

Gaining Perspective When The World Goes Off-Kilter



Right after 9/11, I got some sage advice from my meditation teacher James Baraz about how to cope with the sudden shock of so much loss and devastation in a world gone crazy with hatred and fear. Just as wise and timely today for coping with the ongoing disasters in our world, natural and unnatural.

Shift Your Perspective – either by *zooming in* to *this* moment with one very real human being, or by *zooming out* to the long view of eons that have witnessed these upheavals in our world.

Zooming In:

Take heart, stay grounded, be inspired by your direct experience or your witnessing:

- the handing of a sandwich to a victim or a first responder that hasn't eaten for ten hours; savor the moment of connection, the moment of common humanity;
- young children playing tag in the rubble just 48 hours after the flood, earthquake, fire, and remember that joy and gladness are always present somewhere “in the ruthless furnace of this world.”
- noticing one flower, one hummingbird, one peach, one smile, acknowledging the preciousness of any one creature, any one moment with another person.

Zooming Out:

- gaze at the moon and briefly ponder how many cycles of living and dying it has witnessed on this planet, people, nations, even whole civilizations vital in their aliveness and strength for a time, then passing on, fading away, present no more. The existential truth of “This, too, shall pass.”
- remember previous times when a home was re-built, a forest re-seeded and re-grown, a life upheaved by a sudden catastrophe over time finding a new sense of meaning and purpose.

Whatever must be dealt with still must be dealt with. But trying on a different perspective, even temporarily, can put what is upsetting or hard into a new perspective. We can come back to center with fresh energy when we have a fresh perspective. And carry on.