

Going Naked Without Belief

Written by Nirmala
Friday, 02 July 2010 14:46

A friend has shared how he is struggling to know what to believe and even if anything has any meaning at all. Here is how I responded:

Everything you have written is true....because you wrote it! That is the strange thing about this life, everything means what we decide it means. You have heard the phrase, "Make Believe". Well this whole life is make believe. We make up our beliefs and then believe them. We make it all up as we go, and each moment we are also free to make up a new story. We are free to decide what this means and what that means and also free to then "change our mind" and decide the opposite is true.

So when you think enlightenment is important, then it is important. When you think enlightenment is meaningless, then it is meaningless. When you think what you do is useless, then it is useless. When you think you must go through an ego death, then it will seem like you have to go through an ego death.

I am not saying that you decide what happens. I am saying you decide what it means when anything happens. Meaning is like a work of art that we paint with our thoughts, and that we are constantly retouching and recreating. This does not mean that things have no meaning (unless you decide they have no meaning)....it just means that the meaning they have is something we create.

Given the fluid, ever-changing nature of thought and therefore of meaning, the best approach is to believe whatever you believe, but to hold it very lightly. You need a certain structure of belief to function and orient in the world. But you do not need to come up with a final belief or formula for how anything works or what anything means. You can play with beliefs and meanings and see what effect they have. If they are working great. If they are not working, great, because then you can change what you believe.

And in the midst of all of this play at believing, it is also fine to take a break and just not believe. I am not suggesting you decide that things have no meaning. I am suggesting you take a break from knowing what things mean, if they have a meaning or not, and even if there is such a thing as meaning or not. Not knowing is only a problem if you think it matters what you think. If you have a sense of how it is all make believe, then it is OK to go naked for a while with no belief. Then if you want to believe something for a change, put on some belief clothing again.

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It can take a while to get used to this naked possibility of a deep not knowing. It is not better to not know (unless you think it is), it is just different. And at the deepest level of not knowing, it is profoundly different. It is at this deepest level of not knowing, that there is the possibility of seeing things as they really are. And yet even then, it is fine to instead make up a story and make believe it is true, and therefore see and know "reality" that way. The ultimate is not a complete and permanent cessation of knowing, it is a complete flexibility to know or not know from moment to moment. This includes the flexibility to experience the depths of pure Being without the filter of knowing, and it also includes every knowing or belief or meaning you have ever experienced. This flexibility of knowing is not a prescription or something you achieve. It is a description of your consciousness as it is now and as it has always been.

Everything you have ever experienced has been an expression of this capacity you have to make believe. There is no right thing to experience and there is no wrong thing to experience (again unless you decide there is a right and wrong.) Life itself is showing you the full range of your consciousness, from tight constricted, narrow belief to the boundless dimensions of reality unfiltered by meaning or belief. It is the dance between these two--reality and belief-- that makes up your experience in every moment. You might as well enjoy the show!