

## Cultivating a new perspective

I woke with a start into the question, "What kind of 'awareness' leads to a new perspective?"

My thoughts went quickly to commonly held views that physical pain and negative emotions can lead to a new perspective with surrender and acceptance. Maybe so, but I wonder if we can't utilize the observing mind to bring consciousness to our experience in a new way.

As a human being we have the capacity to be aware. For the most part, we use our senses to navigate through life without conscious thought or reflection. We are aware, but there is no compelling reason to re-consider the assumptions and conclusions that are being informed by your senses. Things go better or worse within a relatively narrow range of experience and we respond accordingly. Life moves along in a certain predictable way and we come to accept this as the way things are, the way life is.

If there is no pressure to reevaluate how we relate to people, places and things in daily life, we repeat the same behaviors over and over as if they are hardwired. It is natural to repeat behaviors that have worked before, even when those behaviors no longer serve our needs, much less the needs of humanity.

To oversimplify a bit, life appears to be a repeating process in which we observe the world around us and take action to maintain a certain, if unconscious, relationship to the whole. We take in information through our senses, evaluate what is happening, discover what is to be done and take action - or not. An opportunity to put the observing mind to work lies in the "or not". The opportunity for growth lies in paying attention to what happens at those times.

All is well, and then something happens and we lose focus on the present situation. We withdraw, "go into our head", get distracted, or leave the conversation. Typically the body shuts down, breathing constricts, muscles contract, and nervous energy flows into a memory, a thought or feeling from your past.

You may recognize yourself in some or all of the following examples of where unconscious experiences from the past have been activated:

- \* You withdraw abruptly and experience a loss of voice or energy.
- \* You elicit a very different response from someone than what you intended or desired.
- \* You experience a sudden negative emotion that appears to be related to the immediate interaction or place, but is exaggerated and out-of-place.
- \* Out of the blue, you recognize your blindness to another person's need or concern, or experience not being able to hear expressions of support and contribution.
- \* You get upset over unspoken expectations about a situation, for yourself or another.

Cultivating, or inviting new awareness often provides insight and depth to these situations; it can also lead to a new perspective and the possibility of change. Gentle,

intentional touch can bring us back to the body and re-engage the senses while validating our inner experience. When we engage the observing mind to be aware of the thoughts and feelings that surface from our unconscious, we can discover the truth of our experience. The opportunity for change lies in bringing awareness to the hidden beliefs that impact our relationships, choices, assumptions and expectations.

I have discovered that the kind of awareness that brings me face-to-face with my unconscious thoughts, feelings and beliefs while I remain in the present moment, is liberating and energizing. I believe it is this kind of awareness that both leads to a new perspective and results in conscious choice, and change.

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