

AWAKENING NEWSLETTER # 30

I THINK, THEREFORE I'M DANGEROUS

A recurring question in my life has to do with why humans are the only creatures who seem to be in conflict with what is. We seem to repeatedly position ourselves in opposition to each other and to existence itself. It is as if we believe, through maintaining an attitude of defiance, we can sufficiently manipulate reality to become how we want it to be. The answer, I believe, lies in the examination of thought itself.

Quantum Physicist David Bohm says,

The general tacit assumption in thought is that it's just telling you the way things are and that it's not doing anything - that 'you' are inside there, deciding what to do with the info. But you don't decide what to do with the info. Thought runs you. Thought, however, gives false info that you are running it, that you are the one who controls thought. Whereas actually thought is the one which controls each one of us. Thought is creating divisions out of itself and then saying that they are there naturally.

Are you aware that there is a voice inside you constantly commenting, judging, structuring Reality in a particular way? Do you automatically believe it to be the voice of reason and rationality, the voice of YOU? Isn't it interesting that one of the universal symptoms of mental illness is hearing voices inside your head telling you what to do? Hello?

Now, thinking is a wonderful ability to have. Without it, it is unlikely humans would have survived. It is extremely useful when you are developing a business plan, trading the stock market, or organizing a vacation. It is, however, important to recognize that while we are in the grip of egoic, self centered consciousness, the mind is conditioned to select those bits of information that are consistent with what it has already decided is real and ignore contrary evidence. The mind sees

what it believes, and then believes what it sees.

David continues,

You may say "I see a problem here, so I will bring my thoughts to bear on this problem". But "my" thought is part of the system. It has the same fault as the fault I'm trying to look at.

What to do? In my experience, attempts to “kill” the mind or stop thought are fruitless. But what can be found is the ability to disengage from thinking when it is not useful. We can find a relationship with the thinking mind that leaves us less susceptible to being tyrannized by it. We can cultivate the capacity to not automatically believe the story that the mind continually tells us – we can see thoughts as coming unbidden from the collective energy field, and not claim them as “my” thoughts or believe that just because we are experiencing them, they must be true. We can recognize that it is not “impure thoughts” that are the problem, but our belief (another thought!) that they signify anything about us that is harmful. Any thought can exist in us, and we can find the place inside where we can choose what thoughts to accept and which to ignore.

Let me be clear that I am not talking about “positive thinking”. Positive thinking is better than negative thinking in that it produces a more desirable and resourceful frame of reference – believing you can empowers you more to effective action than believing you can’t. However, it is the action, and not the thought, that is important. Rather than cultivating the capacity to think “good thoughts”, cultivate instead the ability to have choice about what thoughts are useful to entertain, and which are harmful. And eventually, begin to live life without attachment to any thoughts, or stories, that the mind presents. Holding beliefs as hypotheses, tentative assumptions that can always be shifted with new evidence, leaves us in an optimal position to continually let existence teach us anew.

Living life intentionally is keeping your focus on the target, and taking actions that lead in that direction, while reducing actions that lead away. It’s that simple. If you want to become a lawyer, it might be

helpful – although not necessary - to have the positive beliefs that you are up to the work it requires, smart enough, etc. But what is even more helpful – and is necessary - is to keep doing the tasks that are required – classes, reading, practicing, even when you don't feel like it, even when “negative” thoughts may enter. If you want to lose weight, you take steps every day in that direction, when tempted to overeat or skip exercise you refocus on what you want, and direct your energy in a useful way. This is intention, which exists independently of positive or negative thoughts.

The end point of this game, which some call Enlightenment, is not retiring to some tranquil place where only “positive” thoughts exist, but to develop the capability to remain focused on who you are despite the presence of adverse circumstance or unpleasant thought or feelings. Any kind of thought or feeling can arise in you, and you continue to know who you are.