

12 July 2010 Dharma Talk Light

The more present you are, the better you feel. So conversely if you don't feel good that means you're spending too much of your attention on your thoughts and on the emotional reactions you're having to your thoughts and not enough attention on being here now, in the present.

I had a realization the other day as to just how simple, although not necessarily easy, but just how simple enlightenment is. Some of you are aware that I've spent many years working with EEG biofeedback, EEG neurotherapy. Also those of you who have seen the video that I recently put together on "A Taste of Enlightenment" are aware that I feel that attention, how you pay attention and what you pay attention to is really the key to either remaining in a confused and darkened state that most of us run around in, or walk around, or sit around in, or being in a state of enlightenment.

What I realized is that enlightenment is, literally, letting in the light, and I mean the light that is around you, and all the energy, not just the light energy – but all the energy – the sounds, the pressures on your skin, the chemical sensations of aroma, and gustation taste,... And that the only reason we are not in an enlightened state all the time is that we have these gating mechanisms, physiologically and mentally, with which we shut out 90% or more of the stimulation that is coming into us from our environment. And that by doing this – when we pay so much attention to our thoughts, and to our emotional reactions, and to the workings of the sympathetic nervous system of fight or flight response -- it actually shuts us off from receiving the totality of all the energy that is bombarding, that is showering us in every moment. That's the only thing that keeps us from in every moment drinking in, literally, all of that energy and realizing that we are that conscious loving energy that is the source of all sentient beings and all that is.

It is literally that simple. All we have to do is to drop those attentional, physiological gating mechanisms that we ourselves have constructed from infancy onward because of the feelings of separation that we went through when we were infants. If we could just drop those and just become totally permeable to all the energy that is showering upon us right now – then we would realize that we are the Buddhas and the Christs that we truly are. Everything would become clear – everything. That's the message. That's how simple it is. But then the trick becomes that it's not easy. How do we do that? That's why I'm here – to show you the tools that you need to use if you can't just let them go.

You know I spent most of my professional career trying to find what I conceptualized as the off switch for all of the psychological and physiological mechanisms that we carry with us that we constructed and that we carry with that keep us from realizing who and what we truly are. And there is no one off switch and that's why I advocate the Integrated Transformational Pathway: techniques that work on the body, on the mind, on the emotions – the emotional baggage that we continue to carry with us the karma and also on our spiritual connection. Because for most of us we can't find, we have difficulty finding that switch.

People like Eckhart Toler didn't have to find it. It found him. For whatever reason. I said this many times before he's one of the lucky ones, but even he, I don't think, understands why it happened to him, and how it happened to him. That is, to have this enlightenment experience, and for it to stay. His experience did not fade and he can live his life on a moment to moment basis, with all those gating mechanisms dropped away so that he's always receiving 100% of the conscious loving energy that is showering upon him and all of us in every moment.

It has been said, you all heard about the idea that we only use 10% of our brains. Well I think this is the reason why: it's because we only allow 10% or less of all the wonderful energy that we are swimming in at every moment into our conscious awareness. And we do it by our own choice. We do it every time we choose to pay more attention, to give more credence to our thoughts than to what's happening right here right now -- fully opening up to the miracle that is in front of us in every moment. That's my editorial comment for today.

C: Your presentation does make it seem easy.

OK. The point is that it's not easy but it is simple. There's a difference between simplicity and ease. Simple means easily understood easy means easily accomplished. That's what... in Shakespeare's play.. Hamlet: "Aye, there's the rub," comes in. The rub is that it is very simple to understand conceptually, but yes... where is that switch? That switch is available to us in every moment. The switch is choosing whether we're going to be present and open up; or whether we're going to continue to shut ourselves off by paying attention to our thoughts instead of what's happening around us... our thoughts about the past and future and going into our habitual, separate, the behavior patterns and the emotional reactive patterns that we have that are based in the idea and the belief in separation. We need to become aware of what we are doing in each moment, how we are reacting. Are we in tune? Are we out of tune? Are we in tune? Are we out of tune? To be aware enough to be able to say, "Hey, I'm not in tune." I'm thinking about this problem that I have with whoever – my boss, or my brother, or my parents, Or, I'm having some kind of emotional reaction like worry, stress, fear. And then choosing, and choosing deliberately and consciously to move back. Many times it is difficult to choose to move back.. if the reactions you are having are so powerful

C: Thoughts are powerful

They only have the power that you give them. Thoughts are tools. They are good servants but bad masters. Those of you who saw my video might remember that phrase: "Thoughts are good servants, but bad masters." We are the creators of our thoughts, but we then give our thoughts power over us to destroy our peace of mind.

C: Do you ignore, repress thoughts?

No, because doing that is fighting fire with fire. What you do is exactly what we did at the beginning of this talk, that exercise I call the ABC of Mindfulness. You allow the thoughts to be there.. you don't fight them and you don't jump into them, and mull over them, and obsess about them. You simply shift your attention to what is happening right here, right now in the present moment. And then if you have difficulty doing that you use a releasing technique, such as Emotional Freedom Technique, or EFT, which is my releasing technique of choice.

C: EFT?

Yes, EFT. In my experience it is the most powerful releasing tool that we have, so far, that can be self-administered.

So we set up a practice, because most of us are not as lucky as Eckhart Tolle, to have a voice visit them in the middle of the night, in the middle of their nightmare of discontent, and just say, "Resist nothing!" and then just whoosh! and there we go down the tunnel and we open up into the world of enlightenment.

Well, it would be nice. And the fact is, that's how simple it is. But all of us came into this incarnation with an agenda, with issues that we decided to work out. And so for some of us who don't have a lot of issues, it can be that simple. But for the rest of us, we've got to do some work. And by work I mean not toiling or effort in the sense of trying to build something, but just doing the work of being aware and being vigilant.. to know when we are paying too much attention to the baggage, to the karma, and to make the conscious choice to stop listening to that voice in our heads.

So to answer that question a little more completely, "Do you ignore, repress thoughts?" No, what you do is when you realize that your are having thoughts that are separating you from your sense of who and what you truly are, and you're having emotional reactions, you consciously deliberately shift your attention. My way is not the only way, but for me, and for a lot of people, this is the best and simplest way. It's just shift your focus to your breathing, shift your focus to your heart, and breathe in and out through your heart. And keep your focus there. And if the thoughts keep trying to pull you in, just keep shifting your attention back to the heart. And if they keep pulling you in, and it's difficult for you to resist, that's when you use a releasing technique like EFT. And you literally tap that resistance, or you tap that attachment that this thought has to you, or you have to it. You know attachments are a two-way street. But you tap it away. Because it's just an energy blockage. Because it's one of the gating mechanisms that you created, that keep you from opening up to and absorbing and flowing with, all of the energy that you are surrounded with and that infuses you at every moment.

The only part of you that is disconnected, or not fully connected with the miraculous conscious loving energy that is who you are and is surrounding you at all times.. is your ego. That's the only part. And the body, or at least the way the body functions is an extension of that ego. So to the extent that your ego experiences that sense of separation, and is constantly in a state of stress, and anxiety, and worry, and depression

the more that sense of separation will take its toll on your body. Your body will start breaking down, getting ill. Because it's not getting the full amount of energy that it needs to remain healthy. Does that answer the question?

C: Biology of perception

Yes, that's another way of describing it. For everybody, if you want to see my take on meditation I prefer, go to my website <http://brightpathway.com>, and there are instructions for that ABC of Mindfulness exercise we did at the beginning of the Dharma talk. And if you're interested in EFT, on my website also is a tutorial that you can download that gives you a brief explanation. It's a vast subject and you really would do well to get the entire manual. But if you just want a brief introduction just to be able to get to know what it is like, and to try it for yourselves go to my website and download the EFT tutorial.

OK. I'd like to go on. I said earlier that I would talk a little about peaceful conflict resolution and the reason why I came up with this was because on Facebook, one of the communities I belong to is the community of other practitioners of the style of aikido that I practice and teach, Nihon Goshin Aikido. One of the black belts in the association posted a remark and was asking for peoples' responses. I'm going to read you a little bit from what was posted there, and then give you my take on it.

So Alexis, the black belt says, "Our style of aikido has many different strikes from kicking to chopping to punching, but yet there are those who wish that we use less strikes, and add more aikido (meaning harmonizing or blending with the attack,) in our line of defense. If attacked by a much larger person, what will you choose? Striking or aikido? One should never correct the defense of others when it clearly shows what really works. Striking works for me, how about you?"

Now I have to say that this particular black belt, who is a very good friend and colleague of mine, is what you could call a bruiser. He's a real tough, tough as nails, no nonsense martial artist. And when he throws you, he throws you hard. And people love it, they love the way he teaches. And they love the way most of the black belts in our association teach. He's more on the hard side.

So that was his question, and he got a lot of answers from a number of the other black belts I'm going to read a few of them.

My response was as follows: "One must fit the response to the circumstances and one's level of skill. one's response to the circumstances and one's level of skill. I'm sure that people with the experience of Sensei X and Sensei Y (two black belts who wrote responses to the post) will use blending much more often and effectively than a blue or green or purple belt. Our job is to use the least amount of force possible, but still get the job done. So if we have a big guy who's not giving us a lot of energy, then you darn well better strike and strike at a vulnerable area or you're going to get hit. But if someone is giving us the energy and we see it coming and are able to harmonize and

redirect it, isn't it easier and doesn't feel better just to throw the guy and watch that puzzled look on his stupid face that says, "How the hell did I get here?"

So then a number of other people wrote in with their opinions, and basically they were all saying the same thing. That you have to fit the defense to the circumstances of the attack, and the circumstances of the attacker. And finally I wrote it with this:

"Most of us understand that the highest level of Aiki," (Aiki is the guiding principle of aikido, which means harmonizing with the energy of the attacker, not opposing it, not resisting the attack) is practiced in the mind, not on the street. That means we face our inner fears and conquer them. Not by force, but by understanding or harmonizing with them, and by reassuring and befriending them. So that they don't have to be afraid anymore. When we do this, then we are able to harmonize through life in a way that does not attract outer conflict, that we would then have to address using physical means. So, as an example, if there is a mugger on First Avenue waiting in the shadows for a victim, and you're walking by, if you have victim mentality you're going to get mugged and hurt. If you have striking mentality, hitting mentality, then you counter-attack and beat the crap out of him. If you have low level Aiki mentality, then you blend and take a strike or two and take him out. If you have high level Aiki mentality, then you blend effortlessly and redirect using all of his energy and send him flying. But if you have the highest Aiki mentality, you're walking down Second Avenue.

So that's my take on nonviolent conflict resolution.

C: "We have met the enemy and they is us."

Yes, the famous old Pogo quote, for those of you remember that famous comic strip Pogo by Walt Kelly, "We have met the enemy and they is us."

So, remember Gandhi's famous phrase: "Be the peace that you want to see in the world." If you look into yourself and you find those areas -- that baggage that you still carry with you, those areas of conflict, those areas of anger, those areas of resentment and you haven't addressed them.. well, you're going to attract those various scenarios into your life. Because those are energetic vibrations and we know that the universe is made of energy, and that which seems to be outside is going to reflect back to us an identical pattern of what we're experiencing on the inside.

And this goes back to the idea of shadow work again and again and again. That we need to look at -- if we see something in our lives that is causing us distress or is making us angry, making us upset, or making us sad.. then we need to understand that that is simply a reflection and a projection of something that we are carrying within us. Because if we weren't carrying it within us, we would never see it -- we'd be walking down Second Avenue while the mugger is waiting for someone on First Avenue. And that's the only way we're going to have world peace is each individual clearing conflict out of his own psyche. We each individually make a commitment to resolve the conflicts that we still hold in our hearts and minds.

One of the other things that I said in this thread of comments about Aiki was I told the story of Abraham Lincoln. Because one of the one of the black belts in his comments said:

“You want to respond in a way that doesn't hurt the attacker – that is the highest ideal of aikido. You want to respond in that way – but sometimes there are some enemies that you need to destroy”

So I responded to his comment with a quote that I remembered from Abraham Lincoln, the US president during the American Civil War. And the anecdote goes: Lincoln was at some social function one day, he was meeting and speaking with a group of people, and there was a woman among them and she came up to him and started a conversation. She said, “Mr. Lincoln, for the most part I admire you, but there's one policy that you have that I disagree with, and that is that you continually make friends of your enemies, when you should be destroying them.” And Lincoln smiled at her and looked at her very kindly in the eye and said, “Madam, when I make them my friends, do I not destroy them?”

So we're not going to make any friends by fighting, by resisting, by counterattacking, and that goes especially for the issues, the baggage that we are carrying within us that is creating external conflict in our lives. We don't want to resist it, we don't want to fight it because that is simply indulging it.

C: Kindness seems to have the opposite effect. Please explain. No good deed goes unpunished.

Okay. The commenter makes the point that sometimes when you're kind to bad people, you wind up getting bitten in the ass anyway. And that's true. But once again the most important thing that you can do, and the most helpful thing you can do is to look at what you are holding on to inside that is creating that situation. What belief? What emotional reaction? What behavior pattern are you still holding on to, where you are still buying into the idea that no good deed goes unpunished, and that kindness gets repaid with malice instead of more kindness? Because if you're attracting those kinds of situations into your reality, or projecting them, rather, then you are the one who's creating them. That's your belief system at work. So you need to take responsibility for that. Because once you take responsibility, you can change it. Change your inner beliefs and then you don't create those situations. You start walking down Second Avenue, while the mugger is walking down First.

C: I call them scripts

Yes. Scripts, or behavior patterns, tapes – call them whatever you want. Karma..

C: Hide, be a coward.

No, not at all. Because it's really the person who fights who's the coward. Because the person who fights is blaming the other person for the conflict that he's holding within himself.

Now if we're talking about a real physical confrontation here, I'm not saying that you don't defend yourself, or that you allow somebody to harm you. It means you don't harbor anger and resentment toward the person. That you get out of that situation with the least amount of harm to yourself that you can, and then use that situation as a key and a clue to ask yourself what you're holding on to that created that, so you can get rid of it. Because I'll bet you all the money in China, and they have a lot of it, that if you don't confront that issue in yourself, you are going to run into it again and again and again and again until you do. The problem is that most of us, most people in this world, never get to that point where they take responsibility, and they go to their graves always blaming the other person.

C: What about emotional confrontation?

In an emotional confrontation you become a good aikidoka. Aikidoka means somebody who practices aikido. You deflect the energy of the attack. You don't absorb it. So if somebody's angry at you and is yelling at you, you don't have to get defensive, although it's tough sometimes not to, but that's where that point of choice is, that's where that switch is in this particular situation. You allow that person to expend the energy and then you blend with that person, you harmonize. What is it that I see? I can see that you are angry, I can see that you are upset. What is it you are angry about? What is bothering you? It's a technique that all good psychotherapists use.

When you're not in the middle of a confrontation, review that confrontation in your mind. See what the dynamics are. See what the themes are. What emotion is present? How are the emotions being expressed? What is the scenario or the theme of it? Is it resentment because somebody is doing something that you don't like? Or is it anger? Or is it sadness? Or is it betrayal? Or whatever it is.

C: Sadness

Okay sadness. Then you would ask yourself when reviewing the situation what is the theme here? What am I sad about? And see if you can identify the root issue. And even if you can't, that's where the emotional releasing techniques come in. Like using EFT and releasing the binds that are holding that energy in place, so that the conceptual framework of that issue come out and ultimately you can deal with it.

C: Expectations are death by a thousand cuts.

Yes, especially when you have expectations of other people. To make you happy. Remember that nobody can make you happy and you can't make anybody happy.

Each of us is responsible to ourselves for either holding the gates in place that keep us in a state of unhappiness, or opening the gates and allowing ourselves to be happy.

Q: Try to make them smile?

What's more important than trying to make them smile is for you to be happy, for you to be the happiness that you want them to experience. And then being there for them, being willing to listen. And to offer calming and comforting advice.

C: And sometimes imagine what others are going through, sympathy even when being attacked.

C: Being attacked and reviled.

Yes, to understand that nobody would be attacking you unless they felt the same way inside. And so instead of being threatened by what they are feeling...

C: Compassionate

Yes. To feel compassion.. to feel compassion for them. And compassion, I just thought this one up the other day.. Compassion is not feeling sorry for people, it's not feeling their pain, it's not feeling pity for them. It's feeling love. Compassion is feeling love when another person is suffering. It's not feeling bad. Sympathy is feeling bad with another person, feeling the same feeling that they're feeling.

Compassion is feeling love for them. Because how can you possibly help someone else who's in pain, if you put yourself in pain? That's like saying how can you possibly help somebody who's impoverished by being poor yourself?

C: Everyone drowning together.

That's exactly correct. Our job, those of us who are conscious enough to realize it, our job is to maintain our consistent contact with our presence. So that we can be the light that other people want to feel in themselves.

C: One needs to be strong to help others.

It's not a matter of strength, it's a matter of consciousness, it's a matter of awareness. We need to be aware, we need to be attentive, we need to be present to help others. And sometimes, yes, that can feel like needing to be strong but actually becoming present frees all the energy that you've been using to block out the truth – all the energy of who you really are, and all the energy that you're surrounded with. So feeling bad about somebody else's misfortune does nothing to help them, absolutely nothing. It actually contributes to the collective misery of the entire world.



Our job is to be as present as we can as often as we can, until we are present in every moment – moment to moment to moment to moment. And that is enlightenment. That is realizing our Buddha nature. That is being our Christ consciousness. And then we are the Christ, we are the Buddha that is available to all those we come in contact with who need our help, who need our advice, who need our support, who need our guidance.

Does that make sense? Some people say yes. One person says it doesn't help.

C: Simple, but not easy.

Yes, but you know even that is a thought. If you keep thinking that it won't be easy, then it won't be easy. But if you think that it's neither easy nor difficult, it just is, then it is what it is. It's just a matter of being present and choosing presence over disconnection and separation. Moment to moment.