

The Radio of the Mind

Written by Nirmala
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Q: What if thoughts don't come from us but to us, the brain being like an advanced radio, tuning in to a field of potential thought? What if thoughts are reading us as much as we are reading them? What if thoughts are aware? Would knowing this change our thinking and our attitude toward thoughts? Would it change our thoughts' attitude toward us?

A: My sense is that thoughts and also intuitions and insights come from many different sources, and the mind is like a radio that picks them all up. Many of the thoughts our mind picks up are simply triggered from our memory, and so often they are of limited helpfulness in understanding this new moment. Some people are very sensitive and their "radio" even picks up other people's thoughts, which may or may not be relevant to their experience. And then there are thoughts, or insights, that come to us from deeper dimensions of our being. These can sometimes be profoundly helpful and liberating in the moment that they appear.

So how do we tune the "radio" of our mind to a useful and liberating station? It seems the mind just picks up all of the stations and plays every thought that arises. So perhaps the best we can do is to clearly discriminate between conditioned thoughts that come to us from memory and the deeper knowings that also appear in our awareness. By sorting out whether a particular thought or insight is very true or not, the various bits and pieces of information and intuition that appear in our minds are put into perspective. The important thing is to recognize how true our experiences are, including our thoughts and intuitions.

As for thoughts themselves being aware, I would say that everything is alive and aware and affected by everything else. However, just as some things are more true than others, some forms of life have more awareness. Obviously a human has more awareness than a bug, and the bug has more awareness than an amoeba. My sense is that thoughts are like incredibly small bugs with a very short life span. They hatch, mate, and die in a flash. See if you can find the thought you were just having, or do you need to think a new thought? So even if a thought has awareness, it doesn't exist long enough as a separate form to evolve or be affected by much.

I hold all ideas lightly, and yet the biggest truth is that there is just one awareness here. All of the forms and identities that appear, from thoughts to bugs to human beings to galaxies, are temporary expressions of this one awareness that is dreaming (thinking?) them all into existence. What a beautiful dream it is!