

## **EMBODIMENT AND BEYOND THE BODY**

### **November 2006 newsletter**

A very spiritually oriented acquaintance said to me, "Russell, why all this emphasis on the body, it is so obviously temporary, why don't you focus on that which is eternal". I thought this was a good question because it reveals many levels of potential misunderstanding about the whole concept and experience of embodiment.

First, realize that in "The Embodied Life™", we work through the body not on the body or for the body. The infinite, the eternal, the formless, the divine- manifests itself through form, it literally materializes or incarnates as matter. We access the highest and deepest through this very life as breathing human beings. Second, it is essential that we free ourselves from the habit of thinking of the body as object and realize that body is most accurately perceived as process, a living process.

Of course it is very possible and even dangerous to believe that embodiment is about the body. To glorify the body, to get lost in the vehicle, is a tragic error. Perhaps it is out of this fear that many of the great traditions have been either skeptical or hostile toward the physical.

Our body is a vehicle in numerous ways. First, it is not trivial that all our experiences are manifested through this form. It is unimaginable that our experience of love or peace or relationship would remain the same if we were unembodied. Second, our embodiment is the most tangible doorway we have to the present moment. Feel your right hand at this moment (pause for a moment to do this, feel the location, temperature etc.). To really do that you must stop the stream of thought and enter into present moment reality. The density of physical matter makes it easier to locate the living moment. Third, our embodied reality is the ground for the most basic sense of self- the feeling of being alive. Fourth, it is through the actions of our body that we can most tangibly take care of each other and the world.

As we enter the present moment, we become connected to the pulsing reality of life. Letting go more and more deeply into life, there is, paradoxically, a dropping off of the body. Through embodiment, we directly contact our interconnectedness with life, resulting in a feeling that can only be described as love.