

<p><a title="quite the en-lightning evening"

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We are in a constant quest for power and for solutions to our problems. And far too often, we are caught looking outside of ourselves for the answers to those problems.</p> <p>It happens in so many different facets of our lives. Take, for example, the war in Iraq. We now know that the issue of weapons of mass destruction was, well, a non-issue. I think it's safe to say that it was an issue of oil. So we start looking beyond our borders, to the Middle East, to find a solution. We then feel the need to have a presence there in order to have greater access to oil. Sadly, the problem is one within our own borders, and within ourselves. How? We have a problem of energy consumption. Use less oil, need less oil from elsewhere. Pretty simple.</p>

<p>But of course, that would require that we seek the answer that lies within.</p> <p>It expands to many other areas of our world. It could be a teacher, a parent, or a medical professional. Instead of stating ♦I gave you some homework to do, so why didn't you do it?♦, would we be better off asking ourselves ♦what did I not do to get you to comprehend the importance and value-added benefit of that homework?♦.</p> <p>We even go so far as to seek answers outside of our realm. We look for spiritual guidance from beyond. We look to gurus (and the Cult Of Personality)

who compel us to believe that they in fact have all the answers. We look to mystics who tell us that if we can only attain their level of spirituality or understanding, we might just be able to attain the level of knowing that they have and that we so deeply desire.</p> <p>But could the power lie within each and every one of us, right at this very moment?</p>

<p>It starts with understanding ourselves and our boundless capacity to explore, to think, to reflect, to reason, and to learn. It is one of the primary aspects of our species that sets us apart from others. Richard Dawkins, in ♦The Selfish Gene♦ (1976) noted that "Let us understand what our own selfish genes are up to, because we may then at least have the chance to upset their designs". Taking the time to know thyself and the world around us is challenging, traumatic, and exasperating ♦ and fulfilling beyond all belief.</p>

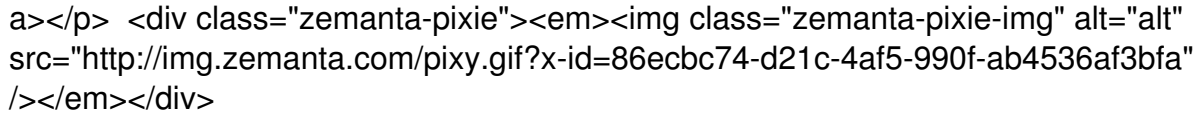
<p>Perhaps that capacity for self-exploration and discovery is off-forgotten. Or avoided. Or simply deadened by passivity and the incessant noise in our world.</p> <p>But if it wasn't for ♦self♦, what would we have? To be selfish is to be ♦devoted to or caring only for oneself♦, which of course sounds like a bad thing as we then think it is at the expense of others. But if we don't foster the growth of our own internal mental, spiritual, emotional, and physical milieu ♦ who will? We have to foster the growth of what Stephen Covey calls ♦response-ability♦. And to do so requires a deeper understanding of ourselves.</p>

<p>There is no need to look elsewhere for answers. There is no need to seek external factors that contribute to our happiness, our self-actualization, our

spiritual growth. The power lies within our own self image, our self esteem, our detachment, and our self-acceptance. The power lies within our compassion, our love, and the peace that we can find inside ourselves. The power lies within our capacity to reason, to think, to learn, and to act upon that knowledge.

That's not to say that the power of the universe doesn't have a significant impact on the world as we know it. But if we are an active participant in understanding ourselves, first and foremost, we can then place that which we find within the context of that almighty universe. Perhaps [God](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/God "God"), or Allah, or Vishnu, is within all of us. Simultaneously. Not as a deity or life force or energy source or mystical guru with all the answers, but purely as a symbol of that power that already exists within all of us. Call it what you will.

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