

Chapter 5: Making More Phone Connections

As stated at the start of this book, over the past several decades 26 percent of Americans have made dramatic shifts how they view and interact with the world.¹ They are “concerned about both social justice and the development of an inner life.”² These people go first go through a process of “personally waking up” and then through a process of “culturally waking up”.³ They start as mystic seekers directing considerable effort at spiritual development (see Appendix), human development, and seekers of community development.

“All that effort could not be just for yourself. Especially in the spiritual approaches, the path was not intended to get you high or to catapult you out of the aggravation of your daily life or to lower your blood pressure. The path was for awakening from the sleep of unconsciousness – not for yourself alone, as the Buddhist vows put it, but for all beings.”⁴

As the mystic seeker, or the mystic/healer, part of the sacred communication responsibility is to “pass it on”. But this process of “passing it on” requires phone connections. Sometimes these connections exist and we simply need to help people use them. Other times they need to be “created” by reaching out to make extend phone connections throughout our community. The community has to recognize that a need exists for the services of the mystic/healer. Then the mystic/healer is “called” to provide those services.

“In Native American vision quests, the seeker devotes himself to the service of his [her] tribe, opening himself [herself] up to merge with the spirit... who will bring wisdom to the group.”⁵

As phone operators we are devoted to the service of our community and we ask God (in whatever form we envision) to pick up the phone and talk to us on behalf of that service.

Robert Egan, in introducing a collection of essays on mysticism and social transformation, said:

“[There is a] tendency for the mystical experience to awaken a fervent discontentedness with human relationships... the direct experience transcends the meaning, density, finality, and obviousness of the reality of everydayness... Things do not have to be the way they seem to be... [There is] always already an emergent possibility available to the imagination that requires an inner gesture more like allowing – or better, welcoming.”⁶

For people who serve as operators the many “phone calls” place them in contact not only with the divine but also with the glaringly obvious notion that relationships do not

have to be the way they are. Simultaneously the divine path of what could be allowed to occur in place of these relationships, of what could be welcomed to happen, is so pungent that its sweet smell never leaves the mystic/healer's memory. Attending to the responsibility of one's role in assisting social transformation is part of the mystic/healer's calling.

The demand for operator services is likely to greatly increase over the next decade because we are facing dramatic changes in social demographics and social awareness. We are also facing internal changes that we need to understand.

“We must wake up in massive numbers, and very fast, to the sacred glory of life and nature and to our sacred responsibility to preserve health or be destroyed. In this waking up the great mystics of the world are our truest and bravest friends, for together they give us the full visionary information we now need.”⁷

We need to make contact with the phone operators in our community to help us with this “waking up”. “Western man will not be able to live indefinitely cut off from an important part of himself.”⁸ We need to develop the phone connections in our community so we can become healthier, happier, and more sacred people. Then as we proceed in our awakening we can “pass it on” by establishing more phone connections.

This process of making more phone connections involves the following:

- Training people to be skilled operators.
- Informing people on the location of phone booths and training people on how to use the phone booth.
- Expanding the availability of phone access.

This process will involve community and systemic support. There must be a desire by the people of the community for access to such phone services and when the desire is loud and persistent then the system will change to meet that desire. This is the responsibility of all mystic/healers and mystic seekers. These are responsibilities that can be fulfilled within any walk of life, using almost any “language of God” or language of healing and compassion.

It is important to reemphasize here that training people in the process of making a collect call to God can be utilized by any person regardless of their particular spiritual orientation. The only requirement is that the person has a spiritual orientation that is sacred, some definition of God, and is willing and able to pursue improved sacred communication within their particular conception of God. Everyone has access to soul awakening and everyone has access to improving the practice of helping others. No walk of life is excluded.

It may be that there are tens of thousands of people who are mystic seekers poised and ready to become phone operators. All that remains to happen is for these talented mystic seekers to receive proper training and then to return to their communities to establish the phone services, to “pass it on” and to hopefully improve the quality of the helping relationships offered within their community.

Training People to be Skilled Operators

If social change is to be facilitated through an awakening then we need to improve peoples’ access to the phone services. Improving peoples’ access to the phone booth is best facilitated through the use of the phone operator. The first step in improving this access is to increase the number of people who have received proper phone operator training. We need to have more phone operators in every walk of life, every human service profession.

“We need guides – clerics, counselors, therapists – who know something about the final integration phase of self-realization, persons who know - first hand – about the rebirth and transpersonal maturity which the self-transcendent person seeks. Too many therapists, psychoanalysts and physicians are either unfamiliar with or unfriendly toward spiritual topics.”⁹

Perhaps there is fear that collapse of the helping professions would follow if there were not a separation of “church and state”. But this idea of placing the collect call to God is not about church. It is about the health of a person’s soul through an improved relationship with God. The idea of a souls’ health can be integrated into every helping profession without any degradation to the integrity of one’s professional identity. Teaching how to do this integration is but one aspect of the phone operator training program. Other aspects of phone operator training were discussed in the chapter on developing a direct line to God and within the chapter on training in “The Healing Relationship”.

The role of the skilled phone operator is to provide spiritual direction and many authors have written on this topic.¹⁰ The relationship between phone operator and caller is one where spiritual guidance is the focus. It is a helping relationship where one person is asking for help and the other is both willing and able to provide that help. The foundation of being trained to become a phone operator is based upon the founding concepts of the helping relationship. These concepts are described in my earlier publications. The central point of emphasis is that the healing relationship is but one of three types of relationship the operator will encounter when placing collect calls for people. These three relationships are 1) the healing relationship, 2) the support relationship and 3) the habitual relationship. Training of the phone operator will need to address all three types of relationships.

Some important concepts facing the training phone operators are addressed in Table 1. I am going to briefly address each of these training concepts. In some instances, particularly when addressing the helping and the healing relationships, I will direct the reader to more detailed descriptions in my earlier publications.

Table 1: Concepts Important for Training Phone Operators¹¹

Training Concept	Description of Concept
Foundation Concepts	The foundational components of a helping relationship ¹² that promotes well being need to be understood so that the healing relationship can be placed within a broader context of phone call services.
The Characteristics	The healing relationship characteristics, and the characteristics of the skilled phone operator, should become understood and recognized within practice.
The Shifted Self-View	The experience of a shifted self-view is part of the practice of becoming an operator – for both participants. This is part of the training.
Interpretive Processes	Because of the sacred mystery involved there will always be interpretation. The outsider and the insider views, as well as one’s worldview, are involved in this process. It is also a part of facilitating the collect call to God.
Sitting in the Between	Sitting in the oneness of the between includes knowing its unitive nature and sharing that wisdom with others in a way they can begin to understand.
Contamination Effect	Steps need to be taken to learn and practice “cleansing” and the art of sacred health. There are risks and side effects to the business of becoming a phone operator.
Spiritual Development	Each practitioner should know his/her own spiritual progress toward becoming a skilled phone operator and learning the language of God.
Being not Doing	The role of the operator is more about being than about doing. Understanding “not-doing” is part of the training.

Throughout this book I have stressed the importance of two key points. First, the operator must be skilled in entering the phone booth (know the characteristics of the sacred healing relationship) in order to become skilled at placing collect calls for people. And, second, the operator should know what is to be expected of the job, i.e., what are the characteristics associated with being a skilled phone operator. The central purpose of “The Healing Relationship” was to address this first key point. The central purpose of this book has been to address the second key point. And whether you are thinking of becoming a phone operator, or just wanting to speak with one, both of these key points are critical to your sacred communication success.

Although this book introduces the reader to these two key points and their relevance to healing and communication with God it is not expected that the reader will be able to integrate the ideas into daily life without assistance. This assistance takes the form of exposure to the “insider view” and follow-up with a witness to the healing and/or transformation experience. Attempting to integrate the materials in these books without both the insider view and wise guidance is not only very difficult but also long and arduous. Spending time with a skilled practitioner is expected and encouraged, and it is hoped that these books will help to make such time more beneficial.

The “insider view” comes from sharing a mystical, or a healing, moment as part of making the collect call to God. It is a moment that involves a “shift in perspective” that not only changes one’s view of life, but also one’s view of self and relationships. It is often the beginning of knowing the nature of the between. There is great mystery in this shared shift in perspective experience. It is a mystery that must involve personal interpretation for it is a deeply personal experience. No other person can define how you should interpret the experience. Yet, if you are fortunate to have a witness than you can have a person to help you “reflect” (or process, think about, clarify) how you are interpreting what has happened. The role of the witness is not to impose, but rather to simply help reflect to the person their struggle with understanding the spiritual journey. The phone operator often becomes a witness by nature of the job description. Phone operators will need training on this important task. It is also wise for phone operators to have their own witnesses.

Throughout so many different sacred traditions there has been the influential relationship of the “master-disciple”.¹³ Whatever spiritual path you are taking you will encounter teachers. Learning how to learn from a spiritual teacher is not the same as the learning you did with your parents, or at school, or at work. It is a special type of learning that involves a special type of communication.

“And the deepest level of communication is not communication, but communion. It is wordless. It is beyond words, and it is beyond concept. Not that we discover a new unity. We discover an older unity.”¹⁴

If we experience this “deepest level communication” then we are experiencing sacred communication and it is part of our training in learning how to experience that same communication without the master. The master has given us an “inside view” into the nature of sacred communication.

The concept of the insider view is discussed with regard to the healing relationship in my previous book.¹⁵ The concept also applies to making the collect call and becoming the operator. The event of Divine communication cannot be known by reason alone. It has to be known through experience and developed through faith. This idea of a distinction between faith and reason dates back to the times of Boethius and St. Thomas Aquinas.¹⁶ But it is not an idea restricted to Western Judeo-Christian theology. It is also found in the idea of Zen koans and the Buddhist idea of empty mind which date back even further. There is this broadly recognized concept that thinking,

rule/ritual following, study, and ideas alone will not facilitate the collect call to God. The information in this book alone will not make the collect call occur. The collect call must involve a relationship of unique character that is preparation for the mystical moment.

Experiencing mystical, or healing, moments (and processing them with a witness or a master) are but one aspect of understanding the life of sitting in the between, the life of oneness with the Divine. Three other important training considerations that are part sitting in the Divine concern learning 1) to understand the contamination effect, 2) understanding our spiritual progress, and 3) knowing about being not doing.

Because we enter the healing relationship with others as part of placing the collect call we need to understand the contamination effect. This is described in my earlier publication, but briefly it refers to the effects of the halopathy experience. These effects become less problematic for the skilled practitioner but are almost always an issue for the novice. As mystic seekers move from novice toward being mystic/healers they also come to understand the deep nature of compassion as a balancing factor for the effects of contamination. This is part of our spiritual development as we move toward sitting in the between and then receiving and understanding sacred communication (see Appendix for further discussion).

Understanding our spiritual progress happens at many levels. It happens in our compassionate relationships with others. It happens in our relationship with the empty self. And it happens in our relationship with the Divine. This is the nature of sitting in the between and it is where we follow the path of spiritual progress or awakening. The novice will need to first come to know about these aspects of spiritual awakening. The novice will need to practice, according to his/her nature, in a manner that promotes further spiritual awakening. The novice will need to seek out skilled practitioners to assist with this. Then, after much practice, the novice begins to realize the deep nature of becoming. It is then that the novice is no longer a novice.

Knowing about being and not doing is the first indicator that the novice is ready for advanced training. From this point forward the training of the operator may contain many miraculous events. It is important that the skilled operator process all events with wisdom and compassion. Learning how to do this type of processing about the effects of not doing is an important part of the practitioner's training.

Once the operator's training has moved beyond the novice stance of doing and to being then one enters the time of calling, truly being called to service. When called into service the operator first learns about being as a part of service. Sometimes this involves falling back to doing or even not knowing. The "darkness of the soul" may be experienced in deeper ways. The practice of compassion may shift from doing to the being of compassion, the presence of radiance. With this shift comes a closer relationship with God. With the closer Divine relationship comes an irrefutable request to teach others how to access the phone line – to "pass it on".

Expanding the Network of Phone Lines by “Passing it On”

In order to “pass it on” people need to be informed on where to locate the phone booth. Then people need to be trained on how to use the phone booth. The best way to do this, initially, is to contact your local phone operator (assuming there is a trained operator in your area). But people need to learn how to be prepared to make this contact with the phone operator and what to expect when contact is made.

There are several matters that seem to be making the art of “passing it on” difficult. These issues are as follows:

- There has to be trained operator in your area in order for you to contact him/her, sit with him/her, learn from the collect call experience and then “pass it on”.
- Once you have located a trained operator, and experienced a successful collect call, then you need to tell people about the “collect call services” that are available. This can be difficult because of the difference between insider and outsider views and because something usually gets “lost in the translation”.
- There are fears that may prevent you from “passing it on”.
- People need to support the implementation of services in their community.

These are the four main concerns inhibiting the success of “passing it on” and thus preventing more phone lines from being established.

People need to be trained on how to access the phone operator, but this cannot be done if there is no access. There are many reasons why a given community has no access to a skilled phone operator. It is our responsibility, within our community, to ask for phone access. If you are a mystic seeker you should demand such access for your community. This is an important step in helping to “pass it on”. This can be done within any type of community.

If you have poor phone service you should demand an improvement in quality. It is possible to have access to a person in your community posing as a skilled operator who is not skilled. You would want to consider very carefully any information you would “pass on” for services received by such a person. It is best to “pass on” information received from only high quality services. Once you have high quality services you should cherish and protect them from all forms of attack and disrepair.

Once you have accessed high quality services then you have a responsibility to “pass it on”. Services continue in an area, in part, because there is a demand for them.

People who desire to use the services create this demand. But people will not, cannot, have the desire to use the services if they are unaware of their existence. If you do not “pass it on” then the demand will not happen and the services will either not arrive, or they will disappear.

A community, whether a family, a business, a town or a city, must have courageous people who are willing to testify that the quality phone services exist, that they work as advertised, and that the experience is beneficial. Without this the community will not open its eyes to the possibility because it knows of no such possibility. No one has told them of the possibility. But once told, once the information shared, then it is the responsibility of the community to embrace the phone operator services or eventually loose access to those services.

It is important to note that the novice operator, in order to more successfully make the transition into being the operator, needs community support. This has been a part of our spiritual heritage since the beginning of written history. A community recognizes the novice mystic/healer, assigns the novice to a master who teaches the responsibilities, and then the community provides the support for the novice to become a master (a skilled phone operator). Support comes in the form of requesting services and paying tribute for those services so that the mystic/healer may live and continue to service the community. Support comes in the form of “passing it on”. Support also is found in believing in the possibility and learning about proper intent. Without such support it becomes very difficult for the mystic/healer to survive. If you are a mystic seeker and you have found your skilled phone operator then you should offer support as part of helping your community.

End Notes and References Cited

To locate the reference go to the reference list and look up the authors name and the year of publication.

¹ Ray and Anderson, 2000.

² Ibid, p. 15.

³ Ibid, p. 174.

⁴ Ibid, p. 175. Also refer to the discussion of Buddhism and social transformation by Rothberg, 2001.

⁵ Borysenko, 1997, p. 66. Parenthetical comments added.

⁶ Egan, 2001, p. x-xi.

⁷ Harvey, 1996, p. xv.

⁸ Eliade, 1965, p. 14 – referring to man’s long history with experiences of mystical illumination.

⁹ Sinetar, 1986, p. 116.

¹⁰ For example: May, 1982a, Fischer, 1988 (spiritual direction for women).

¹¹ This table has been modified from the one presented in my book “The Healing Relationship”

¹² These foundational concepts are described in my earlier publications.

¹³ This is a teacher – student relationship of a sacred nature often incorporating the role of the witness.

¹⁴ Merton, 1992, p. 229.

¹⁵ Hoisington, 2002.

¹⁶ Collins, 1989.