

Wingspan of infinity

Setting the mindbody free of inherited fears, guilt and shame

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What is our legacy? When is it time to let go of what we have been given? Our cells reflect ancestral history; our tissues tell the story of our dynasty. But somewhere, far beyond the membranes, within the depth of our nucleus, rests our potential to make a choice; to declare our identity as separate; to find the I in the We – not despite, but because of the We. This is such a story.

In a colony of albatrosses, over rocky cliffs where they laid their eggs, if you ever looked up you'd see dozens of albatrosses, beautifully circling in invisible paths, ascending and descending. You'd see dozens of albatrosses with a wingspan of infinity; ruling over the air, ruling over the wind.

And in one such colony, one day a young albatross was born, and when his parents looked in his eyes, they knew that their son would be the most courageous of albatrosses ever born. And they fed him with the best of foods, the most beautiful fish, the freshest and most nourishing. And they praised him and he was the most beloved son of the colony. Albatross mothers would come from their own nests to catch a glimpse of this beautiful, courageous, shiny-eyed albatross. And his parents were so proud. Indeed, the young albatross grew bigger and bigger and every day his courage grew with him, and every day his daring increased. He had a destiny to meet.

His body was the body of the warier, his beak – the beak of a fighter; his eyes so sharp, his claws so painfully fierce and accurate. And like any albatross, before he could speak, before he could walk, he already wanted to fly. The albatross would look at the circling albatrosses above, gliding with grace and flying along and between thermals, and he knew that one day he would be like one of them, that one day he would ascend above them all to be the most courageous, the most daring of albatrosses – just like his parents envisaged.

So no-one was really surprised that very shortly after he learned to fly, and indeed he did ascend to the highest of heights, daring to ride on the most frightening thermals, daring to go into the most turbulent of turbulences, no one was surprised when shortly after he learned how to fly, not even mastering the art of flying just yet, this young albatross left the colony. His parents were sad but also very proud. They knew they could expect nothing less of their own son, to dare and reach beyond what was ever achieved before. He would establish a new colony, they thought.

And while they were thinking, while they were weaving dreams for their son, while they were building another nest for a new baby, the albatross was flying. High in the skies, breathing the thin air of high altitudes, overlooking the multitude of colonies, observing the curving of earth, the seas and the oceans, the open lands. He was the ruler of everything he could see. He was in control, young and reckless, and he felt that there is nothing, absolutely nothing, that he couldn't do, so he joyously cried and screamed into the air with fearlessness and clarity and great pride.

One day he found a place where he knew he wanted to stay and settle. The area was a big, high and strong mountain, a steep and rocky cliff. Cooled black lava was underholding the ocean; a mountain that was fiercely cut in the middle to meet the ocean; a noble fjord. And around, what others couldn't see but he had the natural sense to sense, the most dangerous of thermals. Hundreds of air currents, boiling and bubbling, interweaving in beautiful arabesques insides and outsides. Mingling, merging. "This is the place where I want to live," he thought, "this is home."

A small colony of albatrosses lived near by and they dared not reach this area, which was far too turbulent for them; but they looked at this young and arrogant, frighteningly self-assured young albatross, who stood on the top of the cliff, on the black mountain, spread his wings and leaped into the air.

Air, swirls and spirals and slopes, and the thermals embraced him, carrying up and down, playing with him. The young albatross did not learn a lot about thermals and air-turbulences, as he left the colony before his parents had the chance to teach him, but he could feel them. And he loved flying among them, descending with great speed, ascending through giving in to the air. It was such an uplifting feeling. One can appreciate what an uplifting feeling it is to give in to a force bigger than yours, to give in to a force bigger than you. And this albatross took days of pleasure in flying.

So you, having a bodymind which is bound to gravity even more, feeling the muscles tire as they slowly give in, letting go of bones only to be pulled into earth, sinking; where your thoughts start to make connections between what was and what is; where your Self starts to make decisions of changing what was and creates a new becoming.

On a day of inherited destiny, the albatross was flying very high above the place that he called home when two, strict and stubborn air-currents caught him in between them. He couldn't control the pulls up and down – forced to recognize his powerlessness, a mere grain of sand in the hands of the great whistling wind. Kneel down, for the lesson of humility is being taught by the draughts. He was pulled down in a jolt, very strongly pulled down and down, deeper and deeper and he fell, and it was so frightening and he crashed against the earth.

For long days he laid there, bleeding and aching; his bones fractured, his ego stamped on and his confidence battered. Limping, he made his way back home, crawling and walking. The pain was far too big, he was afraid to open his wings. From that day onwards he never flew again.

This young albatross established a family, he was still a good enough fisher, so he could impress the female albatross with gestures of flattering and courtship. Their nest, on the slopes of the cliff became a nest of a non-flying albatross. She was a lovely albatross, and they made a family on the slopes of that rock. She had glimmer in her eyes, but he was too afraid. When the tide was at its highest, the mother gave birth to a successor: one son, one strong albatross chick. But the father was so afraid of flying that he forbade his wife and son from flying, he instilled fear in their hearts. He dared his family never to fly, "It is far too dangerous," he said, "you wouldn't know what is expecting you, the air is waiting, lurking to kill you – to pull you down and destroy you." The family was brainwashed with the illusive, unbearable fears and shame of the father, and from the day that he was born the young albatross heard

nothing but warnings against temptations and about the dangers of flying, and he felt guilty for looking at other birds in the fly and envying them.

Day by day the little albatross grew, not daring to fly yet unable to take his eyes off the skies, off the masters of the air – the beautiful chatty seagulls, the daunting birds of prey, the numerous individuals in the pelican squadrons passing by or, the long and gentle bodies of indispensable storks, occasional flocks of crows, hospitable strong terns – all the birds that flooded the skies with their wings. But above all, he admired the albatrosses – rulers of skies, masters of oceans, the albatrosses with wingspans of infinity. He was so jealous, so fearful, so ashamed.

But he grew well, strong and healthy, as happy as he could be, and a growing sense of fantasy started to tingle, started to tickle in his body; fantasies of flying wrapped in guilt, wrapped in fear, surrounded by shame. His mother was a good mother, she gave him love yet he saw her eyes slowly becoming duller and duller, as if the source of life was being taken away from her and he ached for her pain. The young albatross looked at his dad and he saw the fierce that was once there, being replaced by fear and impotence, and he couldn't understand why. And he saw his mom, dulling away, fading away until one day, at the ambient psychedelic dusk, the albatross saw his mother coming towards him. She walked on the cliff, walking towards him and he looked, and he looked deeply into her eyes and knew that something has changed. Her eyes were glimmering, shining and big and he saw the skies reflecting in her eyes, and the young albatross knew that she disobeyed the father and took on to flying. From that day onwards, he saw that look in his mom's eyes more and more frequently. And every time he could clearly tell, she came back from flying. Still she pretended never to have flown; still she pretended to obey his father's commands, to stay on the ground. But her gestures changed, and her features changed, all saying loud and clear – I am here, I am alive.

You know that the courage to break a cycle can often look inevitable, whereupon the force of life cannot but break free.

On one lucid occasion he even saw her landing. He saw her huge wings closing down as she lands, her claws clasp and grabbing onto the earth for support, and he saw her eyes with the sky reflecting in them like a crystal ball. He felt so guilty for sharing this precious secret with her, he felt so guilty for not telling his dad. He felt ashamed for his wanting to share this flying, he felt ashamed for caring this awful knowledge, he felt ashamed and proud of his mom at the same time, and that installed a great deal of confusion in him.

The young albatross started to follow his mom without her noticing it. On a windy morning, when sunrise made the world look dusty and hazy and the wind sang of impossible feats, he followed her to a cliff. It was a small and hidden cliff, and one that you couldn't see from their home, and there were indeed very few of them. So he saw her reaching the edge of the cliff, turning back to check that nobody was looking, she opened her wings, clasped them together once or twice, leaped into the air and, catching an amazing thermal, took off.

When there was no one around anymore, he stood there, in the place from which she took off. He stood on the edge looking down, and he could understand why his father warned him. He understood why his father warned him because it was so tempting.

And yet, some unstoppable force in him lured him to jump. Spreading his wings the albatross leaped, gradually descending in circles until he reached the ground. Although it didn't last very long, it was one of the moments the albatross would never forget in his entire life.

For these moments form our resume; these moments carve life on our faces: your first smile, your first step, your first word, your first love. The first time you were you is forever in the making, forever changing, engaging your memory to alter the past, engaging your imagination to spread wings and explore possible futures. And what is it in you that could let you know how to recognize the moments that change your life?

It wasn't the last time that he did that. In-fact, his leaps and gliding became more and more frequent. He didn't know how to fly but he knew how to spread his wings wide open and could let the wind carry him; he didn't know how to fly but he could enjoy the sensation of flying. And every day he found yet another excuse to go for a walk and disappear, and his mother and himself started to recognise – in each other's eyes, the glimmer, the shining of the eyes. Everyday he went to the hidden cliff; standing there looking down, feeling the temptation growing and casting over the fear, guilt and shame, and jumping – gliding in circles all the way down.

And the pleasure grew in him, like pleasure can grow in you, and the guilt increased in him like guilt can increase in you, and fear spread in him, like fear can spread in you, and shame contaminated him like shame can contaminate you. He didn't know about thermals, he didn't know about air turbulences, he didn't know about flying. But he had enjoyed, and he had pleasure, shame, fear and guilt. For the first time in his life, in spite of the fear, the shame and the guilt, I think that for the first time you could truly say that he was happy. And a secret was shared between him and his mom, they were recognizing each other's secret, and he imagined that her smile towards him embedded a silent approval, holding the respect of an ally.

More and more he became distant from his father, more and more he felt guilty about flying, more and more the fear grew, anticipating the punishment that awaits him. Until one day he could no longer carry the burden of guilt, shame and fear and he told his father. The fury of his father was so painfully unimaginable, that the young albatross made a choice and left home. The guilt was bubbling in him, the shame was boiling in him and the fear burning his soul with regret. And he walked away from home, farther and farther away, until he found himself, after a few days – because time has past without him noticing it, standing on the highest of cliffs.

Down below, sharp – painfully frightening rocks were resting, up above – sky, as clear as sky could be. And he stood there, his legs shaking from fear, his heart sinking from shame, his belly burning with guilt. He stood there, and the temptation increased. The temptation increased, but unlike the past he could no longer deny the presence of fear, the burden of guilt and shame. The temptation grew so when he jumped something heavy jumped with him. And the thermals were so strong; they carried him upwards like a feather. The air was stroking him, the winds exploring him; the currents were playing with him. The thermals were carrying him around and the turbulences, like waves washing over him. And not unlike his father, many years ago, he was caught up between two currents, one going up and another going down, and he lost control and was drifting away, swinging and abruptly jolting with no hope

until he crashed down and all came to rest. He was lucky to have crashed on the soft sand, and not on the sharp rocks nearby; he was lucky not to have broken his shoulder-bone or his wings. He was lucky to have survived. Yet it was so painful.

So his was lying there wounded feeling guilty and shameful, aching, feeling sorry for himself. He felt guilty and shameful. "Its all my fault," he thought, "its all my self-inflicted destiny. I deserve it".

At times like this we forget our natural born rights. We forget that we have the right to be here, you forget that you have the right to be here.

You have the right to be alive. You have the right to have a body. You have the right to need. You have the right to have.

You have the right to have all your feelings. You have the right to express your emotions. You have the right to have your needs met. You have the right to be sexual. You have the right to act from your centre. You have the right to be responsible for who you are. You have the right to love. You have the right to be loved.

You have the right to speak your truth. You have the right to be heard. You have the right to communicate with clarity. You have the right to see with clarity.

You have the right to be seen as you are. You have the right for truth. You have the right for connection. You have the right for touch.

You have the right for your spirituality. You have the right to belong to god. You have the right to belong to spirit. You have the right to be loved by god.

You have the right to be seen by others. You have the right to have a soul. You have the right to be spoken truth to. You have the right to be loved for what you are.

You have the right to be clear. You have the right to have limitations. You have the right to have boundaries. You have the right to be seen as sexual.

You have the right to be tended respectfully. You have the right to say yes. You have the right to say no. You have the right for ground.

You have the right to surrender to gravity. You have the right to be held. You have the right to fight for your rights. You have the right to be here.

And he looked above, as wounded as he was and saw a gliding hawk. He saw the hawk using thermals, and through giving in to them – flying with grace. He saw the hawk using his wings. He saw the hawk going in between turbulences, and he saw the hawk emerging from turbulence, clapping his wings and ascending again. He saw the hawk and admired his abilities. He saw the hawk and wished he could do the same. He saw the hawk, and the hawk saw him and slowly, descending in circles, landed by the wounded albatross and looked at him.

The hawk stood on the rock and looked at the big albatross, the king of the oceans. "I was looking at you flying," said the albatross, "and I admire your abilities, for I was never taught how to fly. I want to learn your skills and ways and magic, for I know not how to fly and I wish to learn. I want to learn to fly so I can be a bird, so I can truly be an albatross." And the hawk looked at him sharply. "I know that albatrosses are the kings of the ocean, are the kings of the air," he said, "and I will teach you, but you would have to pay me with fish and protect me when I need you to."

The albatross, quite naturally agreed, and soon after he recovered, the albatross commenced his training. He was a quick learner, and the hawk taught him how to pay attention to his own senses, learning to identify and recognise thermals; learning when there's an air current going up and when there's a current going down; learning to

differentiate the slow draughts from the quick ones, to discriminate between warm and cold currents, learning to navigate between them. The albatross learned to activate his muscles, to use his wings, to move with grace – to fly and glide. The albatross learned to ascend and descend, he learned to be free. And he flew, farther and farther away. His muscles became stronger, his eyes more shining. His whole body was present, his whole soul was embodied, he was flying.

One day, he flew so high that he could see the curves of the earth. He could see for great distances and he saw, far away, a place that was not unknown to him. and his wings took him there, and he floated above that place, descending in small circles, slower and slower. And he could see that place and he recognized those who were down there, and then he lost something. Something fell from him, something slowly left his body, going down, falling, deeper and deeper.

Fear leaving the body, descending quicker – falling deeper and deeper, leaving the body - falling down and crashing against the earth, splashing blue sprinkles around in beautiful patterns.

Guilt leaving the body, descending quicker – falling deeper and deeper, leaving the body - falling down and crashing against the earth, splashing fiery orange sprinkles around in burning patterns.

Shame leaving the body, descending quicker – falling deeper and deeper, leaving the body - falling down and crashing against the earth, splashing bloody red sprinkles around in streaming rivers.

Expectations leaving the body, descending quicker – falling deeper and deeper, leaving the body - falling down and crashing against the earth, against the rocked cliffs and splashing magnificent yellow sprinkles around – leftovers of expectations in a sun-like patterns.

Inherited limitations leaving the body, descending quicker – falling deeper and deeper, leaving the body - falling down and crashing against the earth, leaving no traces behind.

And the albatross circled, finding a thermal to join, giving in to it and ascending high-up again, higher and higher, and he saw the leftovers of fear, guilt, shame and expectations. And he saw that nothing remained of his inherited limitation. And inside him great pleasure grew bigger and bigger and he knew, that whatever fear, guilt or shame, whatever expectations and limitations he shall have from this day onwards – these will truly be his own. And the albatross spread his wings as far and wide as he could, and he flew. And he had a wingspan of infinity.