# Adapted from Hate & Spirituality by Hunter Beaumont

*Toward a Spiritual Psychotherapy: Soul as a Dimension of Experience North Atlantic Books, Berkeley: 2012.*

*Hate’s subtle forms may manifest as invisible veils protecting us from what we do not want to see as we pass a homeless person on the street, or the habit of inaction as we animatedly discuss with friends an injustice but undertake no meaningful corrective action. Hate lurks hidden in the unspoken sense of superiority as friends gossip about an acquaintance, and when politicians and pundits, pretending objective analysis, ridicule opinions of the opposition instead of engaging in meaningful dialogue.*

*Hate, as a closing of the soul, is preached from many pulpits and rings through the strident rhetoric of many TV commentators. It is quite possible to hold opposing opinions without hate, without cynically denigrating those who are different while secretly elevating oneself into a position of superiority.*

*Hate is more than an emotion; it is a movement of the soul that closes and eradicates sensitivity to the humanness we share with others. It is a dulling of empathy that makes us cold more often than it makes us overtly violent.*

***Reflections on Hate:***

1. Hate contemplated and integrated has an important function, which is why we cannot ultimately extinguish it; instead **we need to do soul work on our hate**. It begins with admitting to ourselves that we experience it.
2. Hate unworked tends to polarize, to split good and bad. It tends to thicken the inner spaces, to close and harden the heart, and to cloud the mind.
3. **When hate is working in us it is helpful to have the skill of inviting it into our contemplation**. This is a way of ‘loving our enemy.’ Otherwise, we can begin to hate the quality of hate in ourselves and in others and try to destroy ‘it’ as if we were acting out of love. Attempting to eradicate what we do not like or want doesn’t work. “What we resist, persists.” Instead, a self-contemplation with compassion is essential to developing empathy for self and others and to allowing a deeper truth that frees to come into view.
4. Emotional hate – ***Hot Hate*** - is what we usually recognize as hatred. It can happen that the people for whom we feel the most hate are the people we love the most. This is an indication that hate and love are not opposites, as we often think. Love and hate exist easily side by side in the soul. Our minds have a problem with this but not our souls. Soul has no difficulty loving and hating the same people at the same time.
5. A form of hate is instinctual. It belongs to our animal heritage. We humans have the potential to elevate our hate, to understand it and facilitate it. **Hate is a proper theme for meditation –** not hate in general, nor hate in our society, nor our spouse’s hate, but *our own* hate. **Can we sit together with our own hate with an open heart** **to feel what our hate desires when it appears?** Can we allow ourselves to engage in the process of cleansing or perfecting our hate through contemplation, delaying acting on it until we are certain that we know its true desires? Hate may open us to truth.
6. What is the true desire of hate? If we really inquire, the goal of hatred is to remove the obstacles that stand between us and our heart’s desires. Hate wants to destroy what binds us to our suffering. It wants to set us free.
7. Hate refined can do its work and not get caught in distortions. It clears away the garbage. A quarrel that ends in a genuine clearing of the air and frees people to move forward is an example. Rather than closing the heart it carries us where our heart really wants to go: “Energy is focused on the proper target; the barriers to resolution are torn down. It is possible to touch what is really desired.”
8. We are not trying to eliminate hate but to cleanse it, to perfect it and make it work for a greater good.

