

Missing Out

Written by Nirmala
Monday, 03 August 2009 15:00

Here is another guest post by my wife, Gina Lake. You can read much more of her writings on her own blog/website at www.radicalhappiness.com:



The reason we find thoughts so compelling, besides the fact that we are programmed to pay attention to them, is that we believe we need them to function-and we enjoy thinking. We do need some thoughts to function, but most of our thoughts come from the egoic mind, and we don't need those. We think we're going to miss out on something if we don't pay attention to these thoughts-this voice in our head-but what we miss out on is real life, the life beyond the mental world created by the ego. The ego doesn't have a very high opinion of real life, and either do we when we are identified with it. Life without thoughts seems boring, uninteresting. But that's really only because we don't stay long enough in real life to really experience what it has to offer. We are often one foot in and one foot out of it-one foot in the mind and one foot in what's real: present moment experience.

We believe that thinking supplies everything we need-wisdom, insight, information, guidance, and perfect planning-and it's fun. What more could you ask for? If the mind could really provide all of this, then it would be indispensable and a true friend. However, it fails miserably at all of these; even the fun often comes at quite an expense. It pretends to be able to provide these things, and we are programmed to believe it can, but the truth is that it doesn't deliver what it promises.

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Even when we see this, we may still give the egoic mind our attention just in case it comes up with something good-maybe the next thought is the one that will change everything! All of the things we really want to know-what will happen, why things have happened, and what to do next-the mind just doesn't know. Let this sink in a moment, because we are deeply conditioned to believe that it has these answers. What if you really knew that your mind doesn't have any of the answers you're looking for? It, in fact, is what raises these questions and wants so badly to know the answers, but it doesn't have them.

If you take a look, you discover that most of your thoughts are trying to figure out what is going to happen, what to do in the future, and how to deal with the past, either by trying to understand it (translation: tell a story about it) or change it (which is impossible). All of these thoughts are fruitless: You can't know the future, you can't figure out what to do in this unknown future, and you can't deal with the past except through thought because it no longer exists. Just stop a moment again, please, and really take this in. These thoughts waste your time and energy and they take you out of real life, and when you really see this, you can begin to be done with them, but there is one more thing you need to do.

Once you've seen how pointless your thoughts about the past and future are, you need to fall in love with the present, or you will just go back to your thoughts about the past and future because that's what you're used to, and there's some enjoyment in them. Before you can really leave these thoughts behind and no longer involve yourself with them, you have to have a very good reason to do something else. The egoic mind won't give you a reason to pay attention to the present because the ego (the mind-created self) disappears when you do that, and it doesn't want to disappear. You (the real you, the you that is awakening) has to find a reason to pay attention to the present.

The reason to pay attention to the present is that it is the only thing that is Real here. The past and future are just thoughts, and thoughts about them are just more thoughts. The past and future are not real because they don't actually exist when your mind is still and you are just present to what is arising now, in this moment. When you do that, you discover how pleasurable it is to be present, but it can take a lot of practice to stay present long enough to experience the pleasure of being present. Is this pleasure worth giving up your thoughts about the past and present, your worries and fears, your plans and your fantasies?

When you really see the truth about your thoughts and the truth about being present, the choice is clear. But it can take a while before you are convinced that thoughts are not what they seem to be, and the present is not the boring experience your mind assumes it is. This is essentially the process of awakening: It is waking up out of the imaginary world created by your

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thoughts and living in the here and now free of these thoughts. What an amazing transformation of consciousness this is, and what a blessing it is that you are in this lifetime to experience this.