



## **Substituting One Cruelty For Another, by Anthony de Mello**

Many people swing into action only to make things worse. They're not coming from love, they're coming from negative feelings. They're coming from guilt, anger, hate; from a sense of injustice or whatever. You've got to make sure of your "being" before you swing into action. You have to make sure of who you are before you act.

Unfortunately, when sleeping people swing into action, they simply substitute one cruelty for another, one injustice for another. And so it goes. Meister Eckhart says, "It is not by your actions that you will be [awakened] but by your being. It is not by what you do, but by what you are that you will be judged". What good is it to you to feed the hungry, give the thirsty to drink, or visit prisoners in jail? Remember that sentence from Paul: "If I give my body to be burned and all my goods to feed the poor and have not love ..."Â It's not your actions, it's your being that counts. Then you might swing into action. You might or might not. You can't decide that until you're awake.

Unfortunately, all the emphasis is concentrated on changing the world and very little emphasis is given to waking up. When you wake up, you will know what to do or what not to do. Some mysticsÂ are very strange, you know. Like Jesus, who said something like "I wasn't sent to those people; I limit myself to what I am supposed to do right now. Later, maybe". Some mystics go silent. Mysteriously, some of them sing songs. Some of them are into service. We're never sure. They're a law unto themselves; they know exactly what is to be done. "Plunge into the heat of battle and keep your heart at the lotus feet of the Lord", as I said to you earlier.

Imagine that you're unwell and in a foul mood, and they're taking you through some lovely countryside. The landscape is beautiful but you're not in the mood to see anything. A few days later you pass the same place and you say, "Good heavens, where was I that I didn't notice all of this"? Everything becomes beautiful when you change. Or you look at the trees and the mountains through windows that are wet with rain from a storm, and everything looks blurred and shapeless. You want to go right out there and change those trees, change those mountains. Wait a minute, let's examine your window. When the storm ceases and the rain stops, and you look out the window, you say, "Well, how different everything looks". We see people and things not as they are, but as we are. That is why when two people look at something or someone, you get two different reactions. We see things and people not as they are, but as we are.

Put this program into action, a thousand times: (a) identify the

negative feelings in you; (b) understand that they are in you, not in the world, not in external reality; (c) do not see them as an essential part of "I"; these things come and go; (d) understand that when you change, everything changes.

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