



Witnessing: A Form of Compassion, by James O'dea

At this time a whole new configuration of science, spirituality and health is in movement. Many of us have come to enjoy fresh insights from quantum physics. How extraordinary that when we looked down into

the smallest manifestations of existence, we found a world that said, "You are not separate from me. You, the observer, are part of the story." From the quantum physicists's point of view, you cannot isolate and separate the observer from the observed. Wow! We are in this together. What a teaching from the microscopic up! And I say we are more than observers. We are also witnesses. Now, the difference between an observer and a witness is that the observer thinks that he or she can stand back and let things go along -- that we are separate from that which is observed. But think of the witness in a situation of great turmoil. The witness stands together, inside, with those who are hurt and with those who are violated; the witness has an extraordinary capacity to stand in the fires of hatred and violence without increasing those elements. In fact, the deepest form of witnessing is a form of compassion for all suffering beings on all sides of a conflict. In reality, we are never outside observers. We are inside the wound together. It is just that some feel and some are numb. We are inside the very thing that needs to be transformed. Isn't that good news? We ourselves -- each one of us -- is part of the wholeness of consciousness. Each one of us has our work cut out.

--James O'dea