that presence of God in others? Where we strive to improve the lives of our loved ones and people we've never met?

Here's what the Spirit teacher Doctor Martin says about our worldview:

“Those living on the earth plane, in the present, cannot see clearly all that they have. They cannot have the proper perspective to see how man is gaining in wisdom, gaining in strength, gaining in understanding.

“They cannot see these things because of the earth turmoil, which is covered by your news media—for out into your world is thrown all the trash and all the negative thoughts. Negative events are reported by your news and television media, and very little news is reported about positive things happening in your world.

“One day this will change and quiet down, and they will have time to bring forth that which is beautiful and true and good. The more the good is brought forth, the sooner the negative will drop away. For it has been said—and it is true—that ‘like attracts like.’”

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What do you think about Spirit saying people are gaining wisdom, strength, and understanding? Does that sound a bit idealistic, to say the least?

Perhaps not. There's an interesting and highly acclaimed book called *Better Angels of Our Nature*, written in 2011 by a Harvard professor of psychology, Steven Pinker. His book is mammoth, with substantial amounts of data. His book shows that violence in our world has been declining for a thousand years and that right now is the most peaceful time in human history.

Professor Pinker contends that the decline in violence is enormous in magnitude, visible on both long and short time scales, and is found in many domains, including military conflict, homicide, genocide, torture, criminal justice, and treatment of children, homosexuals, animals, and racial and ethnic minorities.

Here's what Pinker says:

“Our cognitive faculties predispose us to believe that we live in violent times, especially when they are stoked by media that follow the watchword ‘If it bleeds, it leads.’ The human mind tends to estimate the probability of an event from the ease with which it can recall examples—and scenes of carnage are more likely to be

beamed into our homes and burned into our memories than footage of people dying of old age.

“No matter how small the percentage of violent deaths may be, in absolute numbers there will always be enough of them to fill the evening news, so people’s impressions of violence will be disconnected from the actual proportions,” Pinker contends.

In other words, we believe what we see, even if what we see is a huge exaggeration of reality. That’s why people who live in virtually crime-free neighborhoods—but who also are exposed by the news to ongoing reports of burglaries, rapes and murders—become convinced that the bad guys are lurking right outside their doors.

Barry Glassner, a professor of sociology at the UCLA and author of *The Culture of Fear: Why Americans Are Afraid of the Wrong Things*, reminds us that the messages causing us to worry so much are a far cry from the truth. He says: “We live in about the safest place, about the safest times in human history, and yet we're terrified of everything.”

And then he explains: "Whenever somebody's trying to scare us, the question to ask is, 'Are they benefiting from it, and in what way?' If they're selling us a product, if they're selling us their political campaign or their cause or whatever it is, we should ask how big is the danger, really? Is it big, is it small, or is it just that they stand to benefit by making us scared?"

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So, we now know that the way the news is handled today creates very low vibrations. In several lectures, Spirit has given us the tools to address the situation, as well as giving us the direction to keep our lives happy, productive, and peaceful.

Once again, Spirit teaches us about the value of prayer, meditation, and releasing. Listen to the Spirit teacher Doctor Martin on the topic of the news:

“Today as you read in your news about those who do not know of love, who tear their country apart with their deeds, we say, yes, it is harsh and yes, you would seek the wings of God to escape from the realization of all of those negative things. You cringe and you actually feel pain from the things you hear. But we say, it is only through pain that man can find his Creator. It is only through pain that the Spirit is born anew.

“Although you would run from the negative things that you hear on your news, you are on the earth plane to help to better it. It is not necessary to enter into the negation and the suffering—but it is necessary to find the part that you must play to keep the vibration of the earth-plane high enough for the Creator to send His angels to work and lift all of humanity.”

In another lecture a few years later, Doctor Martin elaborated further on the topic of news, what we should do, and how we should react to it.

“At this time in your time—not God’s time, as there is no time in God’s time, there are only cycles—but in this cycle you have your news media that broadcasts news regarding conditions in your country and around the world on your television and in your newspapers.

“Because you have this knowledge, you are given the opportunity to pray over it, where you can do something, where you can help others.

“You all have the greatest chance that people in your world have ever had to be universal minded. And we say, yes, you must take care of your own. Yes, you must take care of self first, keep yourself cleansed and ready to work. Yes, you must learn to use the creative power to do things. That is why you were given a mind, why you were given hands and feet—to learn to do things.

“Then you must learn to spread your love to others, where you can help, then help,” Doctor Martin said. “Where you cannot, then pray.”

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Spirit tells us that our time alone with God helps us cope with the negativity and fears we encounter in our daily lives. Doctor Martin in another lecture explains how meditation can help us lift our vibrations.

He says:

“You can escape from negativity in your moments of meditation, and in those moments of your aloneness with God. But that does not mean you are to run away from negativity. It means that in your meditation, you are released from negation when you experience the true realization of lifting your own soul.

“And in that rapture—as you touch with The Creator, as you touch with the Holy Ones—are the moments that are well worthwhile, and you are compensated for having to know of the terrible, negative things.

“You are released from the negativity as you understand how to work with the higher spiritual forces under God, and to put to use the answers that you receive in meditation—or as the guidance comes to you when your meditative time with God is over for that moment.

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There is yet another valuable tool to mention when we consider how to handle the negative impact the news has on the vibration and on us individually.

We have prayer, we have meditation, and we also have releasing.

Spirit tells us that once we have asked for God’s help for these negative situations, we must stop worrying about them. Here’s something Doctor Martin said on this point:

“Worry keeps in the vibration the thing you fear. Oh, if we could only get that understanding through to people on the earth. It’s like a wheel that is moving but going nowhere—the fear is in the vibration and goes around, and around, and around. And and you cannot get rid of it, because you worry.”

If we can release our worries about things we hear in the news, we're on our way to finding the peace that Jesus spoke of. As Doctor Martin tells us, we'll find that peace through God's grace.

"The spiritual meaning of grace encompasses the law of releasing," he teaches us. "This is the beautiful way you who touch with spirit come in peace and release your health issues, your financial problems, whatever difficulty you have—which can include the world's problems. For when you bring anything that is negative to your Creator, the word you feel—even if you do not think of it—is 'peace.'"

Releasing negativity also is urged by White Eagle, speaking through Grace Cooke, the Englishwoman who channeled this Spirit teacher in the 1920s. White Eagle is emphatic that the negativity in the news is not reality.

"Let go of all resentment, fear, and criticism. Hold only the positive thought of all good, of God, and the light will flow into you," White Eagle says. "When you concentrate upon negative things, you give them life. But if you cease to think about them, you withdraw life from them, and they gradually die. People say: 'Oh, but we don't want to turn our backs on reality, we must face it.'"

"But, my children, Reality is Light," the teacher goes on. "Reality is all that is positive, good, pure and true. It is what you call evil that is unreal. Always concentrate on goodness, beauty and love."

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To summarize, my message to you this morning is not complicated. It is simply this:

Jesus tells us to not worry. We are safe in God's hands.

Spirit also tells us to not worry, that the world of Spirit—here and on the other side—is a realm of Love, Light, Goodness and Truth.

The news media makes a tremendous amount of money by frightening us, keeping us insecure and angry, and making us distrustful of other people. There is no louder voice for negativity on the earth plane than the news media.

In actuality, facts show that the conditions on the earth plane are less violent and far more peaceful and loving than the media would have us believe.

News reports of genuinely troubling situations can alert us to where our prayers are needed. Our purpose in this life is to help others, to improve the world. By raising the world's vibration, we enable the angels and Spirit helpers to reduce negativity and heal our world.

And last but not least, we must remember that fear is not reality. Love is.

Here are two Spirit quotes I'd like to leave you with, one from White Eagle and the other from Doctor Martin.

First, White Eagle:

“A life controlled by positive and good thought, a life directed from the heart or from the Christ spirit, is well ordered, peaceful, harmonious, and happy. Nothing disturbs it. Gentle, beautiful and harmonious order makes all things new, all things perfect.

“On the other hand, the life that is ungoverned, uncontrolled, unhappy, inharmonious, and chaotic comes under the domination of negative thoughts and destructive forces.”

White Eagle is simply telling us we have a choice.

And Doctor Martin tells us:

“Those who are willing to work in the way they know they must work by praying, studying and using the truth, finding happiness, and lifting the vibration wherever they may be—they are helping God to heal the earth plane.

“It is right, as it is said in the Bible, to sing a joyful song. It is right to sing and to be happy. It is right for every group, wherever they are, to lift the vibration—for only with this higher vibration can the Spirit teachers, healers, and guardians come close enough to the earth to send their thoughts down to help us all.”

Bless you, and Amen.