

CHAPTER 5  
*Humble Yourself*

# DISCIPLINE NUMBER FIVE

The noble warrior practices humility.



## Lesson

Sun Tzu, the great military strategist, indicates that the general of an army who is too full of pride and uncompromising honor can be defeated in battle because he can be insulted. Because he takes the insult personally, or to heart, he reacts in a foolish manner from a bruised ego, rather than acting from a calm strategic plan. The same is true on a spiritual level. The warrior who is full of pride and uncompromising honor can be defeated by spiritual enemies because trusting in self alone, the warrior cuts off the source of power from the Divine. Thus, the warrior who attributes all glory on the spiritual battlefield to the self becomes weak, because the way to the Source is closed off. The proud warrior becomes confused or deluded, because the source of light and wisdom is made dim from the darkness and illusion of conceit. Without humility, therefore, there is no growth, no integrity, no true spirituality. Humility opens the way, and allows for the Divine to flow in, because in the acknowledgment of powerlessness without the Divine lies a willingness to allow the Divine to enter in to fight the inward battles, and to gain the victory.

This is why, for instance, the first three steps of recovery are about recognizing one's powerlessness, coming to believe in a power greater than self which can restore wholeness and sanity, and turning life over to God to care for the individual and make the necessary changes. This is the only way genuine life-change can take place on a spiritual level, because, when it comes to receiving such powers, pride closes the door while humility opens it. This is why Jesus said that whoever does not humble the self will be abased. To be abased in the original Greek carries with it the connotation of being deflated, degraded, demeaned, humiliated, and even disgraced. Those who have suffered from addiction certainly can resonate with this description. These consequences which come about from a lack of humility are not thrust upon an individual from without, but rather are caused by the individual from within. Pride leads to excess, which in turn, weighs one down to such a degree that one cannot help but fall from the psychic weight. Truly, "Pride," as Proverbs 16:18 says, "goes before destruction, and haughtiness before the fall," because pride initiates the destruction and haughtiness the fall.

Within humility is the willingness to lower oneself into service. Humility is a state of mind or disposition, but it is also a practice. Chogyam Trungpa, the great teacher of Tibetan Shambhala warriorship says, "The master warrior is very humble, extremely humble. His humbleness comes from working with others. When you work with others, you realize the need to be patient, to give space and time to others to develop their own understanding of goodness and warriorship. . . . You let things assume their own shape in their own time." This is humility in practice--unselfish, giving, supporting. It is not self-serving but rather service to others. Thus the common phrase when joining the military that, "you're in the service now," rings even more true on a spiritual level. The genuine warrior lives in service to the higher principles of calling, and to the happiness and welfare of others, especially ones weaker or less fortunate than the self. This is the mark of the true warrior, and the chivalry spoken of about the noble warrior in practically every culture's folklore.

To say that a warrior is ever humble and never proud is not the entire truth. To be humble is to recognize, with the heart, one's limitations. However, the warrior carries a certain pride which is recognized and honored by others. It is not a pride in self, however, and in one's own achievements. It is rather a pride in the cause for which the warrior fights, and it is a confidence which comes from faith that the Divine can and does work through the individual warrior to achieve its ends. Therefore, the warrior who fights for the cause of what is just, stands tall in justice. The warrior who strives for love is not timid in showing it to the world. The warrior who struggles against oppression is not hesitant to take a stand in the name of freedom and human dignity.

The pride of the warrior is a pride married to compassion, integrity, humanity. The humility of the warrior does not shrink into the earth but stands firm with dignity, confidence, and determination. Therefore, the true warrior, as Carlos Castaneda indicates, does not bow his head to anyone, but does not allow anyone to lower their heads to him.



## Gems from the Masters

You cannot have humility  
When you love only yourself.  
Self-love is hard,  
And love to the Divine is soft.  
Self love must be wholly crushed.

Swedenborg

Do not walk proudly on the earth.  
You cannot cleave the earth,  
Nor can you rival the mountains in stature.

Koran 17:37

Shall I teach you what knowledge is?  
When you know a thing,  
to recognize that you know it,  
And when you do not know a thing,  
to recognize that you do not know it.  
That is knowledge.

Confucius

You are young, my son, and,  
As the years go by,  
Time will change  
And even reverse many of your  
present opinions.  
Refrain therefore awhile  
From setting yourself up  
as a judge of the highest matters.

Plato

I have seen  
That in any great undertaking  
It is not enough for a man to depend  
Simply upon himself.

Lone Man

He has shown you, O man,  
What is good;  
And what does the Lord require  
of you  
But to do justly,  
To love mercy,  
And to walk humbly with your God?

Micah 6:8



## Questions for Personal Reflection and Discussion

Everyone is criticized occasionally. Which criticisms really push your buttons or seem to hurt the most?

What belief about yourself is attacked by these criticisms?

What do you believe you will lose by letting go of those beliefs about yourself?



## Meditation

Relax. Take a few deep breaths. Let your shoulders relax. Close your eyes. Listen to this story. It is a story adapted from an ancient Sumerian fable with an important message for you. The Sumerians tell us of a goddess named Inanna. She was the goddess of the heavens. She was beautiful, powerful, joyful. She was loved by many and she was quite good at getting her way. After all, she was the goddess of the heavens, what more could one wish to be? She learned of the death of her brother-in-law, and being filled with compassion she wished to attend his funeral. However, the funeral would take place in the Netherworld, and anyone who ever entered the Netherworld never returned. Being who she was she believed that she could have her way and enter the Netherworld and attend the funeral and return unharmed. Have you ever felt that the rules didn't apply to you? Have you felt that because of your special nature, needs, expectations, that you may pursue whatever you desire, regardless of the rules? She spoke to the gatekeeper who treated her with the respect and deference deserving of a queen of heaven. He explained that she may enter at her own risk, but that the laws of the Netherworld have been extraordinarily perfected, and that she would have to pass through seven gates. At each gate a piece of clothing would be removed from her body. If she could agree to this, she could surely enter. She agreed, but recognizing that this systematic stripping of her garments must surely be something to overcome, perhaps the process by which she would somehow be tricked into remaining in the underworld, she made provision for herself. She dressed in her finest clothes, with her finest jewelry decorating her body, her scepter in hand, and all the trappings of her godliness adorning her and manifesting her majesty. What garments do you wear to show off your beauty? What badges do you wear to remind people of your achievements? As she made her descent into the Netherworld, passing through the first gate, her scepter was taken from her. "What is this?" she asked in wonder. "Extraordinarily perfected are the laws of the Netherworld. Oh Inanna, do not question the laws of the underworld," replied the gatekeeper. She passed through the second gate and the gems adorning her chest were taken. "What is this?" asked Inanna. "Extraordinarily perfected are the laws of the Netherworld. Oh Inanna, do not question the laws of the

underworld,” said the gatekeeper.” As Inana descended into the darkness of the Netherworld, passing through each of the seven gates, something was taken from her--something that reminded her of her godliness, her beauty, her power, and her majesty. As she passed through the last gate she found herself stripped of all her clothing, jewelry, royalty. She stood before the throne of the Netherworld, and the elders fixed their eyes upon her. They looked upon her with the gaze of death, the look that brings terror to the soul. And this woman, this naked sickly woman, became a corpse. They hung the corpse on a stake.

Inana lost all, even her life. As she passed each gate she lost all symbols of her majesty, her beauty, her deity, her very selfhood. At the end of the last gate she lost her life. From a goddess to a corpse--she learned humility the hard way. Thankfully, as in most legends, she eventually is rescued and revived, changed forever by her experience, transformed into something far beyond garments and jewels.

But how are you like Inana? What jewels do you wear and what fine clothing? If you were asked what you are most proud of about yourself, what would your answer be? Can you let go of your names and titles? Can you lose your possessions, your identity? When you lose everything, even your life you become nothing. But in becoming that nothing, can you find peace, rest? In that nothingness can you find yourself? For from that place of nothingness you can be reborn. Open your eyes. How do you relate to this story of Inana?



## Process

For an individual. Get a piece of paper and a pencil, and write down the following sentence twenty times down the page with a space between each: Who are you? Start at the beginning and answer the question in one sentence. For example, under the first question you might write, “I am a father.” Then go to the next question, “Who are you?” and write the first answer that comes to mind. Fill out the entire page with different one sentence answers to the question, “Who are you?” If you have more answers, turn over the page and answer the question twenty more times. What do you learn from this process.

This process is borrowed from Bill Kauth’s Warrior-monk training. In a group. Pair off. Sit facing each other at a fairly close range, so that you can clearly see into each other’s eyes without distraction. One person will be the questioner, the other will answer. One person asks, “Who are you?” The other person replies in one sentence. The questioner says, “Thank you.” and then asks the question again, “Who are you?” The other person answers with a different answer. This continues for five minutes. Keep going, even if the answers become difficult. When finished, switch around and let the other person ask the questions. What do you learn about yourself after this process. Come back together as a group and share your experience.



What are your closing thoughts about the subject of Humility?

End this lesson with a prayer.