

Tiger and Fame – Is That All There Is?

"And what shoulder and what art  
Could twist the sinews of thy heart?  
And when thy heart began to beat,  
What dread hand and what dread feet?" – Robert Blake, *"The Tiger"*

The media are tripping over themselves to cover and capitalize on the Tiger Woods story. I've read and watched many. Typical of much of the media today, they seem to be focusing on the titillating, the gossiping, the business repercussions for Tiger, Inc. and his sponsors, and how his actions will affect golf, or perhaps sports in general.

Well, here's a different take.

Tiger is but one point on the continuum of ambitious folks who've achieved success and fame and were still left "wanting."

Almost every day, we can find examples of successful folks in politics, in business, in sports, in education, in religion, in the arts and entertainment for whom fame represented a defective, lacking, incomplete brass ring. For whom, simply, fame was not enough. Fame did not provide them with a sense of groundedness, a deep sense of self, a "center that holds", that is, a core sense of wholeness and self-love. Rather, amid all the glamour, glitz and groupies, some part of them was feeling alone, lonely, loveless or lacking – suffering. And to ease their suffering, they act out in inappropriate, self-sabotaging ways – infidelity, crime, abuse, addiction, and other seeming "rational" (at the time) acts of stupidity– in an effort to fill a "void" that fame could not. Laughing on the outside, not so much on the inside.

For these folks, no amount of fame, or fortune, can ever suffice. Their deep desire or need for fame, more and more of it, is largely in direct proportion to the "hole" or emptiness they want to fill. As many have never taken the time to explore what's underneath their need for fame, for crowds, for adulation and acceptance, they tend to shy away from their "demons" – seeking escape outside themselves.

Why isn't fame enough for these folks? Why doesn't fame "do it" for them? Eckhart Tolle asks, "If there are so many seekers, why are there so few finders?"

One reason is that their search for success and fame is misplaced. Their search for acceptance and approval is misguided. Their heart's longing for a sense of their "self" is veiled by their not knowing who they are. So, looking outside their self, they seek something they believe they do not have now.

Our psychological condition – what we think, our attitudes and feelings about "who I am" and about what is happening in my life, the childhood experiences and conditioning we have had that we have not explored and addressed, and the shadow side of our self that we have avoided – are factors that affect how we deal with life, with success, with fame.

The fact is we cannot rise higher than our thought about who we are – regardless of the amount of our paycheck, the size of our adoring crowds, the number of hangers-on, lovers, World Series rings, number-one recordings, Oscars, Emmys or glittering marquis pulsing our name.

The Tigers of the world in some way, shape or form feel separate, or lack True and Real love or a harmonious alignment between their personality and their soul within. In this place, healthy and conscious life choices and decisions are often elusive and hard to make. This is their challenge.

Successfully meeting one's challenges requires a deeper, soul-based, approach that supports one to go within to explore, inquire and gain a greater sense and understanding of their self – "Who am I, really?"

For Tiger, and the rest of us for whom fame, fortune and success "don't do it," we're being offered the opportunity to "work" on issues that seek resolution, for example:

- Learning something necessary for our further unfoldment of our person – a natural evolutionary experience that supports us in overcoming some limitation(s) imposed on ourself by ignorance, by withdrawal from social connection or by not expressing ourself on a deeper level
- Healing relationships where disconnection and disharmony exist
- Clearing pathways of expression for Essential soul qualities that are needed (e.g., love, compassion, will, discipline, strength, courage, steadfastness, wisdom...)
- Clarifying our life's purpose
- Restoring order where disorder, or chaos exist in some way, shape or form
- Understanding when we need to become at times more independent and at other times more interdependent
- Restoring virtue where vice exists
- Bringing thought into alignment with our heart and soul
- Aligning our consciousness, understanding and behavior with universal laws
- Awakening our conscience in order to make moral choices
- Overcoming fear, terror and separation in order to experience greater unity within ourself and with the greater whole of humanity
- Learning how to teach or express unconditional love
- Making connection with the Universe and trusting in its intelligence and love
- Learning that soul is present within us and within everyone and that each being is divine in their own right
- Supporting others when they need support

So, when the hubbub dies down, and we experience some quiet time before the next "star" falls from grace and captures all our attention, perhaps we can step back, take some deep breaths and inquire within, "Do I spend much of my life in a 'wanting' state? If so, what am I wanting? And, why? And what makes me think that someone or something outside myself will fulfill that wanting when I know, honestly and sincerely, that will never happen?"

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So, some questions for self-reflection are:

- Is there a part of your life where you feel separate or lacking connection? Why do you think this is so? What might support you to overcome this challenge?
- In what part of your life do you lack understanding? What might support you to overcome this challenge?
- Do you have a tendency to disempower yourself or others? What might support you to empower yourself and others?

- Where is love lacking in your life? How might you resolve to express love appropriately in those parts of your life?
- How do you deal with success? Are you obsessed with success, fame, or being seen and acknowledged?
- Have you ever acted inappropriately in order to feel like a "somebody?" Do you ever compromise your values to be successful, liked, or acknowledged?
- Do you ever feel worth-less, value-less, unloved, or un(der)appreciated? How did that make you feel?
- What was success or fame like for you when you were growing up?

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