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## Loose Tooth

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## Loose Tooth

When we were young children, a loose tooth was cause for some concern on our part, wondering whether or not it would hurt when it came out. Parents and others probably encouraged us to “get it over with” by offering to pull the loose tooth. And we were told that losing teeth was a sign that we were growing up. In our adult years, a lose tooth is surely not a welcome sign of growing older, and would definitely be a cause for concern. The same event, a loose tooth, has greatly different meanings for us, depending upon the circumstances.

Whenever in our young lives we began to experience the tug between right and wrong, we became aware of the possibility of pain or gain whether we would figuratively “pull the loose tooth” or leave it for later. Anticipation is a spiritual movement involving memory and imagination: we have had experiences of both pleasure and pain, and we can elicit fear when we imagine what we might suffer as a consequence of our words or actions, or we can raise our hopes if we imagine some of the benefits that might follow upon what we say or do. As we have grown and matured, we have learned not to be deterred by the anticipation of suffering when one of our values is involved in making a decision.

We long ago lost our “baby teeth,” and we continue to grow in the practice of observing the movements in our spirits that attract or repel. Some graced impulses draw us into actions that might be scary in imagination but are also so attractive, so appropriate, and with such an offer of fulfillment, that we make the phone call, write the message or otherwise commit ourselves to “pulling the loose tooth.” We might also notice some of the movements within us that disturb our peace, such as thoughts that we are not worthy, or good enough to follow an inspiration we have received. The more we listen to the negative comments within our minds, the less attractive will seem volunteer work, speaking our truth or taking any positive initiative. We could even let ourselves get “talked out of” contributing to a conversation, giving a few minutes of our time to be of assistance to someone or deciding to face an ongoing problem. Our day-to-day lives contain many instances of “loose teeth” when the decisions we make are affected by how well we deal with the imagined costs or benefits that come to mind.

When a child focuses on imagined pain, he or she is quite unlikely to let anyone near a loose tooth with an idea of pulling it. We are not children, but we might still be capable of letting our imaginations propose only the negative possibilities that could follow upon a decision we are making. For our “loose tooth” episodes, images of fear, failure or pain have to be balanced with all that we have learned through experience. Seldom have the

potential harmful consequences followed when we decided to act in accord with our values or with a recognized gift of inspired thinking. On the contrary, even when acting rightly cost us some inconvenience or suffering, when all was complete, we felt within us that peace and contentment that come when "the tooth is out."

A "loose tooth" presents us with an opportunity to make a good decision.