

Shortcuts

September 8, 2007

There was a time, and it was rather a long time for me, when I believed in shortcuts. You won't find me using the word *believe* often because this Work does not encourage one to believe, but rather to verify. A quick look back through history will convince nearly anyone that man can believe almost anything. Truth and belief have little in common; if you know the truth you don't believe it *because you know*. If you don't know the truth you can believe something untrue. This doesn't mean there is no place for belief. What it does mean is that we often rely too heavily upon belief when, in fact, we would be better served by relying on our ability to verify.

Also notice that I do not use the words *belief and faith* interchangeably. But, this talk isn't about faith or belief, it's about shortcuts. We generally think of a shortcut as a shorter or alternate route when traveling between two points or, figuratively speaking, an accelerated way of doing or achieving something. Our belief in shortcuts dies hard. Take, for example, this belief: "We can get something for nothing." To our great loss, many of us limp along the path of life nursing these kinds of cherished beliefs in our imagination, believing that life actually operates this way. Or, we think it could work that way if only we believed strongly enough.

It has been suggested that the only way a person can be swindled is when he thinks he's going to get something for nothing. Over and over again we allow imagination to cloud our ability to reason and to remember ourselves. We forget, for example, that if something seems too good to be true, it probably is. There is a saying in the Work that relates to this: "It's possible for one to find money in the street, but it's silly to think one can live on it." The Work also says that imagination satisfies every center. Imagination fuels one's beliefs—and there is no shortage of people willing to take advantage of those looking to get

something for nothing.

"We can get something for nothing," is a belief in shortcuts. Why is the word "free" used so much in advertising? It's used because it works. The idea of getting something for free hooks people where they believe instead of where they think – advertisers know that people buy on emotion, not reason. One reason why genuine self-observation is stressed heavily in the Fourth Way is because we find it so difficult to accept the idea that we are not what we believe we are.

Having been a teacher for the majority of my life, I have observed that students—more often than not—persist in the belief that they can get something for nothing, that they can gain entrance to the show without paying the price of admission. But the universe is not designed to work like that. Because we imagine it does, we continue to justify the false belief that there is a discount ticket we can have, if we only believe long enough, or strongly enough.

Due to imagination, we believe that if we work faster and harder, the time it takes to get where we wish to go will be shortened. If you're aware of your thoughts and feelings at this moment, you may be able to catch a glimpse of your mind challenging what I'm saying: "It just can't be true." Why do we challenge it? Because we don't want it to be true. We may imagine that somebody in our past got something for nothing, and this fuels our belief.

And so it goes. We labor through life with childish ideas that fly in the face of Universal Law. We never really give up Santa Clause, the Easter Bunny or the Tooth Fairy. Instead, what we do is change their names and the suits they wear. We label *belief as faith* and seal it with a prayer. We completely miss the idea—the truth—that you must make the proper request to receive the right answer. The right answer makes no sense when you don't ask the right question. Relax and enjoy the process of living the gift of life, one we so often take for granted.