

# **Commentary on Silo's Message**

Chloë Noordendorp

Park of Study and Reflection Mikebuda

Mikebuda  
[luz.chloe@gmail.com](mailto:luz.chloe@gmail.com)

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# Testimony to Silo's Message

## *Introduction*

Recently I have come to realise that there have only been a few moments of major impact in my life. The most recent of which caused many physical and mental changes. It has forced me to acknowledge certain truths, face fears and see things for what they are, instead of what I would like them to be or how I thought they were. This has led to great internal revelations, resulting in a complete change in lifestyle.

I am writing this testimony in my little house in a forest in Hungary, thinking of the friends who encouraged me to write about my experiences, and although I am writing this text mostly for myself, I am grateful to them for their encouragement and support.

I am also feeling incredibly grateful for all the good that a bad situation has brought me. I have had many experiences related to this bad situation, but was never (and am still not) very good at writing them down. So far I have only shared bits and pieces in conversations with people, so for a time I was unsure where to begin. After giving it some thought it seems to me that to be able to make a good representation of what happened to me, I need to explain the experiences in combination with the general story as much as possible. So what follows is a description of how I started reading Silo's message and what important experiences I had during a very difficult time in my life. I tried to write my story in a way that is easy to understand for everyone, but might not have succeeded since I wrote it mostly for myself. So to make things a bit more clear I marked the passages that are meant to explain an experience or important insight with ' - '. I hope the whole thing is not too difficult to read and that you can enjoy it.

## *Personal context*

I was just a normal, rational minded young woman living my daily life. I was studying Ancient History at the university and living in Amsterdam, in a flat with a roommate. I intended to study well, finish it and then find a nice job and build a nice life for myself. At this moment in my life I wasn't worried about anything at all, except passing my exams, food, and maybe when to walk my dog. I was living my life and I was doing it my way, or I thought I was anyway<sup>1</sup>. My life was totally normal (work, friends, boyfriend, break-up drama, friends drama, you know...). Everything was going well, until it wasn't. From one day to the next my life changed, only I didn't know it yet. I simply woke up one day<sup>2</sup> with an intense pain in my abdomen.

I'm not one to run to a doctor at the first sign of a problem. Usually I just wait for the problem to resolve itself, which it usually does. Only when I can't deny anymore that it would be good to see a doctor, then I go. So the first few weeks with pain I just stayed at home resting, thinking it must be some kind of food poisoning and it would pass. However, with absolutely no change after about 2 weeks and the pain being continuously present, I decided to see my family doctor.

## *The beginning*

My doctor, after listening to my description of the problem and poking and prodding me the way doctors do, had absolutely no clue what we were dealing with and so he referred me to the hospital for an ultrasound.

That was the first of many visits to the hospital, which I will not recount for you. I saw many different specialists in a period of 2 years but already during this first examination it became clear to me that I am just a number to them.

I saw many specialists and had many tests done, and between every appointment I had to go

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<sup>1</sup> It wasn't until later that I realised that I was following the 'expected' course of a persons life in this society

<sup>2</sup> November 2012

back to the family doctor to discuss other possibilities and get new referrals to more specialists. I suppose I was lucky that my family doctor did take me seriously, knowing that I would only have come to see him if something was definitely wrong. The same could not be said for most of the specialists. Most of them were in fact quite unkind and it often felt like they were ordering me around like a child, or didn't take me seriously at all. I can't exactly remember in what order I saw which specialist or what tests were done when, but I very clearly remember the answer they all gave me: "I don't know" and "according these test results, you are perfectly healthy", and after some time of this, "maybe you should see a psychologist".

I was in constant pain, I could barely walk, I was always tired. I was unable to attend my university classes and so got expelled from some of them. I couldn't really go anywhere, or meet up with my friends, or generally live my life. I often felt guilty for not being able to meet my friends, for not being able to do my part in the housekeeping, I even felt guilty towards my dog, for not being able to walk with him properly.

After several months of this situation, my mind started going places I never thought even existed inside me. I was slowly spiralling down into a very deep and very dark hole. And it took me some time to realise it. When I finally saw what was happening, I told myself that I had two choices<sup>3</sup>: Either I let it happen, knowing I probably would not be able to come out of it, or start doing something about it. Physically I was basically helpless, but mentally I could at least work with something. Here again I realise I was lucky, lucky that my parents are Humanists and working with Silo's Message. This is when I truly started to read Silo's Message and other works with true intent and interest. Searching for something meaningful, instead of just reading the words superficially.

- The first step I took to try to get out of this mental state, was to try to find the determination to finish my university degree, as I was considering to drop out at this moment. Not knowing if I would be able to attend the classes in the near future and the constant pain combined with my bad mental state made me believe I would never be able to do it. I did it eventually, and I'm happy I did, but it was only a small result compared to the changes I went through internally to get there. In fact, it seems to me *now* that it was the internal force that I found while doing ceremonies that helped me to be determined to continue and finish what I started, and that the finding of this force was the most important part.

- After reading Silo's Message for some time, I realised I needed to change the way I look at things (but I did not yet realise what that really meant). Like stated earlier, I was a very rational person. I could always explain everything in a rational way and there was always a rational solution to everything. I believe it was because of this that I kept clinging to the idea that if only the doctors would find the cause of the pain, everything would be alright again. There would be a rational problem and rational solution and the world would make sense again. But I realised that as long as I would keep clinging to this notion, my mind would be in discord, unable to find a balance. There was nothing to be found, nothing to be rationally analysed, and trying to hold on to the rationality was in part responsible for this mental break down I was experiencing. It took a long time, but finally I was able to let go of this need to find a reason, a cause for the pain. And this was in no small amount thanks to the ceremonies of Well-being and Force.

This was a big step, but even after this it was difficult to keep hearing the doctors tell me that they had no clue about what was wrong with me. It only became a little bit easier for me to deal with it. And of course the rationality itself was not gone, I only managed to let go of this one small thing (the need to find a cause), but it made a huge difference in how I could deal with the situation, and from this moment onwards I started to get a little better mentally.

### ***The middle***

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<sup>3</sup> Thank you rational mind...

- It went on for a while still, let's call it a 'comfortable middle'. Yes, I was still in pain and the doctors still had no clue, but I could also set my mind to do things again. To live and enjoy for as much as it was possible for me to do so. In this period of starting mental recovery, I had some insights due to unpleasant situations. One of these was that many people had no real interest in me and how I am doing. They would ask how I am because it is the normal, expected thing to do, but they do so expecting to hear that you're fine (which is the normal, expected answer). When I would instead tell them I am not well at all, they would be shocked, even if they already knew I wasn't well. And most of those who did not yet know I wasn't well, replied with asking why I didn't put it on Facebook... These things led me to wonder when our society became one of 'keeping up appearances' at all cost? Why is it not OK to say you're not OK (unless you put it on Facebook)? And why is it that when you do say you're not OK, people can't seem to grasp the meaning of it and are still insulted that I didn't come to their birthday party, having known before that I wasn't well (yes this really happened). Of course this doesn't apply to everyone in my social circle of that time, but it happened often enough for me to see a pattern and become very concerned about this society I live in. And what was even more troubling, I realised it was probably always like this, I just didn't notice it before... This is what eventually led me to another, more important, insight<sup>4</sup>: I was a sheep. This is the point that I realised and personally experienced that our whole society is built on expectations and appearances. Not only from person to person, but also in itself. We are all expected to go to school, to study something, find a good job, buy a house with money borrowed from the bank, which you can do thanks to the good job, then pay the bank for the rest of your life and create a happy family in your house that is in fact not yours but the banks, all the while believing you are free... And I realised I had been on this pre-set path before the pain started. Even though I always believed I was doing things my own way, it turned out that I wasn't. I was a sheep, following the masses without question. I also discovered that the only reason I realised that I was on this path before, was because I could not follow that pre-set path anymore in my current situation.

Ok, so I could not follow the path that we are expected to follow. No problem, I don't want to be a sheep anyway. But what do I do then? I had no clue... and that didn't matter so much at that time because the pain was still such that I was already happy if I made it to the supermarket and back...

- In this period, my mother took me with her to Park La Belle Idee in France a few times. I was not part of any meetings, I was just there, a change of scenery, speaking with the people present. It was on one of these trips that I recognized a distinct feeling of not being able to wake up, like I was sleepwalking through my life<sup>5</sup>. I realised this after one of the friends there, Jon, asked me every day how I was, and I would reply that "I am still sleeping", regardless of the time of day or how long I had actually been awake. Later I realised I was actually sleeping mentally while being physically awake, and I think recognizing this state at this moment is what made the sensation of awakening I experienced later<sup>6</sup> much stronger.

After two years of constant pain, things were looking up a bit. I was about to finish my studies and finally there was a doctor who had an idea about the cause of my pain. However, she told me that there are no medical tests to prove it, so there will never be an official diagnosis as the medical world does not recognize this as a condition. The only way to see if the doctor was right, was to try out the treatment to see if her suspicion was correct<sup>7</sup>, and it appears that she was. After

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<sup>4</sup> See footnote #1

<sup>5</sup> Of course this could have been connected to the extreme fatigue caused by the pain, only it did not seem to be physical, but rather mental.

<sup>6</sup> See below

<sup>7</sup> So there is a treatment plan for something that does not exist...interesting

two months of specialized physiotherapy and a drastic change in my eating patterns, I started to feel better. After the third month, on december 7<sup>th</sup> 2014, I had no pain for the first time in two years<sup>8</sup>.

Finally I could go back to living my life! But what life was that? And do I even want it? I realised that since letting go of my default rational setting, I started thinking in a different way. I let go of many fears and even expectations, although at first unknowingly<sup>9</sup>.

Would I go back to following the expected path, in a society that did not have a place for me when I was unable to follow that path? And since essentially my life before the pain started, consisted of being a sheep... would I go back to being a sheep? I felt completely lost. I did not want to go back to the life I was living before, because everything had changed, and I myself had changed. I had no clue how to live in a society that excludes people who can not contribute to it. I had no direction. So, for a while, I only concentrated on becoming more or less physically fit again, and I continued to read in the book of the Message.

Then my parents told me that there would be a meeting for messengers in Hungary, in May of 2015. They asked me if I would like to go there, stating that they thought it might be good for me. I liked the idea of being away for a while from my daily life, that I now know was without meaning. So I went with them. And that started a whole new and big change in my life.

– I don't remember if I did anything particular or if there was a certain ceremony or conversation that led to it, but what I do remember is the moment, the moment that I felt truly awake. It's entirely possible that it was the charge of the whole weekend of the meeting that somehow affected me, but I only realised it when I met Jon, who was also there, just outside the Sala. He said to me “Good morning, are you still sleeping?”... and I realised in that moment that I wasn't. I felt more awake than ever before and I knew in that moment that something extremely important had changed in me.

During the meeting we were staying in Budapest, and in the busride back from Mikebuda to Budapest I sat next to Tom, who knew about my physical problems because of my visits to La Belle Idee. He asked me how I was doing, and my answer took the biggest part of the busride back. I will not go into detail, but basically I spoke of how the pain that I experienced made me see my world for what it really was, how I was confronted with the meaning of true friendship and how I had the experience of waking up during this meeting. After arriving back in Budapest, I realised that this talk was actually the first time that I spoke about my pain, the feelings related to it, and the things I realised because of it. I also realised, but a bit later, that all of these important realisations and experiences, were the result of a desperate person searching for something in a book.

– After coming back home from the meeting something started happening to me, which only served as proof for me that something important had changed in me. When doing experiences, I could sometimes come to a place inside (I call it a place, because it does not seem like a state of being to me), a place where there is emptiness. This is how I perceived it the first time it happened, as an emptiness. And the first time, it scared me. It seemed to me to be a place of nothingness, without references, and so I stopped the meditation. After stopping though, I recognised that I did not have a bad sensation, that actually the quiet was comforting, in a way. So, I decided not to stop the meditation if it occurred again. And it did. Whenever this place arose during ceremonies/meditation, I tried to welcome it. After a few of such experiences, with 'visits' to this emptiness, I started to try to discover it instead of simply being in it, and soon I saw that it was not empty at all. It's rather difficult to find the words to describe what I experienced then, what I think

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<sup>8</sup> Important to note is that there is no 'cure'. I still have this condition and might have it for the rest of my life. The difference is now, most of the time, it's under control.

<sup>9</sup> See page 5

comes the closest is this: In this emptiness there is only me. Only me, in the truest and deepest meaning of it. It's the place where the purest version of my being resides, uninfluenced by expectation, regret, love, desire, resentment, etc.

\* I meditated on this experience of the emptiness for some time, here's what I came up with: In this emptiness is our truest self, possibly even our spirit. In this society we live in, all people are, consciously or not, filling their minds and lives with the tangible. Relationships, successful job, house, car, kids, etc, without asking themselves if what they are doing has meaning or if it is what they really want. And we do this, because we fear. We fear loneliness, rejection, we fear love even, and failure especially... We fear ourselves... We fear 'the emptiness', because the emptiness seems to be just that on first sight, empty, and that's scary. It's unknown and so we fall back to what we know, that which is tangible... that which is causing us to lose ourselves.

\* During this meditation something else occurred to me. I was (and am) very often able to visit the emptiness at will, I no longer had to wait for it to present itself, but could direct myself to find it. And this made me wonder about my own fears. I stated before that I had to work with my rationality and as a result also with my fears. Now I suspected that not fearing the emptiness resulted in losing my general fears. This seems to be a very strange notion, but definitely worth some investigation. And after meditating on this topic separately as well, I found that many of the general fears I had before, were gone. And it felt liberating.

I recognised that this was a result of my period of pain, in which I was forced to see the truth, forced to let go and forced to wake up. I use 'forced' here, because it was the only option for me. It was this, or allow myself to go deeper into a dark hole, not knowing if I could make it out if I went deeper... and that was simply not an option (once I realised I was in it). I know the word 'forced' sounds negative, but I don't mean it negatively. It's simply the only word that fits the situation I was in. If I did not let go and wake up, I don't know where I would be now, so the result is positive.

– Now I return to the period where I first encountered the emptiness, because in this period I experienced something else for the first time. Something that is still very mysterious to me, even though I still experience it regularly. Let's call it a sensation. It happened for the first time during a practice of the Service. In one moment – I don't know which part of the ceremony, but I don't think that really matters – a tingling feeling started. Right in the middle of my forehead. It felt like a surge of energy, and I had the register that I opened something, a connection of sorts. At first it would only occur during practices of the Service, but that changed quite soon. It occurred, and still occurs at all hours of the day, in any situation. If the circumstances allow it, I try to follow it when I feel the sensation, and when I do I end up with a strong feeling that it's somehow connected to people, but so far I have not been able to find out which people. Sometimes it's accompanied by emotions. It varies in intensity and sometimes seems to move. Once, so far only once, I woke up in the middle of the night to this sensation, it was overwhelming, and I felt like some great force was being directed to me, it seemed so strong I could almost see it.

### ***The Ending***

By this time I had already realised that my life would never be the same as before. During a wonderful trip to nature in the summer of 2015, where I saw real bears up close for the first time in my life, I felt like I received something. It became clear to me that my life didn't have to be the same as before or even similar to before, that I had the opportunity to build a new life, a new, independent future for myself. 2015 was a year full of important realisations and experiences, one of which was a different trip, towards the end of that year. I travelled to Milan with some of the Hungarian friends, where Karen was too. I had never met Karen before (i think) but on that weekend she started something in me that would lead to the best decision of my life. She called it a little game. A game with the principle cards, in a Salita in Milan. She told everyone to pick a card from the stack (they were face down), and that the card we picked would be important for us. She

also said that if you didn't know why the principle that we picked is important, that we should meditate on it and one day we would know. So. I picked. ... “*When you harm others, you remain enchained, but if you do not harm anyone you can freely do whatever you want.*”... And of course this principle did absolutely nothing for me... I was just starting to get more deeply into the Message at that time and had not yet considered the principles as anything other than general guidelines. I forgot about it, until I found the card in my bag when I came home after the trip. And I remember thinking '*why not?*'... I started to meditate on it, as Karen had suggested. Every day I took some time to meditate on it. And it was doing nothing. But the '*why not?*' still applied and the only other valid subject I had to meditate on was how to start living my life, and I wasn't ready for that yet... so I meditated on the principle<sup>10</sup>.

- After about a month I received an answer as to why this principle is important for me. It came in the form of a dream. It wasn't a very long dream, but it was so clear and intense that its message was unmistakable. In the dream I was standing in a place that I registered to be a piece of paradise, my perfect home. I remember clearly standing in a beautiful garden, feeling that it was mine, and feeling an intense happiness. And then, from the background, I started to hear myself talking, saying that this could never be real, it would be impossible because I have responsibilities, because family, because expectations, because this, because that... and then I heard a loud sound, like someone slamming their hand hard on a table, and my own voice, very loudly and clearly shouting “*Chloë! What are you doing!?*”. And then I woke up. Sat up straight in my bed, remembering the whole dream, and I knew my answer. I would leave the Netherlands. I would leave, and I would not hurt anyone by leaving, but I *would* hurt myself by staying... Now I live in my little piece of paradise in Hungary.

**So...**

This is the story of how I came to work with Silo's message. It was the worst period of my life that led me to it, and it helped me see the reality of my world, it helped me to overcome external and internal obstacles and it helped me to find what I truly need. It was the worst period of my life that led me to it, which eventually led me to do the best thing I did in my life – moving to Hungary.

I admit that some of what I wrote may be unbelievable, too easy, lacking detail. This is mostly because I honestly can't tell you the process. I don't know *how* exactly these things happened, but they did. All I know is that I opened myself completely, I surrendered and let the Force guide me.

Although the problem is chronic and I still have physical difficulties from time to time, I am grateful for what it led me to. As I am also grateful to the people, not all of them mentioned in this testimony, who played a part in clarifying the path for me and, consciously or not, helped me through the difficult times. As I am also grateful to the person who wrote that little book that contains so much meaning, Thank You Silo.

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<sup>10</sup> It's good to note here that in the past I had several moment in which I had a strong desire to leave the Netherlands (where I was living), but always I found justifications as to why it would not be possible.