

FOUR

THE POWER OF LOVE

Meditation 01: Commitment

'Commitment is an act, not a word.'

Jean-Paul Sartre

'Until one is committed, there is hesitancy, the chance to draw back, always ineffectiveness. ...the moment one definitely commits oneself, then Providence moves too. All sorts of things occur to help one that would never otherwise have occurred. A whole stream of events issues from the decision, raising in one's favour all manner of unforeseen incidents and meetings and material assistance, which no man could have dreamt would have come his way. I learned a deep respect for one of Goethe's couplets:

Whatever you can do or dream you can, begin it.

Boldness has genius, power and magic in it!

William Hutchison Murray, *The Scottish Himalayan Expedition (1951)*

'To be free is to be committed to that which is a part of the unbound realm.

Whatever sets your soul to flight is freedom.'

C. JoyBell C.

Commitment is a decision. It is a dedication, a devotion. As with Passion, commitment is also partly defined by a basic duality. The tension is between the apparent oppression of locking yourself into a course of action, a relationship or a value system, and the actual liberation that comes with making a decision and then making a decision to stick absolutely to that decision. No reservations, no ifs or buts. Conflict, indecision and uncertainty fly away; for better or worse, this is what I'm going to do, and every decision and action that comes after becomes easier.

Not, perhaps, easier all round to put into action in the real world, because you are committing to a difficult and demanding path, but at least now there is no

mental or spiritual stress. And as the mountaineer Bill Murray says above, once that decision is made you may find that the phenomena of both the real and the subtle worlds fit in around it, facilitating and supporting your determination and direction. Even if you don't get that wonderful sense of things and events conspiring in your favour and you still have to battle your way upstream against obstacles and barriers, as long as your commitment remains unwavering, you will prevail. Of that there is not an iota of doubt.

Commitment strengthens, deepens your resolve. Resolve and commitment are one and the same thing, actually. It takes courage to do, and gives courage in the doing. And here's another subtle double sense in the idea; if you are committed to improving yourself – your Self – to raising your own consciousness, it's likely that you will be regarded as selfish, because that's your own effort for yourself, and what about the less lucky beings with greater apparent need than you for peace and power? What are you doing for them? For the earth, the environment at large, even?

Well, you're working on the Ecology of your own Soul – You the Soul – because when it comes down to it that's all you can take responsibility for. You may not see it all at once, but your own and others' evolution to a higher, more powerful, more peaceful state of being will have its cumulative beneficial effect on the wounded planet and the suffering souls that inhabit it. Buddhists talk about seeking enlightenment for the sake of all conscient beings. Committing, if you like, to the benefit of all. Your apparent selfishness becomes selflessness, because the physically defined self, the body conscious one that confuses existence with material things, is the one that is breaking down. It takes deep experience and understanding to see that in the spiritual realm, to commit, in one of those OED definitions, is to 'entrust, give in charge, commend, consign'. To commit is to hand over, to renounce, to give oneself up, to let go, to let it flow, in a sense to abandon responsibility. You let a higher power (some call it God) take charge; 'the Lord will provide'. But the Lord helps those, continues the wisdom, that help themselves. Here's that freedom thing again. You're not being irresponsible; you're taking more

responsibility for your Self than ever. If commitment is letting go, let go of yourself to find and nurture your true Self.