

# The Tao of Ernest

Ernest Holmes and the ancient Chinese *Tao Te Ching* both teach the same truth: to live your life to the fullest, sometimes you need to let go.

By August Gold



One busy Sunday night, a platter jumped out of my kitchen cabinet and landed on my head before shattering on the floor in a dozen pieces. I had heard stories of great teachers who have had books fall open at their feet, but I couldn't say I remembered any stories about falling platters. And since I'm not destined to become a chef or short-order cook, I knew I would have to search to find the deeper meaning of this incident.

Spirit is always communicating. Often I am listening, but more often I am talking. That night I was all ears. I was not going to sleep until Spirit explained itself. If it had been a falling teacup or a delicate saucer, it could have waited until morning. A falling platter, however, deserved immediate attention.

I sat in silence and waited for the still, small voice to reveal itself. It always does, and that night was no exception. "To him who can perfectly practice inaction, all things are possible." Even in my sleep-deprived state, these words of Ernest Holmes were instantly recognizable. In fact, they were part of the teachings I'd been privately calling "The Tao of Ernest": simple and paradoxical quotes similar to passages from the *Tao Te Ching*, the ancient book of 81 verses that underlies the Taoist phi-

losophy of life. While these consciousness-expanding precepts cannot be fully understood by our human mind, our Divine Mind can and does know how to bring such teachings to life.

Twenty-five hundred years before Ernest, Lao Tzu—whose name literally means "the old man"—gave us the same message in the *Tao Te Ching*: "The master acts without doing and everything gets done." When our mortal mind hears something like this, it resists and throws a fit. "How can all things be possible to a person who perfectly practices inaction?" it demands. "How will anything ever get done?" Holmes' and Lao Tzu's truths sound illogical and counterintuitive, and yet, understood through the eyes of Divine Mind, they are profound and life-transforming.

Suddenly, what Spirit had been trying to tell me through the falling platter was clear: I'd spent the last month doing too much, relying on my own efforts. I'd lost the balance of being and doing, yin and yang, stillness and action in my life. I wish I could say it was the first time I had become a human doing instead of a human being, but it wasn't. And being caught up in doing things—even good, important, spiritual things you love to do—is still *doing*.



## "I LET ALL THINGS BE EXACTLY AS THEY ARE."

I'd lost sight of how I'd been giving and giving and doing and doing nonstop.

There is a part of us, however, that delights in doing without end. The little mind—which keeps us wrapped up in the events of the surface world of effects—mistakenly believes *it* is the one power and presence! It offers us an unrelenting inner monologue about all the things we had better do to stay in control. But when we follow its directives, we discover there is no end to the things we must do—and the more we do, the more there is to get done.

Ernest and Lao Tzu, however, teach us just the opposite. Lao Tzu says, "Stillness benefits more than action. Silence benefits more than words. Rare indeed are those who are still. Rare indeed are those who are silent. Rare indeed are those who obtain the bounty of this world."

Lao Tzu here reveals the limitless bounty that is ours, when we can slow down and allow the feminine energy called yin to lead us. He called it the "Mother" energy, saying "Know the male (energy), yet *hold* to the female (energy) and you will receive the whole world in your arms."

Ernest's passion for Eastern teachings is evident all throughout the Science of Mind philosophy, and in his many books. His model of the creation of life and the creation of our lives—Spirit and subjective mind—reflects the Taoist symbol of yin and yang. Spirit is the male energy, the Universal Father, the initiator that impregnates the Divine Womb, or the Universal Mother, which is the yin energy. The Divine Feminine is "bound by its own Nature to accept," to say yes to the Divine Word (thought, image, seed) that is given to Her. The key is that only by working *together* does the world of myriad forms and effects and beings manifest.

Why must we stop and yield, as the Universal Feminine energy urges? Holmes tells us we don't make anything happen; we let it happen through us. And there is a world of difference in the way we will conduct our lives if we understand the difference between those two approaches. "Demonstration," he writes, "comes as we relax in the situation and permit God to do the work. By faithfully knowing that, God within us (not our own will) is doing the work." Similarly, Lao Tzu wrote, "What could the sage

## How to Bring About Balance in Your Life

### **Step One: Daily Stillness and Silence**

Many believe that a spiritual practice is a luxury they don't have time for. I believe it is a necessity. Here is the practice we do at our church; I call it "20/20/20." We get still and go within for twenty minutes three times a day (morning, midday, evening). Three times a day we let every voice but God's be still in us; we grow still and let the Divine Mother love us. Three times a day we become still an instant and go home. Aside from feeling a physical relief, emotionally, mentally, and spiritually, you will feel more relaxed, grounded, present in the moment, more mindful, and able to go with the flow. You will begin by communing with the yin energy, but you will end up embodying it in your daily lives!

### **Step Two: Service**

Giving is a pure yin activity! As we offer ourselves in service to others, the feminine energy of nurturing and loving and helping is flowing through us. We can't give it away without receiving the blessing of it first. That is why spiritual law declares that giving and receiving are one. What better way to call forth the Divine Mother

than by letting yourself be used by Her. To this end *A Course in Miracles* would have us affirm, "Use me today to bless the world with miracles!"

### **Step Three: Tithing**

Giving of your time to the Source within, and giving service to the Source in others, and giving of your treasure to the Source for the uplifting of the greater spiritual community are all enriching, expanding, and life-transforming acts. All three spiritual practices remove the obstacles and constraints within our own consciousness to let the Divine good flow through us. Tithing is defined as giving 10% of every dollar we receive back to the Source from which it came—the one and only Source of our good. We return to the Source our thanks for the abundant and limitless supply of food that feeds our very soul. When we do this, we are feeding not only ourselves, but an entire spiritual community.

*Try this:* Begin by giving a portion of what you receive to the source of your spiritual food. This could mean to your church or study group, to a teacher, or even to this magazine. As you see the positive effects tithing brings in your life, increase the practice until you have reached 10%.

grab for that he does not already have? What could he do for himself that the universe itself has not already done?"

Like the *Tao Te Ching*, the Tao of Ernest is simple in its direction; it is not a question of making anything happen, it is simply learning how to *let* the good pour through the open consciousness we pro-

vide. When we try to make it happen, we are getting in the way of allowing it to happen.

The beauty of New Thought is in how many different ways the same truth is given us. Joel Goldsmith, another wise teacher on this path, said, "We are the center through which God operates." Similarly, *A Course in Miracles* urges

us to “remove the blocks to the awareness of Love’s presence, which is your natural inheritance.” We open ourselves and God flows through; we remove the obstacles and Love flows through.

The entire philosophy of New Thought and the entire body of mystical wisdom resound in this glorious message: our good is already present, right here, right now. “Within, within,” Lao Tzu wrote, “this is where the world’s treasure has always been.” Making and forcing only push it away. Our constant doing, trying, striving closes the very opening that we are, the opening we need to provide for the Power and Presence to come forth and reveal itself through us and as us.

And yet the race consciousness is not exactly supportive. We live in a world where time is measured and evaluated by what we have accomplished and achieved. We’ve become lopsided, valuing the yang to the exclusion of the yin. How do you put an immediate value on an energy that leads you to inaction? Holmes spoke to this inevitability: “Those who do not understand this attitude may think you are inactive.”

The genius of the Tao of Ernest, which weds Western sensibilities and Eastern influences, is that it does not ignore our need to *do*. Ernest filled his books with all

kinds of things we can do. But he was abundantly clear that once our work is done, we need to stop working and become still. We need to confidently trust that First Cause, the Tao, will do its job. We do not have to convince the flow of life to flow through us, or plead with the Divine givingness of God to give to us—we need only open the avenue through which it may.

Once I sat down in silence and listened to the Voice within, I was able to understand the meaning behind the falling platter aimed at my sometimes thick skull. No doubt there existed a dozen sweeter, softer messages that were offered to me in this last month, but I bet I was so busy *doing* that I didn’t notice them. Too much yang—too much doing—is easy for me to identify when I am doing things I don’t like. It’s harder for me to identify when my working is as pleasurable as playing. But even doing what we love, without the balance of intermittent yielding, and, yes, out-and-out stopping, will, after a while, stop working.

Lao Tzu cautioned: “The Universe is like a bellows. It stays empty yet is never exhausted. It gives out yet always brings forth more. Man is not like this. When he blows out air like a bellows, he becomes exhausted. Man was not



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made to blow out air. He was made to sit quietly and find the truth within." If we don't "hold to the Mother" and refresh ourselves in Her spaciousness and "creative" emptiness within, we will become exhausted, no longer even able to act. Through the balance of the Mother and Father energies, the inaction coupled with the action, not only do all things get done but, what is even more surprising, all things become possible.

The platter has more significance than I first realized. It was a serving platter, not a salad bowl, a sugar bowl, or a soup dish. As a minister, my job is to serve spiritual food to the souls of my congregants. But how can I do this for others unless I myself am getting fed daily in this way? By following the yin within, I relax, I release, I rest. I dip down into the living waters of Spirit and let myself be; I let all things be exactly as they are. Here I am still, and I let the Divine Mother love me.

All of life is created moment to moment from the delicate balance of yin and yang, Spirit and Soul, Universal Father and Mother energy. As I, an individualization of Divine Mind, maintain the harmonious balance of doing and being in my own daily life, I, too, shall effortlessly co-create a life beautiful and divine that will nurture and feed others and myself all the days of my life. The Tao of Ernest couldn't be simpler than this. •