

## PSYCHOLOGY FOR HEART AND SOUL

### Memory and digestion

Robert Sardello



*In this ongoing column I will offer contemplations that seek to hold together 'self' with 'society'.*

Digestion refers to a process of taking in something from the world, where it undergoes complete transformation, and through transforming of substance into activity, life meets world. A similar process takes place with whatever we take in from the world. Digestion is not limited to food. We sensorially, perceptually and cognitively take in events and they become experiences, and when they go deep enough they become soul experiences that nourish creative life.

Obsessions and psychic trauma, for example, manifest memory indigestion. They keep coming back up in exactly the form in which the experience occurred, and creative imagination has no space. Even if we are not haunted by these forms, we are subconsciously ruled by emotion, which when not felt, lives as thoughts without any creative element.

In the present world we are assailed with experiences that cannot be digested. There is too much and it is too fast and there is no context. If what we experience is far too abstract, it cannot be digested, for it is like taking in something that is dead and it just sits there. Mechanical explanations of essentially human activities, for example, are such abstractions. Or, when children are made to learn mechanically, without story or image, or rhythm, then that material taken in cannot be transformed into soul nourishment. Social media cannot be digested; it is like addiction to candy. Later in life, these undigested experiences turn into bodily ailments. It is like having something foreign in the body, sitting there for years, rotting, putrefying. And since this may take 30 or more years, we do not connect our illness with undigested experiences.

True memory is a very fluid and rhythmical process and is of a spiritual nature. Through active re-remembering, we, from time to time, dip down into an ever-flowing deep stream of memory and make part of that stream into a remembered event. Such memories are also creative imagination. With this kind of remembering, we feel the mysterious and unknown whole that is our life.

Creative memory, like healthy eating, relies on our giving complete and full attention to what we are doing. When we incompletely encounter someone or go through

something with only half our attention, then the event remains with us as something like an independent inclusion within us.

The digestion of experiences into the living stream of memory requires, above all, the presence of the heart in the act of attention. The memory of the heart centers true soul memory. If you wish to develop this capacity of memory, it is only a matter of quite consciously shifting your attention, placing your attention in the interior of the heart and practicing experiencing others and the world from that place. Experiencing through the heart is not emotional experience, reacting to others and the world, but a creative feeling-presence, full and active. Then, whatever we experience has depth, rhythm, motion and, most of all, love.

### **Notes on contributor**

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