

Our Inner Compass Is Always Working

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Thursday, 05 August 2010 14:46

Q: I've been reading lately about how certain childhood experiences result in "addiction to unhappiness," that is, the inner compass of what feels right is off. So self-sabotage and veering toward situations that don't serve occur. If this is true, the Heart is off, and you're at sea without a compass.

A: I don't agree that the Heart can be wounded in a way that causes the inner compass to be off. Even when there is an unconscious addiction to unhappiness, the Heart still shows you how true your addictions or compulsions are. Your inner compass still works even if you aren't following it but, instead, following a false compass, such as your fears or desires.

Of course, we are often rewarded for our addictive behavior with a pleasurable or comforting sensation or emotion, a false sense of superiority, or protection against our own self judgment, but that isn't actually an expanded and easeful experience. I often say the truth feels like when you have a roommate and he or she goes away for a month—you can just relax and be yourself. Our addictive and distorted defense mechanisms never result in that sense of just being able to be yourself. They are more like your roommate coming back and bringing his or her parents for a month-long visit: You can't just relax and be. When we are involved in our defense mechanisms, we can never relax and just be; we always have to keep up our defenses.

Because consciousness has no preferences, it allows you to move into any experience, including contracted, confused defenses against the residue of childhood wounding. Consciousness is also always willing to see the truth of that wounding and thereby start to heal it in a way that actually does allow an expansion and realization of our truer nature.