

MICHAEL COLGRASS INTERVIEWED BY NICOLETTA SPOLINI

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WORKSHOP INTERVIEW

I am writing an article about "working with soul". So I would like to ask you some questions about it.

NS Can you explain me exactly your concept of "BASE"?

MC To me, a base for a person is like a port to an ocean liner. It's the place in yourself where you go to rest, to re-fuel, to get what you need for your next voyage. In human terms, it's the place deep inside you where you go to remind yourself who you are and what you do. If you lost contact with your base you would lose contact with yourself, like a ship that could not find its dock. You'd be lost. For an artist, art is the base. An artist needs always to stay connected to it in some way in order to function as a human being.

NS Why is so important to find your Base to reach the excellence in your job?

MC If you want to take a creative approach to your work -- whatever your profession is -- you need to be in contact with the creative part of yourself. The creative part is, in effect, your base. A person who sells, say, real estate, doesn't have to have contact with their base, because they are thinking mainly of property and profit. However, I know some creative and actually spiritual real estate people who want most to see that you have bought the right house. These people are very creative in their way of matching the right person with the right environment. Conversely, some "artists" think mainly about money and have lost their base -- but then if money is your goal you don't need a base. You just need an accountant!

NS What's the first step to find your BASE?

MC Good question. I would say to ask yourself what makes you feel good and then go after that. When historian Joseph Campbell says "follow your bliss." he is suggesting you go deep inside yourself and ask what you really want more than anything else on earth. Then to go after that thing, do or die. That thing, and your quest for it, would be your base.

NS Work and private life: if you want to work with soul why is so important to balance them?

MC Your soul is in you, not in your work. You are the one who puts the soul into the work. The trick is to keep contact with your soul -- with yourself, your identity -- while doing your work, so you can infuse your work with soul. Daily tasks and pressures can take your attention away from what is basic in you, what you value most. You can get diverted by the conflicting pressures of daily living, and, like that ship I talked about above, get lost in the fog and be unable to find your port.

NS Can you give me an example of this balance?

MC You have a chance to break a big story as a reporter and you have two confirmations of the facts of your story. But ethically and professionally you need one more. People's reputations hang in the balance if your story is wrong, but you will win great recognition if your

story is right. Pressure from your editor has been increasing to resolve this issue, also to beat the other newspapers to the story. You also personally need a success to assure your colleagues that you are as good as they think you are. So you submit the story saying you have all the confirmations you need, even though you know you are doing the wrong thing. You have lost your balance between maintaining your base and doing your job. Or, to put it in the positive, you hold back the story and knock yourself out getting that third confirmation, whatever it takes within ethical boundaries. Because you can't live with yourself if you separate your belief in what is right from the acts you carry out as a professional in your work. You would lose yourself; lose contact with your base. Performing this way continually you would eventually lose sight of your soul.

NS Can you explain to me the role of VISION in finding your BASE?

MC First you need to picture what you want in order to know it's right for you. When you get an inspiring mental image, large and in color, then step into the picture and see how it feels. If it feels right then forge the path to your goal and stay on that path. Sometimes life gets stormy, sometimes things get dark -- your vision carries you through all that because, in your mind's eye, you continue to see what you want and where exactly you are going. Vision helps you create both the dream and your path to the dream.

NS Is Creative energy, or THE DEMON, as you call it, easier to find if you work with soul? And, if so, why?

MC When you are in contact with your creative demon (daemon) you are automatically working with soul. Your demon is the personification of your soul. Creative energy is a force that comes from your soul and the demon is the soul's messenger. Learning how to manage your relationship with the demon so that it doesn't destroy you is one of the major accomplishments of the creative person, because the demon can overwhelm you with its demands. This is another example of the importance of balance.

NS How is it possible to work with soul in a corporation that doesn't share your values?

MC My first advice would be to ask what would happen if you left that corporation, and seriously considered taking that option. Perhaps you like the company and its basic intent, but just don't like the direction in which the company is going. Politicians might find themselves in that position in relation to their work. Then what? Then you need to reaffirm your base, get in good strong and continual contact with your soul and then continue to do your work in a way that you believe will help to correct the misdirection, finding others who think as you do and forming an alliance with them. We need allies, and sometimes we can make allies even out of those we thought were our enemies. Now we're talking about what a base really is, and how important it is to always keep at least a toe in continual contact with it.