

Thriving on What Is

It is so easy to look around at life and assume that life needs fixing to make it right. We don't have to go much farther than the evening news to notice what's wrong with the world: the violence, hunger, corruption, environmental issues and so on. We want to do something to be a part of the solution, rather than a part of the problem, whether it is through outer social action, through financial support good organizations or through working on ourselves. We notice so little change from our actions and wonder what else can be done. We pray, we meditate, we wonder...

The orientation of seeing a world that needs fixing to be the "right" world can actually be deconstructed if we are willing to explore that. The beginning point is in the realization that we are thinking that we know what a "right" world would look like. We think that rape and murder and awful things like that can obviously be known to be "wrong" and a "right" world would not contain things like that. But look again at the way that we know this... what is it based on? Do we really have the big picture, or are we making judgments about right and wrong based on our own personal tendency to want to avoid pain and move towards pleasure? Of course we want to avoid pain and wishing that others avoid pain too is just an extension of our own preferences to include the world. In a way, if my neighbor is hurting, I am hurting with him or her. We are all in this together.

But if we look at our own lives with honesty and open-mindedness, is it clear that avoidance of pain is the "right" thing for us personally? Have pain and suffering played a role in our lives that in hindsight we respect? Most often the answer is yes. If we look deeply into the painful points in our history, these are the growing points, the places where new energy and new life has had an opportunity to enter our lives because the old patterns have been destroyed or disrupted by some loss, accident, crime or sickness. These things make us move on, even if it is through touching into the depths of despair.

Meanwhile life just is what it is. Without our having decided that it is supposed to look a certain way, or end up a certain way, it just is what it is. Not only that but also, it just ends up the way it ends up. Far from being the invitation to idleness that this may initially seem (but really is not at all) the above are just plain statements of what is so, at least before our judging/thinking minds get started.

When I look into this it seems clear that we really don't know what should or shouldn't be happening in ourselves or in the world. Just because we may feel a dark emotion and start behaving badly towards our loved ones, do we know that this is "wrong"? Do we actually know that we are a bad person because this has occurred? Could the experience instead be looked at as developmentally necessary, helpful and illuminating? Could this alternate perspective actually be a way out of the endless repetition of our patterns?

Do we know for sure that the car accident or the crime in today's news should not have happened? The latest war casualties? Although mind will claim to be sure that these things are wrong, are we certain that they really are? Are we certain that something critical won't be changed by this "bad" happening that will make all the difference in

some significant "good" happening later that we care even more about? Do we know for sure that the critical world situation (being a threat to our survival as a species) is not exactly the circumstance that will motivate a positive response that otherwise would not have been dreamed of?

Accepting our own not-knowing gives us entry into a new relationship with the world and with our own selves. If we don't spend all of our energies resisting what is, we can open up a deeper relationship to it. Our own dark feelings become pointers into whatever in us is still needing to be awakened. The negative situations in the world become as important a part of things as the positives, maybe more, as we accept them as having a part to play. Without resisting what is, we are able to connect more fully with ourselves and our world, and through this deeper contact we are nourished. While mind was busy resisting the "wrongness" in ourselves and our world, our heart connection was jammed-up with judgment. Through acceptance of what is, we can begin to feel more deeply and be nourished not only by the positive happenings in ourselves and in life, but also by the negatives. They are also being welcomed in our open-heartedness, and through this welcoming we are able to thrive in the world as it is, rather than starve in a mentally constructed world of lack and disconnection.



What could be a more perfect example of thriving on what is, than the summer flowers. What better example of us each doing our own part and tending to our own blossoming without judgment about whether it is "right" or "wrong" or if its going to end well or not.

The flowers all just end up on the compost heap and back into the soil!

Sure, ok, they don't have these minds to contend with, it's true, so maybe its totally easy for them. But they show up in our gardens and homes as an example of the extraordinary yet fleeting beauty that we experience in this thing called life, and how little we need to refer to our ideas about right and wrong or good or bad to come to blossom in a totally unique, natural and easeful way. We draw nourishment from the ground of all that has come and gone before us into our own expression of who we are, and then let that go back again to the ground. Just the way it is.

1040 words

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