

# ***Silver Linings: Transformation in the Aftermath***

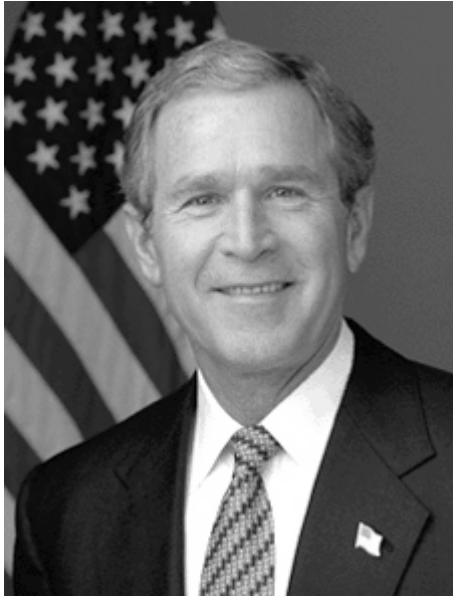
**Healing the George within**

By Kathryn Dixon



Here we all sit, smack dab in the middle of the unthinkable. Preposterous. Devastating. Infuriating. Terrifying. Now what? How in the world can this country--even this world--survive another four years of George playing capitalistic antiterrorist terrorist free--wheeling conservative Christian savior from democracy?

Perhaps some of you are still holed up in your bedroom with your bedcovers pulled over your head, hoping against hope that this has all been just a bad--a very bad--dream. Perfectly understandable; we all deserve a little time out for grieving and regrouping.



But maybe this bad dream isn't so bad after all.

"WHAT?"

Please consider this: What if redemption from this bad dream is more an inside job than an outside one?

We've been trying to end the nightmares in this world for a very long time through countless endeavors designed to change other people/parties/genders/countries, and to be perfectly frank, it has never worked. Not even once. There may be a brief glimmer of "justice" arising momentarily from the dust and ashes of war; however, it never takes long until the cannons of unrest begin to rumble once again. True justice is never found through violence--violent thinking or violent action. It is only realized through the truth of heart.

I notice that when I'm in conflict or resistance to something, within or without, authentic inner peace is not possible. I'm arguing with what is. When I'm angry about any circumstance or outcome, I'm at war with what is. I notice that in such a state, I tend to cause more suffering rather than relieve the suffering that inspired my desire to "help" in the first place.

What is, at the moment, is that George remains in Washington.

Acceptance doesn't mean I have to agree with George, or that I don't boycott or participate consciously in rallies and petitions to anyone who will read them, but it does mean that when I do those things, I am motivated by love rather than reaction, fear and hatred.

If I want peace on earth, my desire never seems to move very far until I own that it is my desire and my responsibility to manifest it in my life and in this world to the greatest degree of which I am capable. Peace cannot come about through legislation or anarchy. It must be lived, one moment at a time, every day. One thing I'm sure of, making other people wrong doesn't bring peace--not even when you're talking about dear old George.

Is this World Peace Job a thing I can do all on my own? Don't I need others of like mind to help me to get this done? Well, maybe not. It is sometimes in the process of recruiting others to my noble causes that I completely lose the footing on my own path. What if, until I take on the job personally and wholeheartedly in my own life, there is no way that significant strides to world peace are possible?

Have you ever noticed that it's easy to feel peace and brotherly love when the people all around you are folks with the same experiences, perspectives and principles as your own? Nice coincidence, eh? The authentic peacekeeping begins when I happen to be in the company of fervent Republicans - particularly if they also happen to be vocal and "born again."

Nothing happens until the polarization stops. Think about it. If the world is a reflection of my consciousness, then when I happen to angrily respond to conservative precepts and principles that are in my face, then the mirror of my world reflects the angry bashing of my very own beloved principles and precepts. The mirror does not lie--it can't; it's a totally neutral thing. Adding insult to injury, when I look a little deeper into the mirror, I might notice that I am not doing such an impressive job of actually living the principles I am so wont to enlighten my beloved world with. How can I expect people to respect me and my views and wisdom, when I have only contempt for them and theirs?

Healing The George Within (little did you know what that W really stands for?)

If there's a George W "out there" (and I hear there still is), he's got to be a reflection of something I've missed that's going on right here in me. That really sucks, yet it is the only path to freedom that isn't bloody or temporal. What does he reflect in me that I would much rather project outward than heal within my very own heart? Discovery time. Who knows? Maybe the 'W' really stands for "Within."

Let's try self-inquiry ala The Work of Byron Katie ([www.thework.org](http://www.thework.org)) to get a closer look at how I can heal my inner George, thereby clearing up things in that nasty mirror as well.

The simple self-inquiry process of The Work is the fastest and most pragmatic path to freedom I have yet to find. (And you can trust me when I say, I've been looking in earnest for a long, long time.)

I invite you to participate in your own little transformational experience, rather than merely observing mine. It's the difference between looking at a menu and actually eating the food. Just take a moment to find your own answers to these questions and watch what

happens. Here goes:

Start from a statement you want to practice self-inquiry on:

Another four years of George is the worst that could happen.

1. Can I really know that that's true? No. Despite my proclivities, I cannot know that this is the really the worst that could happen.

2. What do I get when I hold that belief? I get to feel seriously screwed and fear that not only this country, but the entire world, is endangered by our "democracy." I get to feel terror. I become a terrorist to my own precious self. I talk to my friends about how scary this is, and thus I become a terrorist to my friends as well. I treat me like I am merely a pawn in a very ugly game in which I am utterly doomed, noble principles and all. I treat me like I am a martyr (a very old and boring role now that I've been playing it for half a century). I treat George like the Antichrist in my mind, and I get to wonder if in fact this is indeed the end of days. I get to live in Armageddon instead of Salt Lake City in my thinking.

3. Can I see a reason to drop the belief that George winning the election is the worst that could happen? (And please note, this is not asking if I will drop the belief, just can I see a reason to drop it?) Yes, I see several reasons to drop it - terror and stomach acid are good ones.

3a. Can I see any reason to keep the belief that is not stressful? Not a one, interestingly enough. Every reason to keep the belief causes big-time stress. "George is wrong!" has been my mantra in one fashion or another for four years now, and I can feel my shoulder and neck muscles tense up every time I even think it.

4. Who would I be without the belief that George winning the election is the worst that could happen? Wow, what a question. Without that belief, I wouldn't feel so much fear. I would trust that somehow, we will find our way through all of this - we might even find a better way because of all this. I would open to a sliver of trust that George may not be completely corrupt, and that would help me breathe a little easier. I could stop being such a terrorist to myself and with my friends. I would breathe deeper and therefore have more oxygen in my blood, resulting in a greater ability to think more clearly about actions I can take which will bring more peace to myself and in the world. I would be more present in my own life, focusing on living my own principles on a daily basis instead of feebly wishing George would do it for me. I would trust that even though this looks like a big mistake, it could, in fact, be a bigger opportunity for me to heal my own perceptions and thinking.

OK, so now that I've loosened up my consciousness by asking questions about my suffering that I've never asked myself before, I'll do what Byron Katie calls the "turn-around." This is the part of the process where you turn around the original statement and discover some other, often deeper (and certainly more personal) truths.

Another four years with George is the best that could happen. That could be; while I have many skills, I am not a fortune teller. It is also entirely possible that similar to when Nixon was elected for a second term, this country might just collectively stand and say, "OK, enough is enough, George." We could actually own and live our deepest principles in our lives, and then they would have to be reflected in the Washington mirror. Either George will have an awakening at that point, or he'll hit the road. One way or the other, all will be well.

Another four years of my habitual thoughts about George is the worst that could happen. Definitely truer. These thoughts are eating away at my stomach lining, requiring regular deep tissue massage, making my spiritual practice more difficult, and leaving me, well, generally agitated, to put it mildly. To be at war with George is to be invading Fallujah in my very own heart. And that negatively impacts everything in my life--health, mental clarity, the quality of my relationships in every arena of my life. Yep, good to let go of that.

Or, how about this turn-around: Four years with Kerry is the worst that could happen.

Who knows? That could well be as much the truth for Kerry as for George and me. It would be pretty awful if we persevered in our confused and exasperating course of expecting positive changes to come from the outside in. With George in charge, we have some serious impetus for inner-truth diving. With Kerry, there could have been a stronger temptation to hope that he or some external system could save us from ourselves. It's not his job. It's ours. It's mine--and it starts right here. Time to get busy.

Let peace begin with me, and let it begin with George. I'll start with the George inside. She's closer.

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