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2018

2018 - 01

What else have you learned through in-joy-ment and appreciation? - 2018-01-01 08:57

As I said in a [prior blog post](#), in-joy-ment is the active finding of joy through appreciation for what-is and whatever is happening. Appreciation is an easily accessible doorway to finding the joy of the moment. Also, appreciation...embracing and finding value in what-is...goes beyond tolerance. In a way, you could say there is no need for tolerance if you appreciate it.

In my experience with in-joy-ment and appreciation, I have also learned that there is no need for forgiveness if you appreciate it. Also, appreciation opens the way to love. Or said in another way, there is no love unless there is first appreciation for the person or thing as they are.

How can you say you love someone if you do not embrace and value who they are as a person?

I do not believe it is right to say you love who/what they really are...a soul, the Self, etc. as this implies this is separate from the person they are. Then, in some funny way, you can love their "inner being" while tolerating the person. You can not really love what is being "tolerated". I also do not believe you can separate what a person does from what they are (as a person). People act from their being and understanding...and so as we act we are. A compassionate person acts compassionately. A hateful person hates...in essence, they are hate. There may be ignorance and confusion at the root of how we act...but that just means we are ignorance and confusion as well. Attempting to split "inner being" from the person or to split actions from the person is just another game of the mind...creating duality. No such duality really exists...it is an illusion of the mind.

So when you love someone...I say you have to love all of them...warts and all (not trying to dismiss or overlook the warts). To do that you have to embrace and value the whole of them. We can not pick and choose...I love most of them, but hate some other parts. In such scenarios, it is not uncommon that people eventually just can't take the parts they hate anymore...and they fall out of love with the person. Was this really love? I don't think so.

This applies to self-love as well. Do you appreciate yourself? Do you allow and accept yourself to be as you are right now? Do you embrace and see value in yourself as you are right now?

If you do, then you must also allow, accept, and appreciate your past and everything that has happened to you. Everything that has brought you to where you are right now. Painful events in the past have helped shape who you are now (as a person). To appreciate who you are now requires appreciating what has happened to you in the past...as that has helped make who you are now.

Now, if you appreciate all of what has happened to you in the past...what is there to forgive? We don't forgive people for doing things that have benefited us. So if you have embraced and more importantly value what has happened to you in the past (as helping make you who you are now...the person you appreciate and love) - then what is there to forgive? Really, to say that you do not forgive means you do not accept and appreciate yourself now. In accepting and appreciating yourself now, you have to already have accepted and appreciated the past which brought you to now...the two go together.

If you accept and appreciate the past, is there anyone to blame? We do not assign fault and blame to actions/happenings that we value. If you accept and appreciate the present/moment, is there anything or anyone to criticize or complain about? We criticize and complain when it is things we don't like...don't value.

I am not creating some kind of rule...thou shalt appreciate all things. I am not saying this is something you must or even should do. This is just something to play with. If you can't appreciate something, then you can't...don't make an issue or problem of it. Appreciate what you are able to appreciate now. Appreciate where you are now in your understanding. With deeper understanding and the dispelling of ignorance/illusion...things may shift on their own and you may find you can appreciate things you could not in the past. In playing with appreciation, you may find new ways to appreciate things you never thought you could appreciate.

Appreciation is also much easier to do after awakening. Once you are no longer creating your own suffering. Once many of the illusions of the mind no longer fool you and cause confusion. Once you are truly content with what-is as it is...and no longer are resisting or denying what-is (i.e. reality). Once attachment and fear are no more. Once there is no "me". However, I think that people can play with appreciation before awakening. But there will be more things that just can't be appreciated. And that is OK.

Could you talk more about what you mean by "in-joy-ment"? - 2018-01-04 07:34

In-joy-ment is the active finding of joy in what-is. I find that an easily accessible doorway to joy of the moment is the appreciation of what-is. Of course, in order to appreciate what-is, you have to have already allowed and accepted what-is.

As is often the case in nonduality and advaita, I noticed a certain dryness. Some people into nonduality seem to become aloof...disengaged. I have come to understand this is one of the traps of nondualism.

In a way, it is like someone who thinks non-attachment means avoiding all pleasure. They can not see that one can enjoy oneself and experience pleasure without becoming attached to it...needing it to continue or return. For example, to be non-attached does not mean that when hungry you just eat tasteless gruel. If good tasting food was available, why not eat good tasting food and enjoy the meal? The trick is not becoming attached to good tasting food...being unhappy when there is no good tasting food available. If you find yourself in a situation of being at a dinner party that is not serving anything you like...you don't make this a problem or suffer.

Likewise, some people think nonduality means being above it all and being unaffected by the world. This does involve allowing and accepting everything...or more precisely it is the non-resistance and non-denial of everything. However, just non-resisting and non-denying is only the beginning...like tolerance.

Tolerance is an allowing, but it comes from the viewpoint that my life is no better with whatever it is in my life. Some might even think that my life might actually be better without it in my life because then I would not have to tolerate it. Of course, this shows some struggle or effort is being made to tolerate something...and if it was truly allowed it would be effortless.

However, instead of tolerance...what if you truly accepted whatever it is in your life? Let us go even further still. What if you looked for and saw value in whatever it is? Instead of just allowing it and/or accepting it, now you embrace and value it. You see that your life is better for having whatever it is in your life. This is a whole new level really.

I had said that just non-resisting and non-denying is like tolerance because it is dry and cold. Tolerance is cold really, but embracing and valuing something is warm. Similarly, non-resisting and non-denying is dry...it overlooks the juice of life that is found when it is embraced and valued. Embracing and valuing what-is is appreciating what-is. It is a step up from non-resisting and non-denying what-is.

Now, when you are really embracing and valuing what-is...you will find joy. It just arises on its own. The kind of

joy that children feel when playing. Everything does not have to be pleasurable and going your way in order to find joy in it. If a boy is playing and imagines a princess has been kidnapped and now he must save the princess (like in the cartoons)...maybe he bumps into troubles and problems on the way...but he is enjoying it all. The game is not fun without some challenges.

So if you are driving to work one day and come across slow traffic...you could allow and accept the traffic. This would be tolerating it. Or you could embrace it and value it. Perhaps, due to the slower pace, you are able to enjoy the scenery. Perhaps, it gave you an opportunity for sadhana (spiritual practice)...for allowing, accepting, embracing, and valuing what is going on. Perhaps, it just gives you some time to think or be alone.

This is what I mean by in-joy-ment...the active looking for the joy in life through appreciation for what is happening. Sometimes, this means looking down instead of looking up (so to speak). What I mean is recognizing how far you have come instead of how far you need to go. This can be done in a variety of ways. Perhaps, while in slow traffic, you realize you just traveled 40 miles and a little over hundred years ago this might have been a two day trip. You can appreciate the car and much faster travel (relatively speaking). In this way, we cease taking things for granted. Or another way is to simply recognize it could have been worse. You are in slow traffic, but at least you are not stuck due to a flat tire or car accident. You can appreciate how good you have it...even if the traffic is slow. This is not trying to mentally bypass or dismiss the slow traffic, but putting it into perspective. The slow traffic is embraced.

I found delight in something Sadhguru Jaggi Vasudev said in a talk he gave in Minneapolis in 2016. What he said pointed at the very same in-joy-ment idea. He looked at the clock, joy beamed from his face, and he said, "it's 4 o'clock...and I am still alive. My family and love ones are still alive." He was finding joy in the fact that every one he cares about is still alive...with him. We often overlook such blessings.

In conclusion, I will define in-joy-ment as the active finding of joy through appreciation for what-is now and whatever is happening. Through in-joying oneself, the juice of life is not lost...things do not become dry...you remain engaged...embracing and valuing life. In-joy-ing it.

Isn't it just allowing the ebb and flow of life to happen? Thoughts, happiness, sadness, etc.? - 2018-01-07 07:30

Yes and no. I mean "yes" in that everything is allowed, accepted, and perhaps even appreciated. However, enlightenment or awakening is not just that. I mean "no" in that thought, by and large, ceases. I mean "no, in that sadness and most negative emotions may no longer arise. Suffering ceases.

Being "transcended" from the ebb and flow of life...and just being "awareness" of it...this is often spoken about and taught as awakening. But then I also hear it is allowing thoughts, feelings (often sadness or anxiety is mentioned), and everything else to arise and pass in awareness. This misses the fact that once the illusions of the mind are seen through and understanding has dawned, that the reactions and actions to life's happenings changes.

If you are in a car and hit a traffic jam, perhaps (due to your current understanding and being) you will react with thoughts of frustration or anger. Perhaps you start complaining or yelling at the other drivers (as if they could hear you). Now, you could claim that you are somehow above all of this...you have accepted and allowed it and are just aware of it as awareness. But this would be a bypass, because if the understanding that there is no "me" was fully realized...then a "me" would not be riled up...a "me" would not be inconvenienced.

Saying you have accepted and allowed what is and are just aware of it as a "[witness](#)" is a way to dismiss what is really going on. There is still ignorance and lack of understanding. The illusions of the mind are still believed.

Thought about the past, future, and pure imaginations are still rampant...and mostly believed. This is not awakening.

Awakening is not simply being a "witness" to the patterns of life, because this overlooks understanding. Awakening is a change in understanding. Basically, ignorance is dispelled with enlightenment. Just being a "witness" to thoughts, sadness, anxiety, guilt, etc. is not enough, because these continue due to ignorance.

Be careful now. I am not saying we are trying to get rid of thoughts, sadness, anxiety, guilt, etc. as a need to improve ourselves or seek a better "me".

I am not resisting or denying thoughts when they do arise (some thought is useful). But when you have no need to think about something, can you just sit without thinking? Also, do any of your thoughts cause you suffering?

I am not resisting or denying any negative emotion that may arise either, but it is fairly infrequent that a negative emotion arises and when it does I know that I need to embrace it, feel it, and look at it deeply to gain understanding about what is happening and why. I am curious about why it arises and in understanding it I find it ceases to arise. I am also curious about joy and bliss arising as well...and embrace it, feel it, and look at it deeply as well. It is a curiosity about whatever arises and why.

Letting what comes come, letting what goes go, and enjoying what is as long as it is...but how do you enjoy what is happening? With understanding. In just allowing the ebb and flow of life to happen and remain as a "witness"...this means you can be very unhappy and still claim to be awake because you allow your unhappiness and remain as the "witness" to your unhappiness. This is incorrect and a misunderstanding of what it is to be awake.

In the Four Noble Truths of Buddhism, it is said that life is dukkha. Dukkha could be translated as suffering, but also means discontent or dissatisfaction. We just are not satisfied or content in life. Another of the Four Noble Truths says that dukkha can cease. The cessation of dissatisfaction and discontent...the cessation of suffering. The Buddha said awakening brings the cessation of dukkha and I agree. It is the dispelling of ignorance and seeing through the illusions of the mind...it is the dawning of understanding...that brings the cessation of dukkha. Buddhism teaches the the way to end dukkha is the Noble Eight-fold Path...the first, most important, and root of all the others is right view. It all comes down to the right viewing of the world...that is right understanding.

So without understanding - which dispels suffering (by and large), how could one claim to be awakened or enlightened? Now, what causes part of the confusion is that allowing the ebb and flow of life is part of right view or right understanding. All things are temporary and change...and we have little to no control over when or how things change. Resisting and denying this causes suffering. But if you really accepted and allowed the ebb and flow of life, then why would you be sad if your favorite coffee cup was dropped and broke? That would be discontentment...suffering...don't you see? That is a denying and resistance to the temporary nature of the coffee cup and lack of control over when and how it would inevitably leave your life. So this sadness (if you are sad over the loss of your coffee cup), would be attachment and identification...which means you are still trapped in ignorance and the illusions of the mind. This would mean you are probably not awake or enlightened.

Realization, awakening, enlightenment, or whatever term you want to you use...it changes how you act/react in the world. The world is not seen the same way anymore (that is, it is understood differently). As such, thought may mostly cease...sadness may no longer arise...anxiety may be only a memory...etc. It is not simply allowing the ebb and flow of life to happen. Understanding must also dawn.

Do you condemn all negative emotions? - 2018-01-10 07:08

No, I do not condemn all or even any negative emotions. Negative emotions are part of the play of life and I do not condemn anything in it. To condemn something means there is a "me" that disapproves of something else. There is no "me"...only the Self, so to condemn anything is Self-condemnation...and why do that? Like a lot of car insurance, reality is no-fault. There is not anything to blame, find fault with, or condemn.

I have simply said we (as persons) act or react from our understanding and being. If we understood differently, we would react differently. Negative emotions (by and large) are based on ignorance and illusion, and with understanding you may find that some or all negative emotions no longer arise.

There is a process that happens (usually unconsciously/subconsciously) that results in reactions. Something happens. One or more of the senses perceive the happening. There is discernment and recognition of the happening. The happening then is self-referentialized to the body/mind/ego. Judgments are made...is it good for me or bad for me. Further thoughts and judgments are made based on the ideas, beliefs, and conditioning we hold...this is right or wrong (per societal rules, religious code, etc.). Then there are more reactions - more thoughts and emotions are created.

If some idea, belief, or conditioning results in a negative emotion when a situation arises...it is not the emotion that is the issue...it is the idea, belief, or conditioning. Conditioning is often not conscious (we don't choose to follow the conditioning...we react in accordance with conditioning). Ideas and beliefs can have a lot of unconscious or subconscious aspects as well. Basically, there is ignorance and illusions of the mind...and as long as they remain uninvestigated (not brought to the conscious mind)...they remain intact in and in effect. When wisdom and understanding dawns...ignorance is dispelled and illusions of the mind are seen through...then our actions and reacts change. Again, this happens because we act from our understanding and being.

Typically, no one harms themselves willingly (with full knowledge). The negative emotions are termed so because there is a subtle recognition that we are harming ourselves through them. However, full understanding has not been realized...which would result in different reactions. We are still reacting through uninvestigated (un-seen) ideas, beliefs, and conditioning.

Negative emotions are not a necessity or a requirement of life. At the same time, if they occur, they must be fully experienced...allowed...accepted...and let go. Denying, repressing, suppressing, or otherwise making an enemy of negative emotions is not the way.

Many people revel in their negative emotions. You could say some are addicted to negative emotions. Many people (perversely) feel good with negative emotions and it feels like a release. We just don't know how to deal with what-is any other way...again ignorance and illusion.

To repeat, I am not condemning negative emotions. That is a value judgment in which there is disapproval of negative emotions happening at all. I don't care if you get angry. If it makes you happy, so be it. If anger arises for myself...I don't disapprove of it and think this should not be. I allow and accept what-is as it is, but I am curious about how it arose. I look for its source and origination...to understand it.

Why do I do this, if I don't condemn the negative emotions? Simply because I understand that there are ideas, beliefs, and/or conditioning that is causing this reaction which is harmful...or at the very least not enjoyable. Not only for me, but for others as well. And so, I simply sit with the reaction (i.e. negative emotion in this case) and look at it deeply. Curious to see what the roots are...what ideas, beliefs, and conditioning are the cause.

When you look at something deeply, ignorance is dispelled and understanding dawns. With understanding (dispelled ignorance and seeing through illusions of the mind), our actions and reactions change. Love, Truth, Harmony, and Unity is the way...and when there is anything counter to this...be it thought, emotion, etc. - this just means there is something to look at and understand more deeply. Only in ignorance (knowing not what we do), do we go against or run counter to Love, Truth, Harmony, and Unity. It is also quite fascinating and entertaining to see ignorance, false beliefs, and conditioning fall away.

Zabina (2018-01-12 07:04:26)

Hi Eric. How do you best recommend to investigate those unconscious beliefs/ideas/conditionings and to let go of them without any resistance?

So far I feel I have seen and understood many of the mind's illusions. I have tried investigating the illusionary "I" only to find that it does not exist. My thoughts, feelings, fears and my desires belong to no-one meaning there isn't actually a person inside of me who own these fears and desires. At best there is a small disidentification with mind after investigation it more and more, however feelings of hurt and humiliation still arise whenever somebody say something about the illusionary I. I know there isn't actually somebody who feels hurt - the thoughts and feelings arise because of years long belief in this I. Sometimes the feelings and thoughts feels so overwhelming to the point where I "forget" there isn't an I who really is hurt by them. Could it be that there still some belief in this "I?" I don't know what to do to break this identification with the false I (funnily enough, the one who wants to break this identification is another thought too ha!), because I feel like I've done plenty of investigation and don't know how to take it further. Logically, there is an understanding that "I" only exist in thoughts/beliefs/stories and in emotions but these thoughts and emotions only arise because there's still a belief in this "I," isn't that so?

I hope my questions are not too confusing. I'm asking because I have a presentation to do in my university class in front of 50+ people very soon and I just feel completely terrorized. I know there isn't actually a person who these emotions belongs to, but the stories and fear have completely overtaking my body and unfortunately making these past couple of days very.. unenjoyable.

I would appricate some insight from you, thank you very much!

eputkonen (2018-01-12 12:22:29)

Hi Zabina,

"Could it be that there still some belief in this "I?" - of course, you are trying to dismiss your deeper belief that you are this "I" with more shallow mental ideas and concepts that you are not this "I". If you really realized you are not this "I"...what is there to fear? The thoughts and feelings do not arise because of years long belief in this "I"...but the continued belief in the "I".

Saying "my thoughts, feelings, fears and my desires belong to no-one" but they still arise is a sort of spiritual bypassing. It is a way to try to dismiss (separate yourself from...escape) the thoughts, feelings, fears, desires, etc. without actually looking at them and deeply understanding them.

"feelings of hurt and humiliation still arise whenever somebody say something about the illusionary I" - if there was a deep recognition/realization that the "I" is illusory, then feelings of hurt and humiliation would not arise. It may even seem humorous. Some fictitious character is trying to hurt or humiliate a fictitious character.

No, deep down...you identify with the body/mind/"I"...that is why you feel hurt or humiliated (it is an egoic reaction). What you really are can not be hurt or be diminished or lose anything. Feeling of lose (hurt, humiliation, etc.) is a sign of identification with it...an "I".

"I know there isn't actually a person who these emotions belongs to, but the stories and fear have completely overtaking my body and unfortunately making these past couple of days very.. unenjoyable."

That is trying to dismiss it. You don't know...you think you know and you would like to believe it, but you don't.

Delve into the stories and fear. Where does it really come from? What are the thoughts, concepts, beliefs, etc. that are the basis of the stories and fear? Are they true? Do you know the future? What is the worst that can happen...is it really that bad? What is the best that can happen? What happens if you are just 100% devoted to the experience of now? Just some questions to start the inquiry.

Inquire into the stories and fear. Look at the stories and fear deeply...understand them. Only in delving deep into it will understanding dawn. When ignorance is dispelled, you may not feel the same way anymore.

Zabina (2018-01-12 16:41:22)

Thank you for your response! I deeply appreciate the fact you took your time and gave me a thoughtful reply .

I've been thinking a lot about your response and try to connect it with where I am now and in many ways I can indeed agree with you especially this part: "of course, you are trying to dismiss your deeper belief that you are this "I" with more shallow mental ideas and concepts that you are not this "I"."

I do feel now that I'm kind of fooling myself into believing that I really got this (I'm not this I) but in a way this understanding only appears as another concept and does not actually resonate really with my being cause if it really did the hurt, humiliations, fears etc would simply not be the response to other people's opinions or whatever situation I may face.

When I read your comment, I can definitely tell that I need to humble myself some more and really look inward and just to see what I am all about and questioning the validity of my beliefs and stories haha.

It's nice to have someone giving me more clarity over my current state, so thank you once again!

eputkonen (2018-01-12 16:52:12)

Hi Zabina,

"this understanding only appears as another concept and does not actually resonate really with my being"

That is it...right there. It all comes down to what you really feel yourself to be.

About not repelling what is - how do you not push things away when you really want to push them away? - 2018-01-13 09:55

If you feel you are resisting or repelling what-is, repelling that feeling is not the answer. I would suggest delving into the "me" that really wants to push it away. There really is no end to the clinging and repelling of the "me" – as long as the "me" is believed. The "me" is partially sustained by this clinging (holding on) and repelling. It is the "me" that tries to hold on and tries to repel.

I have spoken about accepting the present moment as it is for as long as it is...neither clinging nor repelling what (by its very nature) changes. However, I do not suggest making "not repelling" into some kind of rule or ideal. "Not repelling" is not something done by the "me". So you are just creating more problems for yourself if you are trying to not repel. The "me" never stops repelling...repelling is seen as valuable for a "me".

If you feel you are resisting or repelling what-is, then inquire and delve into this "me" who really wants to push it away. Also, investigate and inquire if repelling or pushing away what-is has ever kept what-is from you. We repel

and push away because we think we can...but what-is is...regardless of clinging or repelling. We are fighting reality in trying to cling or repel. Reality always wins.

For example, if you have a headache. You can resist and try to repel the feeling of pain in your head. But don't you see that makes it feel inescapable and unbearable? It becomes a pain that you just can't get away from. It adds misery to the pain. Trying to push the headache away will not make the headache go away. It only creates suffering...mental anguish...when you find you can't get away from it. This is the futility of repelling or trying to push away what-is. It can't be done.

In investigating this you may come to deeply realize the truth of this and in so doing you may find you cease repelling what-is. Not because you think you should cease pushing things away, but simply because you see the futility of it and that you are unable to push it away. When you realize there is not a thing gained by repelling and instead you just add to your own suffering, you will see no point in causing misery for yourself by trying to repel what already is.

You may be trying to repel or push away what is about to happen or may happen at some future time. Investigate the truth and logic of this. Does anyone know the future? Of course not. But why do we imagine things and then try to repel them? This too is futile, because if there is something you can do in the present about it...then do it. If there is nothing you can do about it, then repelling and trying to push it away will not help. Do what you can...but accept what-is as it arises.

You also mentioned "want." Will wanting what-is to be other than it already is change anything? Whether you try to cling onto what is leaving or try to repel what is coming...will the change be halted? The "me" thinks it might and that is why a "me" tries...but upon investigation you will find it is a myth the "me" believes.

Again, if there is something you can do...then do it. If your cable bill is overdue and the cable will be disconnected at the end of the month, all the internal feelings of clinging onto your cable access will not help you. However, if you can scrape a few bucks together and pay your bill - then your cable will not go away (for a little while longer). However, if you have no money - then all the internal feelings of clinging onto your cable access will not stop the cable being disconnected. Clinging and repelling are the same...just different directions - in relation to a "me".

Which brings me back once again to this "me". What is this "me"? But what are you really? Without referring to past or future, what are you right now? Does 'what you are right now' want what-is (the now) to be other than what it is? Is there anything to try to cling onto or repel, if there is an allowing (non-resistance) and acceptance (non-denial) of what-is? The "me" does not want to allow and do not want to accept...that is why the "me" tries to cling onto or repel what-is, what-was, and what-might-be.

A word of caution, don't make allowing and accepting a rule or ideal. Again, allowing and accepting is not really something a "me" does. What is really going on is a ceasing of effort by the "me"...ceasing to resist and ceasing to deny what-is. Non-resistance and non-denial happens when the "me" ceases to do. Like silence...if you are clapping and talking, there is no silence. But if you cease clapping and talking, silence arises. You did not create silence...it just arises on its own when you cease doing. You do not create allowing and accepting...it happens when you cease resisting and denying.

Are actions based upon thoughts? - 2018-01-16 10:05

Thought is an addiction people have...and 90% of thought is not needed (for the average person). Now the mind/ego then thinks/feels...if I don't think, I won't do anything. But that is BS. Don't fall for the tricks of the mind. Right now many of your actions are not based upon thought at all. When you need to take a dump...you just go do it. You don't

think about it and how you can fit it into your day. You don't say, "at two o'clock, that is the appointed time for a dump."

Athletes will talk about being in the zone. This is a time when you are not thinking...you are just acting. Thought and the mind gets in the way for high performance in sports. I think most people have felt this while playing their favorite sports or activities. Say baseball...you swing and hit the ball perfectly and it goes right out of the park. Afterwards you might recall you were not thinking at all at the time. You were just acting. You might even wonder how it you did it so well without thinking.

I used to study the martial arts. A lot of time was spent in letting thought go, because it was when you are thinking that you will get hit more. You can't think about defending yourself and how you will strike back...you just have to do it. The less thought involved...the better. This involves trusting your understanding. You know what to do...you don't have to think about it.

You can plan your future...that does require thought...but it is like hiking in the woods - you only need to look into the distance every once in a while to make sure you are still on course and then you quickly return to looking at where you are to make sure you don't trip over something, bump into something, or fall into a pit. The focus is primarily on now...not on what is up ahead. If you are thinking and imagining too much, you may not see some vines and trip over them. We have all experienced bumping into someone on the street or in halls because we were not really looking where we were going (usually lost in thought).

Choice does not require extensive thought and internal deliberation. We think/deliberate when we don't know what to do. But when you know what to do, thought is not needed. You may not remember when you started driving a car, but you were thinking a lot more about driving at that time to do it well. My daughter started driving last year and it reminded me. She would focus on and think about how much to turn the wheel to make turns...how fast you should go...etc. Often, because she did not know, she would not turn the wheel fast enough or be moving too fast. I have been driving for years...I haven't thought about any of this...in years (until she started to drive). For me, I know what to do in order to drive...so thought is not needed for me to drive. Actually, I am safer when I don't think and just focus on the experience of driving and be aware of what is around me.

I hope some of these examples and pointers help. From my own experience, thought has pretty much stopped in the normal course of day to day life. Hours could pass without a thought. Even now...I am just typing and the words are coming out. I am not thinking about what I am going to write...I am just writing. In this way words and more-so actions just come from silence. Spontaneous action based on what is going on and my own understanding/being.

As a last example and pointer, let me say that a compassionate person acts compassionately because they are compassionate. Compassion is their being. Compassion comes from who they are. It is an effort to act uncompassionately because it goes against their being. Being and understanding is not really separate.

In acting compassionately, they are not thinking all the time how to be compassionate. They are not thinking about their actions and trying to determine if it was compassionate. These would be the thoughts of someone who does not really know/understand compassion and is not compassionate (in their being). So again, this involves trusting your understanding and allowing action to come from who you are. If you know what to do...you don't have to think about it.

So please don't think that if you are uncompassionate now (in understanding and being), that you are stuck always being uncompassionate. Understanding can change...which changes being. Ignorance may be dispelled. In the end, it all comes down to understanding. This understanding is not shallow mental understanding...like of concepts...I am speaking of something deeper. Understanding in the depths of being.

Russ (2018-01-18 13:24:53)

Yes very true however I do think about should I go take a dump now or later but when the impervious urge hits no more thinking time for action. Yes I have black belts in two different martial arts the problem before training is you must think to react but when you become no-mind no more thinking, like starlings thousands flying in synchronized formation without collision there is no thinking involved, they are flying responding to wind and other environmental conditions in perfect harmony and not making any conscious decisions. You must think ahead about the end of taking a dump what toilet paper do I want? Now that can be a pain full decision when I was a child in rural KY. we had a Sears and Roebuck catalog hanging in the outhouse not so good.

What uses do you think the ego has? - 2018-01-19 20:26

The ego doesn't really exist. The question could just as well be, "what uses do you think unicorns have?" The question presupposes that the ego (or unicorns) exist in the first place. However, the ego is just thought. It is the thought of a "me"...a doer, thinker, etc. I have seen through the "me" and when the mind is silent (i.e. no thought), there isn't even something you could call an ego present. The ego is a "me". There is no "me".

However, there is a recognition that when the name "Eric" is called near me...there is a very good chance someone is trying to get my attention. There is a recognition that "Eric" refers to this body/mind. Also, there is a recognition that conscious awareness is limited to the localized senses of this body. I am only aware of the computer screen in front of me...I am not aware of the computer, tablet, or phone screen you may be reading this on now.

I do not separate 'what there is conscious awareness of' and 'what there is no conscious awareness of'. I don't say what I am consciously aware of is in reference to a "me". I don't claim ownership of one and disavow the other. Just like if one finger is pricked, only that finger feels the pain and not the other fingers...this does not mean the fingers are of different bodies. Only if there is identification with conscious awareness (via the senses) or identification with only what is under voluntary control, then there is a concept of a "me" and an ego.

The concept of "me" is the same as ego, but it is a fiction of the mind. Recurring thought and memory create the illusion of a continuing "me".

Now, responding to a name could be considered egoic. In fact, I have said so in the past. There is a sense of "me" that knows it is being called. I have also said that the ego is not destroyed...but just seen through. In a sense, this is also true. To continue playing the game of life, there is limited control...mostly over this body...and limited awareness (to the senses of the body). A "me" is easy to infer. When I speak about in-joy-ment or appreciation, this could be considered in reference to a "me" or ego.

This does not change the fact that the ego is just a recurring thought. It does not make the ego something that exists in its own right. At times we might play with thoughts that are in reference to this body/mind. Such as with in-joy-ment and appreciation, because it brings about a deeper feeling of joy. It keeps a certain feeling of engagement. It makes the game more fun to play.

Ultimately, I think too much attention is given to "ego". Often people speak of the ego as if it is something separate or other than themselves. "Oh, that's my ego!" This is a fictitious splitting up and separation. People want to deal with, reform, or eliminate their egos. Of course, it is the ego that wants this. It is all self image and sense of "me". The ego is an illusion. It is just thought, concept, and belief.

There is a tendency to recognize the label assigned to this body/mind and respond to the name called. Is this

ego...sure, you could call it as such. It is not just habit, because you could change your name and you would respond to the new name. The habit would be to not respond to any other name, but we do. At the same time, it is also possible to have seen through the "me" and clearly see there is no ego...and then go to the gym and tell your gym partner, "I'm going to add 10 more pounds to the weight today."

It is a mystery for those who have not seen through the "me" how this all works out. To be in the world, but not of it...in a way. To play a part without identifying with or believing you are the part. Understanding that a part is a construction of the mind and there is only the whole show...nonduality...there is no other and no separation.

It is like being a great actor...there is a persona acquired by the body/mind, but you know that is not you. You act your part and do things in the play, but you don't take the identity (i.e. persona) seriously. You can respond to your name, you can appreciate and in-joy what is happening, you can do whatever you want (as it is improv and not scripted); but, you do not really identify with any of it. You know it is not "you". In fact, there is no "me" at all. No personal "me" in any way. You are the whole show, and yet still playing (i.e. consciously aware of) one specific character in the play.

Ultimately, the ego is an imagination. There is no other...no separation...and the ego needs others to exist. There has to be what is not "me" in order for "me" to exist. There has to be 'what is not ego' for ego to exist. As the ego does not really exist (it is just a thought)...it can't really do anything. We assign activities, happenings, doings, thoughts, etc. to the "ego" and others are not of the ego, but that division or separation is a fiction of the mind.

eputkonen (2018-01-20 10:33:10)

"What uses do you think the ego has?" is really a circular question in a way. For uses and utility are only in reference to a "me". The ego is the "me". So what is being asked is - what use to "me" do you think the "me" has?

Russell (2018-01-22 12:14:24)

The ego represents billions of years of evolution we only pass our gene pool if we are fierce and determined to secure our place in matters of food, sex, security and leadership. However we need a family to survive and this is the Yin and Yang of creative force of 10,000 things. The family demands that we balance our ego with compassion no more fundamental truth than that. Now we sit aside from the process knowing our impermanence and that all this is just dust in the wind we look deeper for our identity and if we look deeply enough we find it with compassion because all else is empty, void formless.

Where is the line between discernment and judgment? - 2018-01-22 08:54

First there is discernment and then comes judgment. If you hear a caw of a crow, you discern it is a caw. The discernment is such you automatically know it is not the meow of a cat, a bark of a dog, a crack of thunder in the sky, or any other sound. These are all different sounds and each can be discerned. Even if all these other sounds were present in that moment, there is the recognition of that is a caw...which is discerned from a meow, bark, or clap of thunder.

Judgment may then arise. Judgment is valuation. Perhaps you don't like crows, so when you hear a caw of a crow...you grimace in disgust. Perhaps you like crows, so when you hear a caw of a crow...you hear it and feel pleasure. Liking or not liking is judgement. Saying the sound of the caw or the crow itself is good or bad is a

judgment.

Most people judge butterflies and rainbows positively and so when a butterfly or rainbow appears we react with pleasure. You can see the joy on a child's face when there is a butterfly or rainbow. Many adults also still have the same reaction.

Crows, on the other hand, could bring different feelings and reactions based on a positive or negative judgment. If you were taught crows are dirty birds and scavengers, then you might not like crows. Perhaps your culture is superstitious and so crows might be considered an ill omen. Much of our judgment is a reaction based on earlier conditioning due to childhood upbringing and culture.

Some of our judgment comes from our own life experience. Perhaps you were harassed by dogs as a child and so you judge dogs to be a threat. So when you hear a dog bark, you discern the bark...then there is a judgment that it is bad and a potential threat. Anxiety and fear may arise, and then in constant self-commentation and judgment...we might judge ourselves because we fear...we might even judge the judging of our fear.

Judgment can sometimes become quite subtle, because so often the labels we use are charged with positive or negative connotation. So as soon as we choose the label for something, we often have already judged it as positive or negative.

Say we are talking about the day's weather. It is a cloudy day. Feel within yourself the reaction or feeling you get from each sentence:

-
- It is an mostly cloudy day.
-
- It is an overcast day.
-
- It is a gray day.
-
- It is a gloomy day.
-

In a way, you could say these are equivalent terms for the exact same kind of day. However, if you keep your sensitivity and pay attention to what you feel inside...your gut reaction perhaps...you will notice that the valuations may be different depending on the phrase used. Of course, the valuations for each phrase may differ from person to person as well.

Discernment is simply being aware of whatever it is. You see an apple...for example. So far, there has been no value judgments. Once the eyes have seen and the brain has discerned its shape and such...now thoughts come in about the value of it (judging). You might not like apples or you might like apples. There is a judgment. Let's say you like apples. Perhaps you notice some bruising or even a worm hole. More judgments arise...it is not fit to be eaten...I don't like this apple...etc.

Nothing is inherently good or bad. Nonduality means there is no separation...no otherness. If you see a magnet...you can discern there is a north pole and a south pole...but we don't have to judge the north pole to be better than the south pole. There is no north pole without a south pole. You cut off the south pole of a magnet and the magnet creates a new south pole. The poles imply each other and go together.

It is possible to discern, but not judge. You can discern or see a difference between one wave on the ocean and another wave on the ocean. However, you can also understand and realize that "wave" is a mental construct. A convention of speech and thought in order to talk about each wave. However, ocean is all there is (or perhaps more exactly...water is all there is). You can understand and realize the non-otherness and non-separation of the ocean waves while discerning differences between one wave and another.

Discernment and differentiation do not imply duality. All there ever has been or ever will be is nonduality. It is the mind that divides and separates. This serves us in our survival and functioning in the world. It makes it easy to speak about different elements and aspects of our world. However, it is possible to not be fooled by the mind, thought, or speech.

Is indifference the same as enlightenment? - 2018-01-25 08:07

Indifference and dispassion have been taught as a practice for enlightenment since ancient times. However, indifference itself is not the same as enlightenment. Teaching indifference and dispassion to achieve enlightenment probably came about because the enlightened are non-attached. The enlightened seemed indifferent or dispassionate (in comparison to other people) and so someone thought it would be a good idea to imitate this to get enlightenment. Kind of trying to get the tail to wag the dog.

Indifference, as defined by a couple dictionaries I looked in online, is the lack of interest or concern...or seeing things as not important. Let me start with the last - unimportance. There is nothing superior, nor inferior, nor the same. So how could there be something important and something unimportant? There is no such thing as importance or unimportance. There is nothing unimportant, nor important.

The lack of interest or concern is also misleading when it comes to enlightenment. If you see a child run into a street who did not see a car coming, an enlightened being may very well rescue the child. There is compassion...there is a caring for others. Love, truth, harmony, and unity is the way...so the enlightened tend to care about increasing the love, truth, harmony, and unity in the world. If there were absolutely no concern or interest, why rescue the child at all or be concerned about anyone or anything? This is a trap some fall into, but it is not the way. Enlightenment is not about a lack of concern or interest.

As I said earlier, the enlightened are non-attached. This may be misunderstood as a lack of concern or interest. For example, a friend or family member could die and an enlightened being might not cry. It may be deeply understood and accepted that death comes to us all. Everything changes. Everything is temporary. We often have little to no control over when and how things leave our lives. We may realize there is no point in resisting this temporal change. So there may be caring/love and appreciation of the person while they are alive, but his or her death might be immediately accepted (not resisted or denied in any way). If one does not cry when a friend or family member dies, some may interpret this as not caring, lack of concern, lack of interest, etc. in the person who died. This is not the case at all. He or she died, so there is no point in trying to hold on. Also, there is no need for things to continue in your life...so when things go you let them go. This could be misunderstood as indifference to the person. No one truly can understand the inner workings of another. They can only interpret what they see based upon their own understanding.

Another reason enlightened beings are mistakenly called indifference is because they no longer take the game of life so seriously. You might know some people who take the games they play very seriously. They must win...or they are not happy. However, there is another way to play games. That is to know it is just a game and the joy is in playing the game...not in winning the game. Likewise, it is the journey that brings joy...not the destination.

A profound understanding of this other way of playing the game of life would result in not being really upset or disgruntled when things do not go your way or you lose a round. You do what you can...and leave the rest to fate (so

to speak). We don't control how things turn out...so the enlightened are not attached to the fruits of action or the results of the game being played. The enlightened may be interested in a certain outcome and so will do what he or she can towards that outcome. But the outcome itself is left to God (so to speak). If it turns out that the outcome does not come to pass...so be it. This can be misunderstood as disinterest or lack of concern. However, if there truly was no interest or concern in any way, why act in such a way to get any outcome? This is a trap some fall into, but it is not the way. Enlightenment is not about a lack of concern or interest.

It could appear to some that the enlightened are indifferent, but I don't think indifference is quite the right word to use. There could be interest and concern, but the enlightened are simply not attached to it.

Do you find it difficult to stay present in the midst of challenging life circumstances? - 2018-01-28 09:29

Not really, because it is thought that makes a life circumstance difficult (i.e. challenging) or easy. When there is no thought (i.e. truly present), life circumstances are neither difficult nor easy...they are what they are.

Furthermore, what we call a "challenging life circumstance" is usually a life circumstance we are resisting and denying. For example, losing your job - the eighth most stressful life circumstance per the Holmes and Rahe scale.

In 2008, I was laid off because I was a recruiter. As the recession was deepening, fewer people were being hired and so companies were laying off their recruiters. I was one. Almost 2/3 of the recruiters I knew were also unemployed. I knew this recession would last more than a year, so I knew the odds were very small that I could get a job in my field any time soon. There was just too much competition for the one or two recruiting jobs available at an given time.

This would often be considered a challenging life circumstance. Many people would be filled with worry about the future. How am I going to pay the bills that keep arriving in the mail? When and how am I going to find work? The questions could be endless.

I had no questions. I was not worried. I had totally allowed and accepted the situation...and I was doing what I could in the present for a better future. I started a video production company. It was the recession, so not many were spending money on such things, but there was little competition as I was highly specialized. It never really made much money, but it was a part time project to pass the time and fill what would have been an inevitable hole in the employment history of my resume. I learned new skills, showed entrepreneurial spirit, and met lots of people.

In 2009, I had to foreclose on my condo...because unemployment payments were not enough to pay the mortgage and I had depleted all of my savings. I saw it coming and had accepted it, so I was not worried. When I could no longer keep the condo, I mailed the keys to the mortgage company and said it was theirs. I moved in with my fiancé. We married later in the year. Marriage is the seventh most stressful life circumstance per the Holmes and Rahe scale.

In 2010, the unemployment insurance payments ran out (no more extensions) and I was still looking for work in recruiting. I went to a professional association meeting for recruiters and I met someone who was looking to hire a recruiter for a contract. She liked my background especially, because she was working with social media and making videos for recruiting. She loved my video production background. She hired me a week later (after some interviews). The pay was low for my skills and it was a long commute, but it got me back into the profession. It is difficult to get jobs when you have not recently been in a similar job and almost two years had passed since being laid off. While there, I met someone who had a lead for another contract recruiter position (that paid much more)...just as my current contract was finishing. After that next contract, I got a full-time permanent position in recruiting that paid well and have been there since.

In the course of almost two years of unemployment, foreclosing on my condo, a relationship moving from girlfriend to fiancé to wife, depleting my savings, and unemployment insurance running out...I was never worried. I was not plagued by thoughts about the future. I just remained present...doing what I could and leaving the rest to God/fate (so to speak).

How can this be? Because a deeper realization and understanding was there. The reason anyone is not present is because they are lost in thought about the past, imaginations about the future, or pure imaginations. They mistakenly believe this is of help in some way. However, will worrying about the future change anything? Will thinking about past and future change anything? The only place of power and ability to change anything is in the present. You do what you can...now.

There is a saying among Tibetan Buddhists - if a problem can be solved there is no use worrying about it. If it can't be solved, worrying will do no good.

If a problem can be solved...you do what you can in the present and there is no use in worrying. If a problem can not be solved...why suffer with worry...just accept and allow what is for as long as it is...until circumstances change and something can be done.

In a way, it comes down to choosing to use two oars with lots of effort (and challenge) to row upstream or to use one oar to effortlessly steer the boat going downstream. Reality has a flow. Do you resist and deny the flow...and so feel it to be challenging? Or do you allow and accept it, decide to go with the flow, and thus gain the entire strength of the river to get to a place downstream...and find it not challenging at all.

In order to get a sense of the direction of the flow of reality, you have to be present. You can't think about it (pondering past or future), because then you are not aware of the moment to moment changes. Perhaps it is more akin to surfing, to ride that wave requires being with the wave from moment to moment...responding immediately to the change in the moment.

I understand the futility of thought in this situation. It is about feeling...not thinking. So regardless of the circumstance of life, I am 100% devoted to the experience of it...feeling it...moment to moment. Only occasionally glimpsing up (so to speak...to the future), to make sure I am on course towards the future I would like to see come. Then immediately back to the present. In being totally present (not thinking), no circumstance is difficult nor easy...it just is what it is; and I do what I can. Allowing and accepting everything along the way.

Karen (2018-01-28 12:26:34)

Thanks Eric for sharing this. Your guidance is helpful. Much love.

I feel inadequate when we compare myself to peers. What do you suggest? - 2018-01-31 08:18

You are comparing apples to oranges (using the old aphorism). No one and no thing is superior, nor inferior, nor equal. You are creating your own misery in comparing what really can not be compared and believing the comparison is valid.

It all comes down to understanding...or said another way - dispelling ignorance and the illusions of the mind. For

the time being, let's skip the most fundamental illusion...a "me" that is invested in self-image. For now, let us just playfully look at some of the other illusions of the mind and ignorance.



Take this shell I picked up off a beach in Florida, for example. It is gorgeous. It was the protection for a living organism once. Something used to live in it. Now, when it was occupied...do you think while it was hanging around others of its own kind...it might have said to itself, "I am too fat...compared to them over there. Yes...a bit too fat, but what is worse is that my markings are poorly spaced and don't line up." Of course not, because that is something we do to each other and ourselves. It is what humans do.

Each of us (as persons) are like pieces to a puzzle. As long as we don't recognize how we connect and impact others around us, there might be comparison. As long as we don't recognize that the puzzle would be incomplete without us, there might be comparison. As long as we don't recognize that no other can take our place (no other will fit), there might be comparison. How can one judge one puzzle piece superior or inferior or equal to another when each piece only fits in a specific spot? Only when you can look at how you impacted others' lives...and see that you are a vital piece to the puzzle...and without you the puzzle is incomplete...will you not compare yourself to other pieces (that would never fit in the same spot anyway).

The Christmas movie, "It's a Wonderful Life", points well at this idea. George Bailey thinks it would have been better if he was never born. His guardian angel, Clarence, then takes him to a parallel world (of sorts) where he does not exist. Much changed. As he was not there to save his kid brother from drowning as a child, his brother died that day. In his world, his brother was a war hero who saved hundreds...and as his brother wasn't there anymore...all the lives his brother had saved died in this other world. The movie, although some might call hokey or over-exaggerated, does point to the interconnected web of life that we are all a part.

If you did not exist, the world would not be the same. There are hundreds (or thousands) of people you have impacted and influenced over your life...much of it without your knowledge. Perhaps, you show some kindness...like bringing a homeless person a meal...and someone (you didn't even know was there) saw it happen. They might then feel inspired to help someone else. It continues in a chain reaction. Science experiments have shown that when others see someone else show compassion...they are much more likely to show compassion to others for a significant time after seeing the event. Just being seen influences and impacts those around you.

You have to delve into and investigate for yourself...only when you realize there is no one is superior, inferior, or equal will you stop comparing. Also, if you are watching for opportunities to improve another's life...or even day...or improve another's hour...and act when the opportunity arises - then you are always positively influencing those around you and the world in general. You may have thought it was small or unseen or insignificant or

whatever, but the effects ripple throughout your environment and world.

All this is about the role you play in the play of life. In the Divine play, there are no extras...every role is significant. Everyone is a star. The secret for every role is to make today a little better than yesterday...not just for yourself, but others as well. Now, who/what you are is not your role. The "me" is just a story...invested in self-image.

Delve into who/what you feel you are. Inquire...who am I...what am I right now? If there was a deep realization that there is no "me"...that "me" is only a thought...then what is there to compare? There is only the Self...and no other. This realization, of course, would end all feelings of inadequacy, inferiority, unworthiness, etc. However, if you still believe in the "me", you can still look at and investigate the thoughts, beliefs, and assumptions that create these feelings of inadequacy and I hope this post helps start that inquiry.

Rambling Russell (2018-02-01 11:39:24)

Yeah and when I feel inferior the oscillating feeling thing starts it's YIN YANG I try to balance by imagining I am superior and then I fail to confirm and fall back into inferiority, it never halts until I stand and realize it's all an illusion. You see as you yourself are if you make judgement on something or some one else you sell yourself short by judging your self.

2018 - 02

What is the point of attaining enlightenment? - 2018-02-03 07:00

This is a question only a "me" would ask..."what do I get out of it?" There really is no point, because enlightenment is seeing through the "me" that wants to find use or utility. That which might see a point is itself seen to be an illusion. Use and utility only matter to a "me". No "me"...no use or utility...no point.

Enlightenment is not something to be "sold" to someone...to say in some way that you should want or need enlightenment...convincing you in some way. I don't try to convince anyone to seek enlightenment. I am not trying to convert anyone. If you have no desire for enlightenment, that is perfectly OK. There is no reason for me to try to instill a desire in you by displaying various "carrots" and "sticks" in front of you.

What are the "carrots" and "sticks" but uses and utility for a "me"? A "me" that wants to avoid pain and suffering and wants more pleasure and joy in life. However, what you are doing in seeking to "attain enlightenment" for personal gain is to strengthen the feeling that you are this egoic "me". Thus building and strengthening the "me", but enlightenment is entirely seeing through the "me"...realizing there is no "me". So if enlightenment is what you want (realizing there is no "me")...how can this happen when you are building and strengthening the "me" by pursuing enlightenment for its personal gain...its benefit...its use and utility? This is one of the reasons why seeking enlightenment becomes an obstacle to awakening (i.e. enlightenment).

Let go of enlightenment. Let go of this future seeking. Let go of this discontent with the present. This is another way that seeking to "attain enlightenment" is an obstacle to awakening (i.e. enlightenment). You are focusing on some better future and so you are trying to escape the present moment. You might be unsatisfied with the moment. You might be unhappy with the now. This "it shouldn't be this way" or "it should be different" is a way for the "me" to sustain and strengthen itself. Sustained and strengthened through conflict with the here and now...by resisting and

denying the now. The more you struggle to awakening (get from now to something else)...the stronger the "me" who struggles becomes. Conflict and struggle is an egoic activity (i.e. the "me"). For what you really are, can not be in conflict or disharmony. There is no other - and an other is needed for conflict and disharmony.

Be still...relax...be silent...be present. Inquire..."who am I" and/or "what am I?" Be mindful and watch what is happening. When there is suffering or a problem, look deeply at it. Out of curiosity wonder "where did this come from...what is its source?" Follow it to its source and discover the tricks and illusions of the mind. Understanding in the present is all that is needed...dispelling ignorance and the illusions of the mind. Don't worry about enlightenment...it doesn't matter. If it happens...OK. If it doesn't happen...OK. There is nothing you can do about it. What can a "me" do to see through the "me"? Nothing directly...and certainly not by trying.

Cease strengthening and building the "me"...instead just look at it deeply. What is the root and source of the "me"? What is prior to the thought of "me"? As long as we are conscious, we are aware. Because of this, we have no choice but to be aware when we are conscious. Be aware of the "me" and continue to "look" at it. The longer "you look", the more that the "me" is understood. By just looking deeply, ignorance is dispelled and illusions of the mind are seen through.

What is the point of looking? Just to see...and understand what is happening.

Do the awakened care about others? - 2018-02-06 06:57

While the awakened have seen through the idea of others (as separate individuals), I will say there is a caring. It is a misunderstanding to think that the awakened don't recognize others at all. It is a misunderstanding to think that the awakened don't care about others.

Nonduality does not mean there is no recognition of differentiation. For example, how one wave on the ocean is different from another wave of the ocean. The key point is that the awakened realize there is only water and the waves are not separate entities (existing only as mental constructs). The awakened know it is a fiction of the mind created for the conventions of speech and thought...in order to compare and talk about it. The awakened can recognize "others", but they have seen through the illusion of separation (i.e. otherness).

Nonduality sometimes gets rather dry and mechanical...unfeeling. At times, nonduality-folks get disengaged...or rather separate, aloof, or above it all. This is a trap. The awakened can care about others, but really it is a caring about all. There is no way to escape or disengage...there is no other and no separation.

For example, yesterday when I went to the grocery store to grab some lunch at the deli counter...I encountered other shoppers. Upon seeing them, there was a feeling of caring about them. If someone suddenly tripped and fell, I would have helped them up. Why - because I care.

Feeling and thinking you don't care about yourself or don't care about others is one of the things that closes the heart. It kind of shuts yourself off...disengaged. This results in dryness...the juice of life is missing.

Feeling and thinking you only care about some people and not others is one of the ways the illusion of separation and illusory "me" continues. To care about some and not others is separation when no separation really exists. To care...in a nondual sense...is to care about every one and every thing, because there is no other. It is all Self caring for itself.

You can care about someone without the requirement that he or she continues to be in your life...or to reciprocate the feelings...etc. It is unconditional-caring. This is doing what you can for everyone...constantly looking for win-win

situations. To be in harmony with the flow of life and those around you...conflict is an early sign of disharmony and lack of caring for the other (or at least caring for yourself more than the other).

Please do not get some idea of you are constantly thinking about everyone on the planet or trying to care for everyone on the planet. It is more localized than that. It is more in terms of caring for those before you in the moment. If they are not before you right now, there isn't too much you can do for them right now. It is the moment to moment seeing a person and caring for him or her. Don't try to make it into some global or cosmic thing, which tends to be more mental than experiential/kinesthetic. I am also not talking about constant self-sacrifice...because this would not be caring about yourself. Balance is key.

For the awakened, caring for others does not result in suffering (through attachment, identification, etc.). For example, if someone you care about is having a personal tragedy in his or her life (so he or she is suffering)...this does not mean you feel bad for them. No need to create suffering for yourself, because another suffers. Please don't confuse caring with attachment or identification or projection. The awakened do not suffer. They have seen through those illusions and dispelled that ignorance.

This is a very simple thing I am talking about. As I said, I go to the grocery and see others and feel a caring for them. When they leave...I don't see them...I don't know them...and there is no thought about them. I would not say there is still a feeling of caring when they are absent. This caring I speak of is in the present moment...in the direct experience. Of course, if I think of someone...the feeling of caring for that person returns. But usually the mind is silent...so they have to be present in order to feel caring.

Let me end this blog post with sharing a post I made on Facebook earlier this week,

As of late, I have been practicing two things...appreciation and caring. Appreciation for whatever is experienced in the moment. Sunny day...warm house...etc. Caring for whomever I encounter in the moment. Fellow shoppers while I get lunch at the deli...fellow travelers on the highways...etc. I recommend practicing appreciation and caring, and you may find (like me) that it leads to more joy, kindness, and love in daily life.

Can you help me with my fear of failure? - 2018-02-09 06:58

I would recommend any or all of the following:

- 1.
2. remaining present.
- 3.
4. inquiry into this "me" that has fear and look for the source of the "me".
- 5.
6. inquiry into the fear and look for the source of the fear.

- 7.
8. surrendering to God, the Self, Reality, and/or destiny/fate.
- 9.

Fear of failure is a thought about the future. If you are simply 100% devoted to the moment, then there is no thought about past or future. In that total silence of mind, where is fear or future? You have to move your attention from the experience of now and into the mind to generate thoughts about the future and fear of failure.

If you are unable to be 100% devoted to the moment, then fully experience and embrace the fear that is felt now. If you don't feel fear now, you need not go further...but if you feel fear now, where do you feel it within the body? What are the sensations? Feel it deeply and totally. Also, be aware of the "me" that fears. You said "my fear", so you already identify with it. Be aware of that identification with the feeling. Feel the "me" associated with the fear of failure.

Then inquire. Primarily, I would recommend inquiry into the "me" that has fear and look for the source of the "me". Secondly, I would recommend inquiry into the fear and look for the source of the fear.

The key is to simply look...deeply (i.e. inquire). Not trying to get something out of the looking...like trying to get rid of the fear or change the reaction. Not trying to get away from fear...but going into it. Just sit with it...be with it...and look. In order to look deeply, it must be embraced. Sit with it...be with it...allowing and accepting it (or more accurately - not resisting and not denying it).

You must seek the source until it is found...then you might question the source of that source. In this way, you are bringing unconscious/subconscious conditioning into consciousness. It is like peeling an onion...layers upon layers...until you reach the center.

If it is fear and the source of fear that you are inquiring into, then it is less like an onion and more like a fruit of some kind with a pit. You will find the ultimate cause and then you continue to look at it and gain understanding in the looking. Questioning it...is it true? You may find that the ultimate reason why you fear something is totally unrealistic and doesn't make sense. See this clearly enough (i.e. ignorance about the fear is dispelled)...and understanding may dispel the cause and fear vanishes.

If it is the "me" and source of the "me" that you are inquiring into, then it is very much like an onion. An onion is not like a peach or cherry, there is no pit...no center within an onion. It is all skins. When you reach the center, you find nothing there. You may realize the "me" is just a thought...a story we tell ourselves. When you go to the source of the "I-thought", there is silence.

The last recommended option is surrender. Bhaktas or devotees worship God. Many of the best of them surrender themselves to God and the will of God. "Lord, I commit myself into thy hands." If you surrender to God and God's will...and *all is God's will*...what is there to be afraid of?

The same idea can be achieved by surrendering to fate/destiny. I think this is one redeeming quality of the common nonduality teaching that everything is predestined and scripted. There can be a surrendering to whatever happens, because it could not have been any different. There is no point in fearing the inevitable. It is a rather dry and mechanical way of looking at things, but there is no fear and no "me". It is like being the bell in a clock (as a person)...it will be struck when the hour comes...there is nothing you can do about it...so surrender to whatever is as it is in the moment.

This brings me to surrendering to reality or whatever is. This has elements of being present, but with doing what you can (in the moment) while surrendering to whatever is (in the moment). Surrendering to the realities of lack of

control, uncertainty, and unknowing...and understanding that you can only do what you can do (and it may or may not be enough, but you won't know until you do it and see the results). Don't fear or fight reality...surrender to reality. And so why fear failure? You do what you can - no more is possible. If failure is the result, you surrender to the reality of that failure in the moment. You don't worry about it before hand.

Lastly, you surrender to the Self. Nonduality is all there ever was and there is no other or separation. So you could also say you (as the Self) chose everything. In a way, you are surrendering and committing yourself into the hands of the Self (which is you). Whatever happens...the Self (you) chose it...and so there can be surrender there. And there is doing what you can and not fighting reality (the Self). Life is the Self playing...like children playing with dolls.

In this way, you can choose to work towards something and fail...and it is all OK. You chose to work at it (as the Self) and you chose to fail at it (as the Self)...as part of the play. The fun of the play was not in a successful outcome, but in playing the game (win or lose). If you play a game of checkers (or whatever), do you fear losing the game? If you do, you are taking the game too seriously. It is just a game. The fun is in playing the game.

And if we don't lose sometimes, we lose interest in the game. Think about a game that you have mastered and never lose...do you still keep playing? Or do you prefer to play other games that are more of a challenge...a game in which you are more likely to lose? If the game was too easy, it would not be fun. Failure is OK and part of the experience of playing a fun game.

I will end with recommending that you may want to read "[Do Enlightened people make mistakes? Do they feel regret for the mistakes?](#)" Ultimately, there is no such thing as a mistake...and therefore no such thing as failure.

Russell Ray (2018-02-09 11:54:14)
Wow!

eputkonen (2018-02-10 09:02:48)
Buddha said something like - do not expect to be happy and you do not fear grief. Likewise, it could be said - do not expect to succeed and you do not fear failure.

How does one stop desiring? - 2018-02-12 06:53

Why desire to stop desiring? It is not that you have to stop desiring entirely, but that you do not to take those desires so seriously (i.e. attachment to the desires). Attachment to desires cause suffering...it is not desire itself that causes suffering. It is a craving and that you just are not happy until you get what you desire.

It is like when you are playing a game - say Monopoly. When you are playing Monopoly very seriously and feel you must win...you put yourself through all sorts of suffering when things do not go your way. Someone beats you to the last property you need and then refuses to sell regardless of how much is offered. This may cause you to feel frustrated, mad, or otherwise unhappy with the game or player. As it is not going your way, you may cease enjoying to play the game...if you are taking the game too seriously.

However, you can play with the desire/intention to win...but at the same time not really care if you lose either. You are just playing for the fun of it. You are playing sincerely...but not seriously. You intend and desire to win (playing sincerely), but if it is not going your way...you can still enjoy the game. You don't have to win (not overly serious about the game). The fun is in playing the game...a challenging game in which you may lose.

Suffering is the key. Does it cause suffering? If it does cause suffering, you look at it and investigate - what is the source of this? Through understanding you may realize what you are doing to yourself. You may cease doing it to yourself. For suffering is something we do to ourselves...unwittingly. We usually don't create unpleasantness for ourselves on purpose.

As you might know, I work as a corporate recruiter for a company. I have been working as a recruiter for over 15 years and desired to become a Recruiting Manager. I thought it would be fun to manage a small team of recruiters and determine how recruiting would be conducted (as a process/practice) at a company. This desire arose and I started working towards it.

I have never been a Recruiting Manager and unfortunately many companies only want to hire people into jobs when they have already done them before. So it was not easy. I applied to many Recruiting Manager jobs and interviewed for a few of them. I even tried to get promoted in the company I work for but they too only hire Recruiting Managers who have managed teams of recruiters already. After two years of trying to get into the role and improving my skills (as I was able), I still was unable to be hired into a Recruiting Manager role or be promoted.

Although the desire was there and I did what I could to get what was desired (sincere effort), I was not attached to the goal/desire. So after two years, I was not suffering because of it...I was not unhappy or discontent. I am still just as content in my current role.

Now due to timing, my desires have changed. I plan on moving to the Tampa, Florida area...not this summer, but the following summer (2019). With only about a year and a half left before moving, it would not be worth leaving my current role (which I work from home). Instead, I plan on keeping my current role and moving to Florida and work from my new home there.

Perhaps some time after I move to Florida, I might get a chance to become a Recruiting Manager...but now is not the time. "To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven" (Ecclesiastes 3:1). If I was attached...and therefore demanding in getting my desire, I would not be able to wait. If I was attached to the desire, I would not really be happy as long as I was not a Recruiting Manager. Instead, I am perfectly happy and content not working as a Recruiting Manager.

This is the difference between sincerity and seriousness. Instead of working for something (which is too serious), how about playing with/for something? I was playing at trying to get hired or promoted as a Recruiting Manager. Like many games, we don't always win or the game lasts longer than we thought. I paused or perhaps ended my play...time will tell if I play at attempting it again.

The difference between sincerity and seriousness is really the same difference between play and work. Work is something we do that is not fun, but needed to make money and earn a living. Contrarily, we dream of taking vacations and playing. Work is done for a purpose, goal, etc., but play is simply done for the fun of it. All of life can be play.

When you are commuting to work in the morning, this is a chore that causes people a lot of aggravation and suffering. Instead, you could be playing at commuting to work. The commute could be a time to play. Navigating various turns and exit lanes. Keeping the ride smooth. It could be play...if looking from the right point of view.

Desire is not a problem. The issue is do you see a problem if you don't get what you desire? Can you desire something and sincerely make efforts to achieve it, but not become attached to it so it becomes serious or work? Can you desire without suffering...unhappiness...discontent?

Ruben James (2018-02-13 12:34:53)

I desire that I had quite desiring sooner, I desire not to desire, it is impossible to live with out desire the Dalai Lama says be smart about your desires, channel to the least suffering.

eputkonen (2018-02-13 14:11:39)

To desire to not desire OR desire to quit desiring soon is excessive...a pointless desire that only causes frustration, which is suffering. Let go of desire...as much as able.

How has appreciation worked with negative events? Like appreciating grief or pain? - 2018-02-15 06:54

No event is positive or negative...good or bad. It is only in thought that what-is is deemed positive or negative in relation to a "me". It is ignorance and the illusions of the mind really...that create good or bad...fortunate or unfortunate...etc. In Zen, it might be phrased as - vast emptiness...nothing holy...or unholy.

Suffering...as in grief...is not something that has arisen for me in many years. Pain is something that occurs from time to time. I had what the doctor thought was gout. I could not walk very well for nearly a week; and I had a limp for a month. It started out with extreme pain for about a week, but the pain decreased daily over the next month. I appreciate that, even at its worst, I could still walk and had the use of my legs...not to mention I was alive. Life wasn't just about the pain...I had many experiences that were enjoyable (even with pain) and appreciated them. The pain was but one small aspect of everything that was going on.

Obviously not everything is peaches in life, so the trick (at first) is to look for what you can appreciate (don't try to force yourself or make some absolute rule about it). Even in pain, your family and friends are alive...no one that you care about died today. You have a full stomach and a roof over your head - probably, if you have a computer or phone to read this. You have to recognize that there are people in the world that would love to be in your situation...even with the pain.

If someone dies and you experience grief, there is always the opportunity to appreciate that only one person has left your life (it could have been a group in a car crash)...or you could appreciate that the person died without pain (if that is the case)...or death ended their pain (if the person was in pain). It depends upon the individual situation, but if you quit looking at what you don't have and instead look at what you do have and appreciate that...it changes things.

We have conditioned our brains/minds (and been conditioned) to usually go negative...to see things as problems or as lack or as not good enough. So it may take a bit of practice to find how - whatever it is - it is not that bad...and can be appreciated. With practice, it becomes easier to appreciate and care for more things...more often.

Perhaps it is easy to appreciate sunny days, but then you find you can appreciate thunderstorms for the lightning displays. Perhaps, you find you can appreciate snow storms because of the beauty of the fresh, pure white on everything. In time, you may find a way to appreciate rainy days...perhaps because of the freshness it brings and the renewing of the green vegetation. You may even come to appreciate the cloudy days too. Eventually, you may find...no matter what kind of day it is...you can appreciate it.

If you find you just can't find anything to appreciate, then this is an opportunity to look at thoughts, concepts, and

beliefs that you are holding. Something within you is resisting and/or denying what-is. There is something within you that is limiting your view to only a negative outlook.

Someone might ask, "are we not still in ignorance and illusion in assigning good valuations and appreciating?" As I said, pain might be appreciated because it is proof you are alive...you are not dead yet. Even what most people would call "bad" or "negative" might still be appreciated for what it is. Granted, this is not something that is easy or most can allow right away. You need to practice appreciation and play with it for a while.

Appreciation might even start out as assigning "good" valuations to things and events (and so playing with illusions of the mind), but what you are doing is destroying the meaning of labels and valuations of good and bad. If every kind of day...sunny, cloudy, rainy, storming, snowing, etc...is appreciated, then was is a bad day? Without "bad", "good" ceases to hold meaning. The duality ceases. You could say - all is good - but such phrases hold little meaning because something has to be "not good" for "good" to have meaning.

In the end, the values and labels are dropped...and what-is is appreciated for simply being what it is. Appreciation is a feeling...not a thought. In the silence of mind (when there is no thought, labels, valuations, etc.), there can be the feeling of appreciation for what is as it is for as long as it is. It is only the tendencies of the mind, the illusions of the mind, and ignorance that won't allow appreciation to arise.

russell (2018-02-15 15:30:47)

Nice, Thank You,

BlogBook v1.0,
L^AT_EX 2_ε & GNU/Linux.
<https://www.blogbooker.com>

Edited: February 16, 2018