

Shrink Rap Radio #175, September 26, 2008 – Toltec Wisdom Teachings
David Van Nuys, Ph.D., aka “Dr. Dave” interviews Allan Hardman
(transcribed from www.ShrinkRapRadio.com by Susan Argyelan)

Excerpt: *And, since now we’re discovering that the reality that we’re perceiving isn’t real, and all of the rules are totally arbitrary, and all the gods and everybody that’s making rules, Santa Claus, everybody that’s watching us and checking lists – they’re all made up; they’re different in every culture, every time period. All of the sudden, we’re like, “Whoa!” you know? And we say, “Well, how do I choose, then, if I’m going to reprogram?” And so, we say, choose new beliefs and choose new agreements for yourself that are not based in judgment and fear; that are based in love and acceptance as the truth of who you are and the truth of what this universe is.*

Introduction: That was the voice of my guest, Allan Hardman, who’s written a guide to the wisdom teachings of the ancient Toltecs. You can find out much more about Allan Hardman in our show notes at www.ShrinkRapRadio.com. Now, let’s get into the interview.

Dr. Dave: Allan Hardman, welcome to Shrink Rap Radio.

Allan Hardman: Thank you so much. This is so great to be here, David.

Dr. Dave: Well, your 2007 book is titled *The Everything Toltec Wisdom Book: A Complete Guide to the Ancient Wisdoms*. So, maybe the place for us to start is for you to tell us who the Toltecs were, and then how we’d know anything about their ancient wisdom.

Hardman: Yeah, great. The second half of the question is, we don’t know as much as we think we do.

Dr. Dave: Okay. (laughs)

Hardman: The first half is that the Toltecs were an interesting culture because they came in northern Mexico, and they apparently migrated from places from the north into an area north of Mexico City, in those high plains of central Mexico. The difference between them and all the other civilizations like Aztecs and Mayans and the others – Olmecs – in Mexico was that these people were not a race or a culture so much as they were a gathering of spiritual seekers and artists, and nobody knows what brought them all together. And they built beautiful pyramids and cities, and there’s even doubt about who they were. The name Toltec was given to them from the word “artist,” which came from the Nahuatl language of the Aztecs, who found Teotihuacán and other places after the Toltecs had completely vanished. They predated the Aztecs and the Mayans by hundreds and hundreds of years in Mexico.

Dr. Dave: Oh, interesting! I was wondering what the relationship was to those two particular civilizations. So, they were actually earlier, and those pyramids that I think you referred to in Mexico actually predate the Aztec and Mayan ruins?

Hardman: When the Aztecs were a wandering tribe and had a prophecy that they would settle where they found an eagle with a serpent in its talons sitting on a cactus – was the prophecy, and they saw that in the midst of swamplands where Mexico City is now. So, they settled there and started draining swamps. And when they started traveling out – when they got more populated and started traveling out – they found Teotihuacán, which is about an hour's drive north of Mexico City. A little farther – the Aztecs didn't have cars, I guess. And, it was completely in ruins when they found it. They really didn't know who was there. They found treasures, they found beautiful art, they found murals...but they really had very little idea of who was there. So, they named the place and they named the people, and there was a lot of mythology about who these people had been – still alive, because there were still people living around there. And, the Aztecs were so impressed they called the place The City Where Humans Become Gods, and they started actually adopting a lot of the mythologies that they heard about the Toltecs for themselves, and calling themselves, often, Toltec, or related to the Toltecs, to try to capture some of the glory that they imagined that these people had had. But at one time, they say there could have been 200,000 people living around in Teotihuacán, outside of this beautiful pyramid complex.

Dr. Dave: Fascinating.

Hardman: All over Mexico.

Dr. Dave: Wow. Fascinating. Well, let's talk a little bit about your journey. How did you happen to be on this path? Have you always been a seeker? This must've started at some point earlier in your life.

Hardman: Yeah. I think I was born a seeker, although when I was young, there was nothing to, no answers to the questions because nobody was asking the questions. But, in the sixties and seventies, I found Carlos Castaneda books and was fascinated by his stories about Don Juan and the desert and the psychedelic plants, and the altered states of consciousness...

Dr. Dave: Sure. So was I. (laughs)

Hardman: Yeah, I experimented with some of my own altered states of consciousness and the sacred plants...and then, you know, got busy. So (I) always was reading, always was seeking more peace and harmony. And, along in the middle of 1990s, started a new relationship, and we both decided that we wanted spiritual, some kind of spiritual community and a spiritual basis in our relationship. And so, we joined the Church of Religious Science, here in Santa Rosa, which is now known for the Center for Spiritual Living, and found it to be a fabulous place of metaphysical

teaching and awareness, and a whole different kind of idea for me about what the universe was and how to relate to this idea of a God, and that sort of thing – and, a God that’s unified energy force and creation. And, after some time as a member of that community, somebody told me that there was a nagual like Don Juan in the Castaneda book teaching in Sacramento. And so I said, “Well! I want to find out about that.” So I went over there and instantly, instantly fell into love with Miguel Ruiz, who, a couple of years later, wrote *The Four Agreements* and then wrote *The Mastery of Love*, *The Voice of Knowledge*, and other books.

Dr. Dave: Okay, I’m not familiar with them, and many of our listeners might not be aware of them, either. And you refer to him as “nagual,” and that’s a new term for me as well.

Hardman: Okay. A nagual is a word from Mexico that is – well, there’s the tonal and the nagual. The tonal is creation itself and identified with a person who focuses simply on the material world. And the nagual is somebody who sees the bigger picture, who’s connected more to the spiritual presence in life than to the manifestation of that spiritual presence. So, that energy that supports and creates and animates this universe is the nagual, and then we call people who have achieved and aware connection as (of?) themselves as that; we call them naguals.

Dr. Dave: Now with that, when you talk about having achieved an aware connection, would you equate that to the Eastern concept of enlightenment, or is it different in some way?

Hardman: Well, I think it’s close enough that it’s not worth splitting hairs over, yeah.

Dr. Dave: Okay. Okay, so tell us more about Don Miguel Ruiz.

Hardman: Yeah. Someone just asked me the other day what caught my attention there because I’ve had a lot of teachers, I’ve sought out different styles, you know – meditating, from everywhere...but I’ve had a long, long-term love of Mexico. I travel to Mexico a lot. In fact, I just bought a house in a beach village in Mexico, and I’m going back to live for five months this winter.

Dr. Dave: Wow. Congratulations!

Hardman: Yeah, thanks. I’m really excited. And so, when I met Miguel Ruiz, I met somebody who was very embodied in his physical human being-ness as well as being connected to that spiritual oneness that he knew himself to be. And that really spoke to me, because it seemed like – at least the way I interpreted a lot of other teachings, and especially Eastern teachings – the goal is to kind of separate from the human, or to set aside desires and lusts and passions and appetites and be something else.

Dr. Dave: Right.

Hardman: That's what I really was.

Dr. Dave: Yeah.

Hardman: And here Miguel Ruiz was all of it! He loved ladies, he loved eating, he loved just being in his body and hugging and laughing and playing games with people and stuff. He used to, we'd be sitting around waiting for a plane or something, and he'd put a nickel or a dime in the middle of his palm and see if you could grab it out of his palm, which was almost impossible, he was so quick. He just loved to play, and he was just a joy. And, I looked at that and I said, I want to have that, you know. I want to find out what he's got and see if I can't – rather than dividing myself up, which is the problem in the first place (laughs), I learned later – reintegrate myself and because whole, and just fall in love with the totality of who and what I am.

Dr. Dave: I think that's a great advertisement, you know, that you were sort of drawn to it by who this person was – by his energy, his love of life, and so on – rather than from a very, sort of “head,” abstract, theoretical place.

Hardman: Uh-huh. Worked for me, boy!

Dr. Dave: Yeah. It sounds like it did. (laughs)

Hardman: And of course, what he wanted to do was take us to places in Mexico like Teotihuacán and these Toltec pyramids and on journeys. And so I said, that worked for me, too – sign up and boy, we went everywhere, all through Honduras and Guatemala and the Yucatan, Tikal and Chichen Itza, and Teotihuacán. We went to Egypt together and with groups. In the beginning, it was a very small group of people that he had gathered in Sacramento – an apprentice group – and he'd done the same thing in southern California and in Santa Fe. And so, there were these three groups, and then we would get together a couple of times a year and all go to the pyramids and Teotihuacán. And then every August, we had a celebration called the Circle of Fire, and we'd all come together. And a couple years after I met him, he wrote this book called The Four Agreements, which became one of those runaway word-of-mouth bestsellers. It's all over the world. It's been what, 11 years now, and it's still on top – list, seller list – in 38 languages all over the world. They've sold millions...

Dr. Dave: Boy, I don't know how I missed that one.

Hardman: I'm surprised you have, David, because I really recommend it. It's a very sweet, sweet book. Very short, but people read it and they buy 10 and give them to their friends. It's just one of those books. Oprah talked about it on her show a couple times.

Dr. Dave: Can you say what the Four Agreements are? Is that something you can summarize?

Hardman: Really describing them and talking about them is a little deeper, but the first one is to always be impeccable with your word. And what he's talking about with "impeccable" is not always tell the truth, always be honest, always keep your commitments – which a lot of people misunderstand, unfortunately – but what he's talking about underneath that is, he defines being impeccable as not using your word against yourself.

Dr. Dave: Hmm.

Hardman: So, when he says be impeccable with your word, he's saying, "Don't use your word against yourself. Don't judge yourself" – which is huge, of course, and if you stop doing that, you're home free right there. "Don't gossip," because gossiping is a way to use your word against yourself. And so, there's all these ways that he shows that we have to learn and we can learn, if we choose to do that, not to use our word against ourselves. And, he says by making that new agreement you'll start seeing all the old agreements, and you'll start learning how to break the old agreements. The second one is, "Don't taking anything personally." This is where a lot of people get stuck, because they realize that they're reacting constantly to other people and to events and to wars and to presidents and politics and all of these things that...

Dr. Dave: Yes.

Hardman: ...they get emotional reactions to, is because they personalize them and think that "The universe is doing this to me. That person is doing this to me." And in his book he shows – and in my book, too – we show how that's not actually true, that nobody can actually create an emotional reaction in you...that we dream it. We have to interpret what they do, tell ourselves a story, and that's what creates the emotional reaction.

Dr. Dave: Right. Interestingly, psychology, in the form of cognitive behavioral psychology, has kind of come around to a version of that, I would say.

Hardman: Yes. And Byron Katie's work is very closely aligned there, too. So then, the third agreement is, "Don't make assumptions." And so here, they're asking us to not guess what other people are thinking and then try to manipulate our reality so we can manipulate their reality so things will turn out the way we want. Don't have expectations and make assumptions about how things are going to turn out in the world, or your life. It's really about being present in the moment.

Dr. Dave: Yes.

Hardman: And he said the way out of making assumptions is to ask questions. So, if you're in a relationship and he comes home late or she comes home late, and there's this assumption that he's cheating, instead of just sitting, brewing on an assumption, guessing, you ask the question: "This is what I'm assuming; is it true?"

Dr. Dave: Mm-hmm...

Hardman: Great freedom there. And great fear, because people have been so domesticated to all these other rules about "Everything is personal," and "You've got to figure things out without asking." And the fourth one is simply, "Always do your best." And, it's another one that gets misinterpreted, where people think, "Oh, that means I have to push and do better and better and better," but if you do that, you're back to judging yourself for not doing it well enough, which means you're not (inaudible) impeccable. You're using your word against yourself to judge yourself. What he really means is, to not...to always do your best is simply to make that agreement: "I am always doing my best." So, every time the judge inside or outside says, "You should've done this differently," or "You should've done it better," you say, "No. My agreement is that I'm always doing my best. I show up in the moment, I have my programming, I have my experiences – I bring that all to the moment. I make choices, I make decisions, and those are my best choices and decisions in the moment."

Dr. Dave: Mm-hmm... Somehow, this all sort of sounds familiar. I mean, I'm sure there are unique aspects to it, but it doesn't sound strange or foreign, you know, given the other sorts of teachings that seem to be all around us these days. I'm wondering how is it that he connects this to the Toltecs. And I do want to talk about your book; I promise we'll move to your book.

Hardman: Yeah. He...the Toltec lineages went underground and different (inaudible) a lot of people writing books and talking about Toltecs. Some of them, they're describing wisdom that they say they learned in past lives. Others, like Castaneda, talking about everything meta-...nagual in the desert. Miguel's grandfather was a nagual on his mother's side, and his mother had – up until last year, when she died in her mid-90s – was an incredible spiritual healer, very well known in northern Mexico for her spiritual healing, and in southern California, where she moved. And so, he was the 13th child in that family and pretty much wandered off on his own – actually became a neurosurgeon in Mexico City. But when he had an out-of-body, kind of near-death experience in a car accident, which he writes about in his book, he realized, "Wait a minute. There's something more to life. Maybe the wacko family I was raised in had something going on." So he went back to his mother, and he trained for three or four years with his mother, and then he began teaching. So, he represents kind of a lineage. They call it the "Eagle-Knight lineage," but it's simply a wisdom that's been passed on through these families for a long, long time. And the Four Agreements – you know, there were no stone tablets written in some bizarre language that they found in the pyramids that said, "Here's your Four Agreements." This is his... Well, when I first met him, he was teaching kind of

like Castaneda. It was very mysterious; there was a lot of fear of power, that sort of thing, and diagrams of luminous eggs – a lot of pretty esoteric stuff. And pretty early on, he started saying, “You know, I’m...this is not...” He said, “My goal is to teach you love – to love yourselves, to love the universe, to love the creator of this universe.” He said, “Let’s simplify this.” And by the time he wrote *The Four Agreements*, he had so simplified it that there’s not very much mythology of anything in there. It’s more of a very simple handbook about life, and about these very obvious, kind of simple principles that are very deep when you start living with them. And one of the things that I think really has caught people is that the first part of the book is an explanation of how we are domesticated as children by our parents and our caregivers. And I think that has been a huge awakening in people that read the book. This “Oh, my God! The way I perceive the world is distorted by the programming that was done for me when I was little and has got nothing to do with reality. How can I connect with reality here?”

Dr. Dave: At the same time, when I was reading in your book and you kind of discussed that phenomenon, I also thought that I was hearing you say that probably, parents couldn’t do it any differently; that it’s sort of part of – what would you call it? – existential reality that parents are in a position where they have to give children some kind of a programming.

Hardman: Yes, although –

Dr. Dave: So parents aren’t necessarily evil for doing that.

Hardman: No. Thank you; it’s true, it’s very true – they’re doing their best. In every moment, all parents are doing their best. And I was just talking to somebody yesterday that was talking to me about being hit across the face by her mother on a regular basis. And I go, “Ouch!” you know, but still, it’s that parent and that moment, with their pain and their programming and their suffering and their domestication – doing the best they knew how.

Dr. Dave: Mm-hmm...

Hardman: They weren’t evil. They weren’t saying, “I’m going to mess up this person’s life forever,” you know.

Dr. Dave: Yeah. In your book, in *your* book, you say Toltec wisdom is based on three unique masteries: the mastery of awareness, the mastery of transformation, and mastery of intent. Perhaps you can take us through each of these three masteries.

Hardman: Great question, because it sets the foundation of these teachings, David. The mastery of awareness is when we wake up and discover how the awareness that we’re, what the Toltecs call “dreaming.” And that is, to me, the core gift of these teachings, is that we realize that we are taking in all the information through our senses – ears, you know; our smell, taste, touch, and especially visual, light. And

we call it all light in the tradition, and so that light comes in. And the light is the perfect messenger. And as you remember, probably from high-school physics, that light is reflecting off of objects out there and coming to your eye, hitting the back of your eye, making some kind of image, maybe on the back of your eye, upside-down, and then it's being translated into neurological impulses that move through your brain somewhere and form a little hologram or virtual reality inside your brain of what's out there.

Dr. Dave: Right.

Hardman: So, we're not seeing what's out there. We're seeing what's out there reflected into our mind, and we're actually perceiving inside of our mind.

Dr. Dave: And it's so hard to really grasp that, I think. I mean, it just... what we think is reality seems so real.

Hardman: It does seem very real, and we argue about it. And we say, "Seeing is believing." I mean, it's there. I mean, obvious – it's so obvious. The Toltecs remind us that... They say that when that light comes in and travels through those neurons, or whatever, they call it channels of perception. And the channels of perception have stored light from our emotional traumas, our programming, our domestication as children – good, bad, right or wrong. You know, everything that we've been taught, our wounding, all the broken hearts, the romance, the (inaudible) – you know, all that kind of stuff gets stored in those channels of perception. So, when the light from the outside comes in and travels through the channel of perception, it will pick up stored light that's related, and then it creates the little virtual reality, what we call the dream. And the stored light distorts the incoming light into that dream. And since every human has different stored light, every human has a different dream – because they have a different way of distorting the light.

Dr. Dave: Yeah, that makes sense to me. So, the mastery of awareness is involved with waking up from the dream, so to speak.

Hardman: Yes, and saying, "Oh, I'm dreaming this. It's not real, and I've been domesticated. I've been programmed. I didn't come into the world with these beliefs and agreements and fears and things. And so, I was programmed into them. I could reprogram myself.

Dr. Dave: Mm-hmm...

Hardman: And, I could learn to clean out that stored light and those old wounds and things from the channels of perception so that that light could come in more clearly, and I could have a more clear relationship between what I see inside of my mind and what's actually out there.

Dr. Dave: Does that begin to get into the mastery of transformation, that second one?

Hardman: Yeah, exactly. Yeah. So, then we transform our dream. And what they say in Toltec is there's, in the mastery of awareness, it's the "dream of the first attention." Because that's the first time that our attention was hooked and the program was downloaded into our minds. And in the mastery of transformation, we learn to give ourselves the dream of the second attention, because now we're hooking our own attention for the second time, looking into those channels of perception, looking at that stored light, looking at the wounding. We can do it in therapy, or the Toltec tradition has a lot of amazing tools for stalking and clearing those old...old stuff. I have a background in hypnosis, hypnotherapy, and counseling also, so I use, I've introduced a lot of that kind of thing into my book. My book is even less Toltec, really, than Miguel Ruiz's, because I've got a lot of *that* kind of information...

Dr. Dave: Uh-huh.

Hardman: ...disguised – hopefully disguised – as still (inaudible). The transformation, then, is transforming our dream from what they programmed into what we want and what we choose. And, since now we're discovering that the reality they were perceiving isn't real, and all of the rules are totally arbitrary, and all of the gods and everybody that's making rules, Santa Claus, everybody that's watching us and checking lists – they're all made up; they're different in every culture, every time period. All of the sudden, we're like, "Whoa!" you know? And we say, "Well, how do I choose, then, if I'm going to reprogram?" And so, we say, choose new beliefs and choose new agreements for yourself that are not based in judgment and fear; that are based in love and acceptance as the truth of who you are and the truth of what this universe is. And, that will take you out of the suffering of the judgment and make you happy. And so, choose agreements that make you happy. Reprogram it, then make yourself happy.

Dr. Dave: Does that...is that the third one, the mastery of intent?

Hardman: Having done that, or on the way to completing that, yes – then we discover that we live in a unity with the universe. And so, the mastery of intent – sometimes they call it the mastery of love – is really about, "Well, then how do I live in this world as a spiritual warrior, really, where everybody else is dreaming, but they're responsible for each other's feelings, and they're arguing. And, all the conflict, which is only caused by people thinking that the way they're perceiving the universe is right, and anybody that disagrees with them must be wrong, because so clearly they can see it – what's right – all the conflict comes from that. And so, the mastery of intent and mastery of love is, how, then, do I go into this world as this acceptance and love, where there's nothing but conflict and arguing inside people's heads, and with each other...and be happy and survive and make a living and play the game that's here without really being part of it. And that's real warrior work.

Dr. Dave: Yeah. That is. That's a big question, which I'm sure we can't give a real quick answer to, here. You know, as I was listening to you speak about all that just now, though, I was reminded of est. In some ways, this seems to me to be...it seems like est was trying to communicate similar sorts of messages. I don't know if that was one of the things you looked in, way back when – looked into way back when – or not.

Hardman: I was aware of it. I never did any est trainings or anything, but it had a lot of people that did and I was very aware of it...

Dr. Dave: Yeah.

Hardman: I think the difference here is that this Toltec path – the way it's been brought forward by Miguel Ruiz now and by myself and other teachers in his lineage – is much more love-based.

Dr. Dave: Mm-hmm...

Hardman: It's softer. It's about acceptance and love, and that it's so perfect, just the way we are. There's nothing we have... We don't have to get "it."

Dr. Dave: Yeah. (laughs)

Hardman: 'Cause we *are* it, you know? This is just it – and maybe that's the "it" that the "it" was supposed to get. But we just do it by just being, you know, by just saying, "Okay, I am... There's nothing I have to achieve to win some prize – not to go to heaven, not to be worthy of love, not to hold onto a relationship – I am just perfect the way I am.

Dr. Dave: Okay. Now, you did a ten-year apprenticeship with Don Miguel Ruiz, and I'm guessing there must've been some struggles along the way. What were some of your personal low points and high points along that journey, if you don't mind sharing?

Hardman: No, it's a great question. You know, the first couple of years, probably, I said, you know, I was there because I embraced his philosophy. The "underneath" truth of that is that it was a big ego trip because I... People could say, "Hey, Allan! What are you doing these days? What's going on? I haven't seen you." I'd say, "Oh, I'm apprentice to a Toltec nagual – you know, like Castaneda and Don Juan?" And, I would just go on and on...

Dr. Dave: Yeah. Sure!

Hardman: That held me. I'm very grateful for that, because it kept me there and kept me going back until I really got what I was doing there. And Miguel is infinitely patient with me, and that was the message that I finally got. Because I went in

there, then, wanting to impress the nagual, and I'd been a hypnotherapist for five years before I met him, and I knew all about the judge, and he's talking about the judge. And I knew all about that. So I'd sit, you know, fairly close to the front of the room. We were usually meeting in people's houses in those days and sleeping on the floor at night. And we'd just sit there, and he'd be talking, and I'd be nodding vigorously to affirm that I thought that he was very wise. And I really liked the way he phrased that, you know? (laughs)

Dr. Dave: Yes.

Hardman: And then I'd be furiously taking notes, which was my other strategy, so that I would know the answers to the questions if he called on me like a teacher, later, and said, "What was that we talked about yesterday?" And so I had those strategies to impress the teacher so he would like me. And he would sit there, and he'd look around the room, and he'd meet our eyes as he was talking, and he'd meet my eyes and I'd give him one of those, "Oh, well said!" kind of looks.

Dr. Dave: (laughs)

Hardman: And he wouldn't respond to it. He wasn't withholding anything; he was just seeing *past* my mask, past all my, "Hey-look-at-me-I'm-so-great-Dad!" strategies and seeing the beauty that he saw there as this unique expression of the divine sitting in front of him. And it took me a long time to get – because he didn't talk about that that's what he was doing. And so it took me quite a while on my own to (inaudible), He's just...he is just loving me, you know? In spite of my attempts to get him to love me, to approve of me, to accept who I am, without me doing anything, he's still totally present with me. And that was really... when I got that, that's when my work really started with him, I think, was when I started... And he told us later, he said, you know, "All those mythologies of stories I had to keep making up so you would come for the weekend, you know?" He said, "That was 'candy for the reason,'" he called it.

Dr. Dave: Ah...

Hardman: He said, "I just needed you to come and eat the candy so you could be in my presence long enough to know what it was that I was offering you." And later on, when a lot of us started teaching, he said, "I don't want you to go out and teach what I told you; I want you to go out and be who you became because of your association with me and share that as your teaching."

Dr. Dave: Hmm...that's a nice distinction. And I could really relate to that sort of struggle with wanting to please Daddy...

Hardman: Yeah. (laughs)

Dr. Dave: (laughs) ...and wanting to grab hold of the whole Castaneda fun and notoriety, and the tension.

Hardman: Very grateful for his patience, and now I see my own apprentices doing that. I work with apprentices and clients and a lot of long-distance phone conversations with people. And I see them doing the same thing with me, and I just love it. I mean, it's just sweet, and I just keep loving them, too. Now it's my turn.

Dr. Dave: Uh-huh. You emphasize that this is not a religion that you're talking about, but rather an artful approach to living. It's spiritual but not religious, I gather. What's the difference, though? In what way is it *not* a religion?

Hardman: I love... It's a great question again, David.

Dr. Dave: Thank you. (laughs)

Hardman: Great! I like to say for my own work – my Joydancer, which is my website at joydancer.com. The Joydancer Toltec tradition has no rules and lots of tools. And I think that's the difference between what we do and the Toltec philosophy and religion... is that there's no dogma. There's no standards to meet to be a good Toltec. There's nobody watching. There's nobody keeping score. There's no entrance fee of behavior; there's only, "Here's tools you can use if you choose to, to enrich your life, to change your dream, and to become more happy." Happy in a big sense, not "la-la" happy, but happy as in the freedom from the suffering we cause by being afraid because we're so caught up in judgment.

Dr. Dave: Okay. I'm going to leap ahead a little bit to a place in the book where you talk about the "parasite," since that's...*that* word has kind of a strong charge on it. (laughs) There's no good, there's no evil – but now we have this word, "the parasite." Tell us about that.

Hardman: I think it's a perfect description of what, how we use it, because when we're little, we are... we come into this world without opinions. Like I said, without agreements about good/bad, right and wrong. We can be laying there at six months old and somebody's changing us, and we're stark naked, and the neighbors come over, and "Oh, isn't he cute!" You know? (laughs) And we don't have any knowledge about, "Oh, my body is shameful. That part of my body has to be covered," you know...that kind of thing. It's all just out there. We are channels of love. We're just like this pure light when we come in, and everybody wants to look at us and make eye contact, because we're just this channel of pure acceptance. And people are very drawn to that. We're like little gurus. But, the other people around us are living in a dream about good and bad and right and wrong, and that dream is like a living entity. We call it...which is we call "the parasite." The parasite, description of a parasite is a being that lives off the energy of its host and usually doesn't kill its host – because that would go against the parasite. But, it drains the energy and lives on the energy of the host. And the human dream of that

entity, that parasite, is in the mind. It's kind of a disease of the mind, and it's the fear from all the knowledge that we get downloaded into us about good/bad, right and wrong. And so, when we're little, the people around us start taking little seeds of their parasite, of their knowledge of right and wrong. It's like Eve eating the apple in the Garden of Eden. And, they start planting the seeds of that stuff into our minds – “Bad boy,” you know?

Dr. Dave: Yeah.

Hardman: “Good girl! Oh, Daddy loves you when you do that!” “Oh, you're so cute!” You know? Or, “You make me so angry when you do that,” and all these ways that they're starting to domesticate us, punishing us and rewarding us. And punishment goes when we don't follow their idea of the dream, of their dream – their parasite's vision of how we should behave. And how they should look as parents, because an awful lot of parenting and domesticating children is so the parents can look good to their judges, outside and inside. They're trying to control our behavior so they'll look good.

Dr. Dave: So, it's the parasite, then sort of both the personal and the collective judgment that sucks energy from us. Is that...?

Hardman: Yeah. And we say the parasite lives on fear... and so, our emotional fear. So, the parasite is that part of our mind that creates fear by perceiving things in a fearful way and then eats that fear. And in some people, it's very, very big. And when you realize that all humans are possessed by a parasite, and you... Like I love it in airports or someplace where people are busy and absorbed in walking – I can look and I can see exactly what their parasite is saying about the world to the human, and controlling the human. Everybody has different strategies, different ways they walk, different ways they dress. In the early days, Miguel Ruiz used to have us go to a mirror like it was a twelve-step meeting in the morning, and look in the mirror and say, “My name is Allan, and I'm a parasite. And I'm addicted to fear.”

Dr. Dave: Hmm.

Hardman: And it was a big awakening because I saw how much – even in my story about trying to wear masks or have strategies that would get his approval – it was my fear that he would reject me that was driving that energy.

Dr. Dave: Yes.

Hardman: The worst thing that could ever have happened when he looked around the room and say, “You know, Allan, I don't think you're really getting this, and I don't think you should really come back.” Oh, my God! Can you imagine? And so...and that's the parasite being afraid of that happening, being rejected – which is the punishment that we get when we're domesticated. (inaudible)

Dr. Dave: By the way, I want to tell you that I really admire the simplicity of the presentation in the book. I mean, the writing is very clear, it's straightforward, it avoids getting entangled in a lot of esoteric complexities, jargon, and philosophies. Just as you're speaking now, in a very straightforward, simple manner, the book comes across in the same way, and I think that's a real gift to be able to do that.

Hardman: Thank you, David. My goal is really to write a "tool book," kind of. A lot of people read *The Four Agreements*; I think it's 74 pages or something, and it's just a "wow!" kind of book. But there isn't a lot of, "Well, what do I do now? What do I do if I take something personally? What do I do if I make assumptions?" I didn't directly address *The Four Agreements* in my book because that's Miguel's property, but I worked around them, and I... The core of the book in the *Master of Transformation* is just down-to-earth basic tools that we can sit down and use to change our dream. And first of all, here's the awareness of the dream, and then here's how to change it, and then here's how to live after you've changed it. So thank you for reflecting that, because that was my goal, and it's sweet to hear you see that perhaps I've achieved it.

Dr. Dave: Yeah, I think so. Now, on the other side, perhaps being a little bit more critical, on the cover of your book you list yourself as a Toltec master. And I'm wondering, you know, was there any struggle around putting yourself out that way? At what point did you attain that status of being able to say, "Well, I'm a Toltec master"?

Hardman: (laughs) Ahhhh...well, you've got to be something in this world, you know?

Dr. Dave: Yep, yep.

Hardman: Miguel...Don Miguel Ruiz did that to me before I could possibly wear that. He called me "Don Allan" – you know, "Don Miguel," "Don Allan," "Don Giovanni" – it's like a title of respect. And so, he started calling me Don Allan when it just made my skin crawl. (laughs) "No, Dad! I don't deserve that!"

Dr. Dave: (laughs)

Hardman: And he just badgered me and badgered me...to "You are a master here." And he was inviting me to step into that. He used to say, "I want you to accept your authority. I want you to get out and teach, and I want you to accept your authority as a teacher." But I would say, "But I don't know enough." And he'd say, "That's not what I'm talking about." He'd say, "I want you to accept the fact that you are you, and that you have a right to show up and be you in the world and teach whatever it is that you are. And there's nothing you have to achieve or learn – there's no license, there's no test to be you." And he said, "I want you to claim your authority to be you." And that was the very big difference, you know – like being an ordained minister or something. And so it was an act of power to me to

start calling myself a Toltec master. And some of my fellow teachers had some judgments about it, because they were calling themselves “mentors,” Toltec mentors. And I said, “No, I don’t want to hide,” you know? “I’m just going to do it.”

Dr. Dave: I...you know, I understand that. I think I’ve got some feeling for both sides of that issue and understand that part of the journey has something to do with claiming your power, claiming authority. And then at the same time, personally, you know, I’m a bit leery of gurus or spiritual teachers who claim to be impeccable or to have arrived somehow.

Hardman: Yeah.

Dr. Dave: And...I don’t know. You don’t seem to be doing that right now.

Hardman: No, it doesn’t really matter. I just show up, you know? And do my best to share what wisdom I’ve gained along my life path, and to love – that’s the bottom line.

Dr. Dave: Yeah, yeah. Just before I let go of this (laughs) this thing, you know, the system seems to be one of masters and apprentices, and if I understand that approach, the apprentice is being challenged to see everything he knows is false, and to let go of all judgments. And I both understand that and the rationale behind it, but it also makes me nervous because I’m fearful that it could lead to sort of blind cult-followership. So, what’s your thinking about that sort of dimension?

Hardman: God, another great reflection! Thank you. It has that danger, certainly. Their (inaudible) tradition (inaudible) kind of messed up with that and had a lot of dogma and a lot of rules and actually told people, “You don’t belong here,” you know? “You’re not good enough, and you don’t get it.” And, I’ve actually worked with some of those people to try to bring them back to the truth of the real teaching. And fortunately, the two teachers that I’m thinking of that did that have since gone on to other things, and (inaudible) grateful that they did. So there’s that danger, but if we stay true to the teachings, we understand that there’s no rules to follow. I set myself up as an authority. I have that authority. And when I’m in the pyramids with a group – we’re going to Teotihuacán next week, a week from today, actually – with a group, we’ve got about 16 people from all around the world. I’m excited about that. You know, the international flavor of this group. I go there as the nagual. I go there as an authority, so I can look at people, and I can see the strategies they’re using and how they’re blocking and limiting themselves. And I will just tell ‘em! I mean, I have the authority – I claim the authority to be that teacher and just say, “You are doing this, and it is hurting you. And, I want you not to do it for this day. I don’t want you to talk today, I don’t want you to tell stories today, I don’t want to not take care of anybody or help anybody today. I want you to get out of the back of the crowd, and I want you in the front all day.” You know, those kinds of things to push people’s strategies, but it’s with such love, and such just adoring the truth of

who they are that they don't feel threatened by it. And if they do, then we go deeper into that. And yet, at the same time, I don't really... It's an agreement that we make, they and I, but it's not really the truth or anything. I'm not... They've just forgotten something that I remembered along the way, and they just haven't remembered it yet. And, I just want to reflect it back to them so they can remember who they are.

Dr. Dave: Yes.

Hardman: But it doesn't set me apart from them. When we come in out of the field and have great Mexican food afterwards, we're just there together, you know. I take my mask off. You know, the teaching says that a nagual is a man of a thousand masks – or a woman – who's attached to none of them.

Dr. Dave: Mm-hmm...

Hardman: And when I described myself (inaudible) the other day, sitting in front of Don Miguel, I was very attached to my masks, and I was very afraid that he would see through them – unconsciously, really. But, the nagual has no fear, so that he can let go of those masks but use them as needed. He can use anger, he can use obedience, he can use know-it-all, you know, he can use senility (?) – whatever's called for in a situation.

Dr. Dave: Okay. Well, we're probably coming to the time where it's time to sort of start winding down, and you mentioned the trip to Mexico that's coming up. I know that you lead journeys to Mexico and Peru. I'll be sure to put a link in our show notes in case there are listeners who'd like to learn more about this approach or who'd like to join you on one of these trips. As we close down here, I wonder if there's anything that you'd like to get out that maybe my questions haven't elicited.

Hardman: Wow, thank you. You know, I mentioned I'm going to Mexico this winter. I've bought a house there on the beach north of Puerto Vallarta about an hour and a half. And I'm going to be teaching there and inviting people to come down and teach with me there, so they can use that link to joydancer.com to find out about all the things that I do. But what I would really like to leave people with – and I think you've brought that out here – is that this Toltec path is a simple path. It's a path of love and a path of wisdom. And that love says, "You're perfect the way you are. There's nothing you have to do, nothing you have to achieve, nothing you have to fix – heal, even, to break free from something that you shouldn't be in order to become something that's worthy of love of yourself, of your own love and acceptance and of this universe." There's nobody doing that in this whole universe but us humans doing it to ourselves. The squirrels and the trees and the sun and the stars and the earthworms, they're not judging each other. They're not judging themselves about not being good enough, or too tall or too short or too fat or too smart – they're just being. And there's no reason for us to move into (?) domesticated when we have this parasite possession that David, if we can all just

learn to go back to that truth that we were domesticated out of, of our, just our divine perfection, the world would be so wonderful.

Dr. Dave: Yeah. You know, I get that from dogs, from a couple of dogs that I have met recently that are just so open and friendly and loving and fun (laughs).

Hardman: Yes. They're laying in the shade, you know, and the sun moves. Then they get hot. They don't look and say, "I don't want to move; I don't want to look like a wimp. The other dogs aren't moving and..." They just get up and move when they're hot; they go back in the sun when they're cold. They come in when they're hungry, they (inaudible) to eat. Well...humans can live that way, too.

Dr. Dave: Yeah. Hey, Allan Hardman, thanks so much for being my guest today on Shrink Rap Radio.

Hardman: David, what a pleasure. Thank you so much.