

## Notes

- Finding Interconnection from the pain of contraction
  - intro
    - The first noble truth of the buddha is not only acknowledgment of conflict and struggle in our life, but an invitation to address them. the b is saying in effect that the rd to liberation lies through understanding how and why we suffer. 'i teach only suffering and its ending'
    - []The information we need is always present within our mind. generally we refuse to listen, not from obstinacy, but because our conditioning is to move away from rather than toward the unpleasant.
    - [BIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIG]our resistance to reality, not reality itself, creates suffering.
    - [][]when reality is formed through our personal view, we attempt to think our way out of pain, which simultaneously maintains our story and perpetuates the pain...through a specific problem may be partially resolved through our triedandtrue methods of the past, conditioned responses will never end suffering! problems end when we perceive the story and the storyteller as false assumptions.
    - [][]problems end when we have removed the support systems on which the story is built. in spiritual work, we do not try to take everything off the rug, we pull the rug out from everything on top of it.
    - Disturbance is not caused by outside sounds buy by internal reactions to perceived annoyances.
    - []Suffering is the desire for more choices than reality offers, but reality is without options.
    - when the moment becomes adversarial, we become self-invested and determined to do something about it. this creates the sense of someone being on one side and reality being on the other, as if life was happening to us.
  - []Symptom and disease
    - notice as we go through this inquiry that what is bein asked for is only our presence adn our honest observation and ccourage
    - judgment/inadequacy
      - 1 as an example, i find myself judgingin, and ihave learned as a meditator to be aware of judging. i see how continuous my judgments are, and i feel, as the 3rd zen patriarch says, the burdensome act of judging. at this level , awarness does not stop judging but just observes the action and its effects. wise view oreients us toward connecting with the pain rather than acting it out. interested in where this will lead, i become motivated toward deeper inquiry, and in relaxes attention i now see the judgemtns is being fed by a painful state of mind, a feeling of inadequacy simultaneously occurring with the judgment.
      - 2 to remain with the act of judging without looking at the contracte dpain that is driving it is likse arresting your

attention on coughing during an episode of pneumonia. the judgment is a symptom of a deeper level of disturbance. there is a choice as to whether to stay with the symptom or understand its cause, but since i have lived much of my life painfully acting out the judgment, i realize that the cure is with the pain that drives it, and i seek the more connected solution

- 3 judgment is oftent an attempt to cover over inadequacy a rooted belief most of us assume to be true it is important to note that judgment and the feeling of inadequacy are simultaneous experiences, and judgment is a reaction to the sense of being insufficient. like a teeter-ototter, if i can lower your image through my judgment, i can raise and enhance my own. the judgment gives me a brief respite from the pain of my belief, but over time the teeter-totter will continue to swing toward the weighted conditioning of my assumed inadequacy if left unobserved.
- 4 i begin to understand that awareness of judgment alone is not enough; judgment is a reaction to a compelling belief that needs my attention. i am now willing to enter the emotion of inadequacy and the self-assumptions that feed that perceived truth. 'i' do not want to go here. i think these assumptions hold the real truth of who i am, and i have spent my entire life trying to avoid this truth. most assumed truths about ourselves create overcompensating actions that try to dispel the truth by engaging in an alternative belief. the truth of my inadequacy has made me dependent on others for my sense of well-being, and i have become a workaholic and an overachiever to compensate for this inner pain. i have an unlted need for approval and acceptance that is never satisfied no matter how much praise i achieve, because i simply do not believe the praise, i believe the inadequacy. in fact, much of my bvr throughout my life has been an attempt to counter my low self-esteem.
- 5 this observation is the salvation. i can no longer pretend that the pain is being caused by anyone or anything other than me. there are now 2 directions i can take this inquiry: either i can analyze my history for the roots of my conditioning and use that analysis to self-improve, or i can question the truth of the assumptions that hold the emotion in place. questioning in the truth of our assumed reality is more difficult than analyzing our history, because analysis is only an attempt to ameliorate the effects of the pain by showing it had outside causes, and questioning the assumptions uproots the beliefs that hold the pain in place
- 6 the self remains in control as it self-improves, and this subtly reinforces the base assumption of me. as long as a me remains in place, it will suffer within its definitions

- here and only here will the story end. my story can be modified from the h'l dim, but not invalidated. to nullify the story we must see the fabrication of the storyteller
- we add content to awareness through our desire to remain embodied as a self, but when the content of life is empty, there is stillness
  - for one who clings, motion exists;
  - but for one who clings not, there is no motion.
  - where no motion is, there is stillness.
  - where stillness is, there is no craving.
  - where no craving is,
  - there is neither coming nor going.
  - where neither coming nor going is,
  - there is neither arising nor passing away.
  - where neither arising nor passing away is,
  - there is neither this world, nor a world beyond,
  - nor a state between.
  - this is the end of suffering
- radical accountability
  - Emotions cue us toward that investigation. thought is often a reaction to an emotion and is an attempt to justify the experience of an emotion. as thoughts attempt to explain why we are feeling what we are feeling, they further seed the emotion by tagging the emotion to someone or something responsible for giving it to us. the emotion then feeds off the explanation, which drives more emotion and eventually more thinking. these explanations and accompanying emotions compound themselves into a new tale about what we must do to get out of the emotion. these separate emotional incidents usually feed upon, and further feed, a general overall attitude contained within the story of our life. this attitude forms into a perceptual orientation to life and reinforces a conditioned way of perceiving others and ourselves
  - [emotions]an emotion is not caused by an external event; the mind assigns an emotion to an external event. The confusion is resolved when we focus on the emotion and let it be what it is, while at the same time releasing the need to think our way out of the emotion.
  - [emotions]when we believe, you make me angry (or make me anything else' the world is severed in two.
  - [emotions]everyone knows the power of projection when we are afraid. fear is being afraid of what might happen, not of what is happening. emotions have their own logic, distant from the truth of the moment. the here and now does not argue with emotional rationale; it quiets the emotions by taking away the story line that is essential for emotional escalation.
  - in avoidance we are attempting to speed time up and get over the problem, and when we indulge we are trying to slow time down and wallow a little longer. either way we are not allowing the moment to move as it naturally does, and that is the definition of suffering.
  - [emotion]In radical accountability we say, ' i pain myself, i frustrate myself, and i deress myself'

- [emotion]with radical accountability all emotions are observed as experiences only, pointing nowhere, implicating no one, and signifying nothing. though it is no one's fault that we have an emotion, it is still essential to hold the emotion fully within awareness without wavering.
- reverse cues
  - [emotion] awareness knows the difference between the experience and the mind's overlay of opinions and ideas about the experience...as directed by wise view, the basic orientation is toward experience, opening and connecting with, rather than escaping from, whatever arises
  - presence becomes an acquired taste. it feels joyful to be awake, and the mind slowly learns to trust its own quietude and persistently moves into difficult emotional experiences with ease.
  - [emotion] a reverse cue is using an experience, usually an emotion, which normally induces us to separate from a situation, to turn toward it instead. an example would be anger. anger can only be maintained from unwise view; if anger remains unconscious and projected out, we will reinforce its conditioning. the arising of anger is a signal that we are operating within unwise view, and anger then becomes a cue to drop the object of our wrath and connect with emotion.
  - 1 the self-righteousness of anger makes it very difficult to let it go. we love the power of being right, perhaps even more than we loathe the burning pain of the anger. the Buddha calls this righteousness the poison of anger with its honey-sweet tip. the next time you are angry with someone, you might try the difficult but possible task of listening to the other side. our ability to listen is directly related to our ability to switch views. to listen to the person requires we drop our righteous view, and since anger cannot be sustained without righteousness, it falls away. reverse cueing only works if the intention to connect is stronger than the motivation to remain separate and within our story.
  - 2 most of the disconnecting emotions cannot be maintained within the interconnectedness of wise view. Say not two
  - at some point in our maturation, turning away from our emotions and toward further separation is no longer acceptable
  - a key component of awakening is investigation. we see how essential it is to explore pain, regardless of where the examination takes us...this investigation continues until there is no doer of the deed and no one claiming responsibility for the action taken
- The View of Interconnection
  - intro
    - The real voyage of discovery consists not in seeking new landscapes, but in having new eyes - proust
    - we have seen we cannot move vertically by applying horizontal truths, and therefore the principles we will use to construct this path will be the laws of the vertical universe
    - with time and enough suffering, the self gives up pursuing lasting happiness within the horizontal universe and organically seeks to align itself with the vertical axis. this movement from the horizontal (belief in self) to the vertical (abiding awareness of the heart) is the spiritual path

- the effort needed is to know when the self-image is arising and let it go. spiritual practices are often far too complex and overstated.
- The simpler we are, the more we come into wise alignment with the conceptual nature of self and see it for what it is.
- the b's teaching builds upon itself, and wise view precedes and frames all the other components.
- Wise view is an internal realignment, the contrived h'l, (selfishness), moving into the spontaneous combustion of the v'l (selflessness). from selflessness, awareness is free of personal gain, and nothing is separated or owned as 'mine'. it is the domain where the heart flourishes.
- What we see when we look through our eyes is our orientation to the world. most of us see multiple objects that seem separated and disconnected from us. we wake up and go to sleep reinforcing that view all day.
- the following exercise may clarify this pt. in this moment imagine yourself a person who is having the experience of being aware. look around with awareness at your surroundings. awareness is seemingly activated by you and under your control. you can be aware through any of your senses and feel the quality and relationship within each contact. that is normally how meditation is taught: 'you' being aware of what is arising implies you are in control of the experiences of that awareness. but this awareness is skewed because from this view, you reign supreme and there isn't a 'you.' \ if we reverse this figure/round, a shift occurs. now allow awareness to have the experience of being you. you are being held within awareness. awareness is not inside you looking out, but rather it is both inside and outside equally. the sense of you is one experience among many within awareness. awareness is not under your control; it preexists your influence. nothing has changed, and yet everything has changed. you did not need to go anywhere or do anything to make this switch. it is a simple release of the h'l into the vertical.
- to be altered, we have to give up the idea of who is having the experience
- wise view is the reorganization of perception. it allows life to be seen in its natural alignment. it is not a view as such, because all views come from the sense-of-self. it is the release of any perspective, any fixation. it returns life to its original dynamic, where life is continually in movement, flexible and malleable, never stagnant, always in transition. / separate stationary objects are created by the sos for the security of always needing to know what something is.
- Skilful means
  - nisar was pointing out that it actually takes more courage to enter the realm where there are no problems, and therefore no problem solver, than it does to solve a problem and maintain our self-position.
  - most of us take up a spiritual life from the view of having a problem to resolve, and we begin our spiritual practice firmly fixed within the paradox of seeking a solution

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- we may have too much buddhism and not enough buddha
- the shadow is created when we want the pointing to be the whole truth and refuse to look at its shortcomings
- a skilful means is a temporary holding pattern that allows our understanding and courage to rise to the occasion for the next step, which in this case is complete surrender.
- both the inmates and i dispelled our preconceived notions about one another that day, allowing us to bridge the separation our ideas had created. the prisoners dissolved their concepts of someone wearing prissy, short sweatpants, and i released my opinions about murderers. together we met in the heart, a space where there are no divisive nouns like murderer, gay, and straight. it is a space where life can meet itself as a continual unfolding.
- meditation and wise view
  - ☐☐the purpose of meditation is to inform us about the true nature of relationships, and it will take us directly into the reactive patterns that keep us separated from all life.
  - ☐☐the point of meditation is to see what we are bringing to experience, and then to see that whatever we bring is extra and needs to be discarded.
  - ☐☐to align with this new orientation (wise view), we only need to accept what life is offering.
  - ☐☐☐☐contraction, disappointment, dissatisfaction, denial, and all the variations of suffering are the reasons most of us search for a remedy. Ending our limited and isolated position is what motivates us to search for a spiritual cure in the first place. we feel restricted and defined within our pain, yet something inside us knows we are more than what we have taken ourselves to be. we would like to think that we could leave all the pain aside and go directly to the payoff of interconnectedness, but for most of us that is not the case. / one of the hardest lessons on any spiritual path is to understand that interconnection comes from the wisdom discovered through exposure to our pain, not in turning away from it.
- The sense of self
  - intro
    - as we practice, so we will become. if we live and practice as a separate, individuated self, we will harden the assumptions around that belief and continue into the future isolated from one another
    - ☐☐☐☐☐☐☐when our life focuses on our own welfare, the buddha seems to be saying we are entombing ourselves within our own misdirected thoughts
    - We are constantly constructing our present reality from past experiences and living out the present as if it were the past.
    - [INTERPRETING HOW I FEEL] What is astonishing is the validity we give our reality. if we feel or think something, then it must be true, but if the very thoughts and emotions on which that assumption is based are conditioned from past circumstances, how valid can they be? this assumed reality might not be any more reliable than reading last year's newspaper for today's news.

- the buddha taught that over time, the unobserved thought settles into character; character is the way we see life.
  - our personal tale with its conflict, pain, drama, and momentum is predicated on the single untested and unquestioned belief that 'i' exist.
- Selflessness
  - Once freed of the constricting bonds of a self-image, the heart is free to open and be fully affected. all the qualities we spend our spiritual life trying to cultivate - love compassion patience integrity and intrinsic joy - are inherent in the presence that remains when the self-image abates.
  - [I IN CONTEXT] the call of spiritual practice is to examine and understand what we are, and once understood the sense-of-self becomes a functional necessity but never an abiding reality.
- Formation of the sense of self
  - the self is an attempt to make reality fail safe. reflecting upon what is occurring creates a time gap between the reflective idea about the moment and the actual event that is the moment.
  - we want to mentally add a little something to the moment to compensate for our individual needs
  - neuroscience tells us that the neurological pathway for perception is the same pathway for recognition. in other words our sense simultaneously perceive and recognize an object.
  - the point is that the mind does not know the perceptual difference between the past and the present
  - when the B was asked to express the location of awareness, he said that there is no center because awareness is not contained in the mind.
  - That which sees and that which thinks about what it sees are two different dimensions.
  - the naming occurs because of our attachment to knowing, our fear of not knowing, or our desire to know. we are afraid of the implications of not knowing, and we wonder what would protect us, how would we survive, or what would people think of us if we did not have the answer.
  - in the seen, let there be only the seen. in the heard, let there be only the heard. in the sensed, let there be only the sensed. in the cognized, let there be only the cognized. that is how you should train yourself. when for you there is only the seen in the seen, only the heard in the heard, only the sensed in the sensed, only the cognized in the cognized, then, you will not be reckoned by it. when you are not reckoned by it, you will not be in it. when you are not in it, you will neither be here nor there nor between the two. this, just this, is the end of suffering.
- Perpendicular universes
  - [RENEWAL] (in the vertical universe) Things move within it, but it never moves. moment after moment we are taking birth in the vertical; the problem is we think we are in the horizontal.
  - Each universe has its own set of laws. the horizontal universe operates according to the principles of pleasure and pain.

- The resolution
  - in the end the problem of our suffering is an imagined one. the intellectual understanding may not alleviate our difficulty, but it can orient us correctly to the solution.
  - [when DOUBTING MYSELF][][][] [When i see i have a problem with myself, my thoughts get heavier, the drama deeper, and the assumption of me stronger.
  - This question of separation needs to be handled with utmost care; we have to be full-hearted in our determination to end a problem that does not exist.
  - The means of our practice cannot be different from the ends we seek.
  - The eightfold path is a path of least resistance. it is not about welding or forcing things together but relaxing, observing, and allowing what is already here to be together. all our strategies and tools can be governed by one simple fact: the more resistance we apply to the problem, the more we allow the problem to have an unfounded reality, and the further from the truth we stray.
  - Assuming the truth of separation is the cause of separation
- Aligned with Awakening 416 261 4017 mitra singh4167234017
  - Intro
    - like a miner, we strap the light of our attention onto our helmet and plunge into the dark of our consciousness, leaving our opinions aside and looking freshly at every experience
    - the first question we pose is whether it is possible to observe the mind without thinking about what we see, to somehow park ourselves in a neutral location where we can silently observe with the impartiality that is needed. we cannot understand what something really is unless we see it free of the contaminating history contained within our thoughts, and the mind is no exception.
  - Deception of the mind
    - the thinking mind is not our enemy and is in fact a vital organ for functioning in the world, but its power is overextended and misused
    - these boundaries are self-imposed and created by thought because the mind still assumes there is a threat to the organism
    - knowing is the mind's form of security, and it advances only under the assurance of its history
    - although it is a biological necessity for our mind to separate the organism from the environment, this is not the truth. the truth is that all things are conjoined in ways that the mind is incapable of perceiving, and we therefore cannot use the mind as an indication of what is ultimately true. it responds in accordance with how it organizes the data, and therefore thinks in terms of separation. secondly, since the mind is only part of the truth of all things, it is incapable of perceiving that truth through the sense doors. the mind uses the senses to externalize objects, and therefore it perceives 'god' as external to oneself. we cannot be the truth and perceive the truth in the same moment. - Rodney Stephens, Stepping out of self-deception
    - once 'we' have been est, we start arranging the data to suit our desires and fears, and then act upon reality as if it could be aligned with our



needs and wants. that is when all hell breaks loose, because reality is not divided, and acting upon reality as if we were separate creates the pain and suffering of the world. | the fundamental principle we must remember when traversing a spiritual path is that 'we' do not 'have' a mind. the mind has created the sense of you and me from the way it perceives reality. the truth is the mind holds ús' within it. 'we' are not the possessor of a mind, and the mind is not something happening to us as if we were outside looking in. 'we' are a part of the mental processing of the mind. the thoughts of the mind and the sense-of-i are not two separate events. 'we' exist only because the mind thinks us into creation.

- since the sense-of-i is just thought, emotion, and mental phenomena, the effort to get control over an experience is the I' of the mind fighting against the interpretation it has given the data.
- it thinks itself separate and divides itself from the world by struggling internally with its own processes.
- we will behave as if the sense-of-self were separate from the mind that is having the difficulty.
- once the mind becomes whole through ceasing its internal argument, the sense-of-self, the mind, and all external objects implode into an indivisible union. Jesus said, be whole as your Father in Heaven is whole.
- if the mind works in an unwise direction, with the imagined sense-of-i being outside the mind and claiming ownership of the mind, then our efforts will simply reinforce the untrue perceptions of separation created by the mind
- Realizing the potential of lay life
  - spiritual growth is a fine-tuning of our ear to the needs of our heart.
  - discovering the sacred within all moments is the hallmark of awakening
  - Spiritual forms and rituals can be very helpful in focusing our intention and providing a doorway to the sacredness of all life. they can awaken a sensitivity of heart and allow our mind to quiet. forms and rituals become a problem when they stop representing a gateway into oneself and become an exclusive presentation of the sacred, such as the belief that the only way to commune with God is by going to church or taking a walk in nature, or the only way to meditate is to be alone in quiet surroundings.
- The eightfold path
  - Wise View
    - is the true and natural way lal things inherently are. when perceptions are freed from opinions, there is a natural realignment to oneness.
    - wiseview is questioning all forms of separation while keeping the truth of unity foremost in our heart.
  - Wise Intention

- Aligning our energies toward interconnectedness and bringing wisdom to our self-destructive tendencies. there is an urge to connect and unify that is deeply embedded within each one of us.
  - these innate intentions toward unity are countered by what the sense-of-i wants and fears.
- wise speech
  - no matter how nice and kind we make our words, if they are governed by unwise view, they will energetically carry the message of distance and isolation
- wise action
  - wise action is spontaneous and immediate, and taps the body's inborn intelligence that is far beyond the mind's intellect
- wise livelihood
- wise effort
  - if we believe ourselves to be separate, most of our effort will work toward a greater sense of self-definition and eventually more self-imposed pain
- wise mindfulness
  - mindfulness effortlessly moves into an abiding awareness, which maintains itself in our absence.
- wise samadhi
  - culmination of wise view
  - everything depends on stability of focus and investigating the nature of our contracted life, and only through stable attention can we see the problem and decipher the cause.
- Learning anatta intellectually is not the point; anatta is to be realized, ingested, and completely integrated into every facet of our life. the spiritual journey only makes sense from anatta, and if we move from any other direction the sense-of-self builds upon its accomplishments and ultimately frustrates our desire for freedom
- Introduction
  - the term anatta, which means no permanently abiding self or soul, is at the heart of the buddha's teaching
  - When we look at our experience we appear to be the center of the universe. all experiences seem to confirm our central place in life, and every input is interpreted through the lens of self
  - We begin to further understand that the cause of our suffering is not what we do but the way we perceive, and until this obstacle is addressed all actions of body, speech, and mind will predictably reinforce our old perceptions of self and other, problem and solution, and limitation and freedom

- the buddha made the realization and integration of anatta central to his teaching. we are without separate existence; that is a fact. when we align all our practices and efforts with this fact, the spiritual path becomes quite simple and transforms everything we do. all the monasteries, renunciations, restraints, skilful means, the full-lotus posture, and nose-tip awareness, all of it, has only this intended purposes.
- you are like a man holding a flashlight, trying to run beyond its beam. the view you are holding within the methods you are using is undermining your intent. - nisargadatta maharaj
- from this vantage point there seemed far too much methodology in the buddhism i had been practicing and not enough release
- once we abandon the belief that there is a more spiritually useful moment than the one we are in, we have embraced our life and infused it with the energy for awakening
- Questioning the Known
  - intro
    - since our being and life are not two different events, life can never be known for what it truly is, only for what the mind makes it as it fractures life into an objective experience
    - The SOS forms conclusion bc it fears living within the ambiguity of a question. questions are moments of wonderment but do not provide the security of assurance that the self seeks. as we journey along our spiritual path, we become more willing to move from mental certainty to the open amazement of not knowing
    - the paradox is that we can only move forward when our security is threatened, bc we are never further from the truth than when we are certain
    - [wonderment] questions are rarely directed toward our reality, bc that is far too frightening.
    - in essence the b is saying our only loyalty is to the realized truth
    - our attention, garnered through questioning, allows the unconscious to become conscious, and this keeps us alive and our opinions open
    - we would love our self-questioning to confirm what we already know
    - if we give over to our defensiveness, we end up seeing and understanding only what we already know: listening to the world, we hear our own opinions, viewing the world, we see our own conditioning
    - our narrative holds all our explanations, but it has no wonder. the sincere spiritual question does not stop until there is wonder. the q drops like a stone into a pool of water and keeps falling, moving toward greater stillness and a bottomless wonder. all along the way our fear boundaries are exposed until we stand defenseless against the question.
    - B would not allow statues in his monastery and suggested to the man that the real b was within the natural env. he told the man that if he wanted to bow to something, he should bow to a rock. the man kept insisting his money could help the monastery, until b suggested he take his money and throw it off a cliff
    - when we ask a dharma question, we have no idea where the q will take us or what we will see along the way

- Asking wise questions
  - as i explored effort, i saw that much of my tension came from a need to succeed, and until i addressed that urge, the impulse to improve would be behind all my spiritual labour
  - i began to fall in love with the mystery of not knowing. early on, not knowing was a state to pass over as quickly as possible bc it was confusing and disorienting, and i felt too exposed if i did not know the answer. through this inquiry i discovered that i had wanted to know the moment, but not live the moment, and there was inherent struggle in the need to know bc there was always more to know. i would have to give up even the need to know the moment. i noticed that over time as i posed more q's, i started to appreciate living the question rather than having the answer. i was most alive in the wonder of the curiosity that existed before the answer became known.
  - the tool of investigation is meant to explore the limitations of the view we are in, but if the language we use to investigate comes from our current view, it will corrupt our discovery. we cannot ascend to new heights using the same language as the base camp, or we would be reaffirming our old view even as we aspire towards the new
  - Rather than assuming the 'i' is true, ask 'who am i?' rather than working from certainty, ask what is this? rather than believing the story of me, ask, is this true?
  - who is asking this question?
  - what is seeing through our eyes?
  - cling to naught. the state of inquiry is a return to innocence because it is a complete suspending of everything that is known
  - stillness is what remains after we stop trying to find it, and therefore there is no strategy we can impose in order to stop, there is just stopping
  - the horizontal dimension believes idle time is wasted time, and if we are not struggling to satisfy our desires we are slipping backward.
  - [balance] in my more worldly moments, my mind can look at problems as an imposition, something to get over; her mind looks at problems as a method for connecting and working together. she is using a problem to move us vertically, and i am using it to clean up the h'l mess. both dimensional responses have their time and place, but we need to be aware of which axis we are acting from so there can be flexibility between options.
  - we constantly need to question every aspect of our existence bc life continually encircles us with patterns of conformity and social pressure. using life as an open question breaks through those staid patterns and unconscious reactions.
- Selfless Intention
  - intro
    - we like the idea of awakening, but we love the experience of indulging. sincerity is formed through the reversal of that couplet. most of our efforts are toward worldly happiness, but the more we try to obtain that elusive goal, the further it seems to recede. after the pain of countless up and down swings from happiness to disappointment, many of us

are forced to ask, have I had enough? this may be the first sincere dharma question of our life

- i realized later that life had responded to my dedication and one-pointed intention to make contact with a dolphin.
- Intention calls life toward itself and has the wondrous effect of completing the circle, like Michelangelo's painting of the fingers of God and man consummating the touch on the ceiling of the sistine chapel. when we are sincere in reaching out, life responds in kind, and there is meeting and a completion of the rship
- [feeling down]since many of us carry an attitude of personal unworthiness, we questin whether we were good enough or thorough enough in our activities. self doubt holds us to an ideal we rarely approach, and it can leave a lingering sense of shame.
- by far the most difficult reason for our lack of dedicated intention is the nature of silence itself. when we stop moving, stillness arises, and stillness holds nothing of me within it. it swallows us in an instant. we use the only means at hand, our willingness to reengage with the silence, as a pathway back to our original nature.
- Primary and Secondary Intention
  - intro
    - [BIIIIIG]Our primary intention is to completely resolve all outside searching and to know our intrinsic wholeness of being. to meet this primary purpose, simply allow your attention to rest with the longiung rather than with what the longing seems to indicate is missing. When we remain with the experience itself rather than where the experience is pointing, we arrest the notion that there is something wrong with us that needs to be satisfied.
    - we refuse to allow the deeper intention to come fwd bc we are locked within an h'l view that says only satisfying desires will fulfill our need for contentment.
    - Which one did he awnt more, his heart's pull toward peace or the mind's desire for compatibility? He understood he would have to release his need to be liked in order to find peace
    - When the mixed intentions becomes conscious, the next step is obvious. the problem is that we forced mixed intentions into a struggle with one pitted against another. we think that in order to be spiritual we should respond to the primary intention and repress the secondary. This calls for investigation, not condemnation
  - value and limitation of secondary intention
    - how can any addiction end when one part of our midn is still milking the benefits? the dharma rests on the fact that if we could see the total story of the pain derived from desire and the benefit we believe it offers, we would not puruse it one second further. the pleasure we otain from pursuing desires plaes by comparison to the pain inflicted,

but we have to be willing to test that principle if we are to transform the secondary intention back to the primary

- spiritual growth requires our complete understanding of the entire pursuit of pleasure and the pain of the action arising from that pursuit
- [ ]resistance keeps conditions in place and does not provide a pathway to freedom. Fear is a call for exploration, not withdrawal.
- [ ]nothing is denied, nothing is avoided, and the world is allowed to make its impact, to affect us in whatever way it does.
- Mixing intentions and views
  - wise view can be paired with unwise intention. if we divisively protest an unjust war with righteous anger, for example
  - allowing the sos to direct its own awakening is the most common mistake made in spiritual practice
- The Effort Needed
  - 1 as we move more deeply into this system for awakening, we remember that everything is accessible at all times and in all places. we are not going anywhere or becoming anyone. we are seeing through the delirium of our mental assumptions and abiding in a true and natural relationship to all things. the optimum environment for awakening is where we are, and nothing needs to be added or subtracted to improve our opportunities
  - 2 the lay buddhist does not try to arrange her life to fit her spiritual intention but rather brings forth that intention to every facet of her life
  - section
    - the way spiritual practice evolves over time is analogous to being in a room full of mirrors. as we approach the mirrors we see our pox marks, scars, and warts reflected. we see our selfishness and vanity and how many of our altruistic actions concern our self-image. we want nothing more than to run and hide from what we see, but where do we hide when everywhere we turn is another mirror?
    - at this point it is already too late to leave the room, so the alternative is to work hard to overcome the obstacles we see in the mirror. we set off on a path with intention to change ourselves to fit the ideal image. at this stage, spiritual transformation is focused on becoming a different person by getting over our limitations. we keep looking into the mirror to see how we are doing and it keeps reflecting back the person we do not want to be. we do not seem to be getting anywhere, and after some time we grow weary of this expression of effort. over time, character mods do occur but inside we still feel basically unaltered. something in us still hurts, and we seem to be increasing the tension within ourselves by muscling our way through
    - our efforts have forced the formation of a shadow. the shadow is the unconscious quality we are trying to get over through self improvement, and the more we attempt to change ourselves, the inevitably erupts onto the stage, forcing unskilled actions of body, speech, and mind. we feel lost and frustrated. how could these qualities persist after all the practice we have done? slowly and

understanding begins to surface that all pressure to change creates the backlash of its opposite, and this is the first sobering acknowledgement of the inherent limitation of the forms of self-effort and a rudimentary understanding of the undivided mind

- as we evolve out of this stage, we begin to realize that many of our practices are unconsciously coming from deep-seated patterns and self-images. for example, if we harbour feelings of low self esteem, we may see our strategies of practice playing out that theme. we may be drawn to ascetic practices of self-denial or to a teacher who is harsh and overly critical. we feel deserving of the teacher's scolding, and we overreact to our inner feelings of incompetence by forcing ourselves into more painful situations. unknowingly we may be attempting to rebalance our inadequacy with personal abuse. the shadow of our denial is playing itself out through the very effort we are making to rid ourselves of those properties.
- [i] remember reaching this frustration point in my practice, and one night i had a dream where i cut off the head of someone i knew. i woke up terrified, felt tremendous guilt, and tried to deflect the shadow of the brutality by reminding myself it was only a dream state only, i was not allowing that quality to be part of me, and until i was accountable for this mind state it would continue to haunt me. this understanding was an evolutionary step toward selfallowance. now i was no longer trying to suppress the mind but accepting whatever was arising within the whole of my mind. the effort was still very much about me, but the undivided mind became the new objective.
- [this is the realm of kindness and mercy many of us carry such deep-seated psychic wounds and low self-esteem that some expression of self-acceptance is sorely needed to offset this energy. if the unworthiness is not addressed, it will manifest and play out within our consciousness. This new expression of effort is directed toward inclusion and allowance. when all states of mind are met with acceptance, much of the projected discomfort with the world ends, and polarities of life are set aside for the common integrity of the whole. This is the beginning of effort towards nonduality and interconnectedness. though it is still self-focused, the effort is more relaxed, the energy calmer and steadier. this new effort does not attempt to overcome obstacles, but focuses on eliminating needless resistance and bringing kindness to perceived limitations.
- [ ] at this stage we are beginning to feel constrained by the ego but have little idea what the ego is or how it creates our suffering and isolation. we now understand that spiritual practice must embrace all that we are and a gentle curiosity may arise that leads to a new expression of effort; an effort toward the exploration of the nature of mind and body. we are no longer trying to be good meditators, but are interested in discovering the central issue of who we are.
- this new inquiry threatens the ego, but is alive and wide open to its reach. v'l q's such as 'who am i what is this and is this true' are dangerous, and we often feel an accompanying sense of terror as we plunge in without knowing where this will lead. effort gains enormous

confidence and is willing to pursue the questioning regardless of consequences. the effort is wisely patient and unhurried but deliberate and tenacious. it is a hungry effort because it is not coupled with the primary intention and the longing on the heart.

- ...even being lost in thought is not a digression. our effort has evolved out of self, and the struggle of self-efforting has ended. effortlessness reveals the inherent purity of all things, including self. the less we try to self-effort our way toward or away from anything, the more everything resides in its natural state of harmony
- effortlessness reveals the natural stage of all things. one insight is that effort is the basis of all suffering.
- Aligning effort with the v'l universe
  - if we look down from above the maze, the path leading toward the exit is obvious. it is not obvious from inside the maze bc the walls of self prohibit the clarity of observation. the effort involved in seeking the truth is paradoxically long and arduous because the truth is what we intrinsically are, and therefore cannot be sought. from the beginning we need to invert the effort so the effort is not externally seeking what is already here or creating a fixed spiritual terrain. This new effort is releasing the need to be separate. wise effort bypasses much of the discord that occurs when we use methods that conflict with the primary intention and wise view
  - We are not here to change the world. the world is here to change us
  - 4 r's: relax, release, relinquish, and rejoin.
    - relaxation
      - the release of mental and physical tension
      - the opposite of relaxation is tension, and tension arises from resistance. much of our life is lived resisting and defending internal and external experiences we perceive as threats. awareness shows us insightfully that our defences are not needed, that all experiences are harmless, and there is no need to defend or contract around them. this insight dispels the tendency for further protection and points us toward a deeper rest and repose. the effort made is toward allowing all things to be what they are and relaxing more deeply within them. relaxation begins to melt the boundary between self and other that was established by fear and insecurity.
      - when others are ease, those who are close by feel safe and settled. The near enemy of relaxation is indulgence. if we are not careful, the pleasant feeling of relaxation becomes its own goal.
    - Release
      - releasing is letting go of the need to control the outcome.



- the sos lacks faith in anything outside of its own influence. life is perceived as an obstacle to our power and must be aligned by force of will to work to our advantage.
  - now we are ready for faith faith is the opposite of control and expresses itself energetically as releasing our need to have everything go our way.
  - the alternatives were only in her mind. when wise effort meets an obstacle, we drop all resistance to it; when unwise effort meets an obstacle, we strategize how to surmount the problem....we release our life into faith. it is not faith in something; it is stepping into the unknown without assurance. instead of trying to obtain truth, just release yourself into it. let it grab you, and envelop you. this is faith.
- relinquish
- rejoin
  - rejoining is the energetic expression of wise view. maintaining the untruth of separation is effortful; rejoining is effortless. it is simply allowing our heart to take over our life. the mind will forever create the assumption of difference, but the heart sees from the v'l dimension of interconnection. each time we rejoin we reinforce the truth of that organ until it finally takes ctrl of perception. we don't use the capacity to know differences, it simply is no longer our default position.
- [HUGE] Doubting our efforts
  - in the west one of the common ways we lose our balance and confirm the sos is through self doubt. self doubt is the pain of our own image. when we live in a market-driven economy that promotes feeling incomplete until we buy such and such a product, together with a lifetime of comparisons and evaluations on every front, we can be certain we will age with a strong sense of inadequacy and low self-esteem. this sense of incompleteness changes over time into doubts about our ability to succeed
  - Doubt loves these drawn-out teachings bc they confirm what it feels: i am not ready. doubt cannot put an end to itself through hard work when the need to do the hard work is driven by the pain of inadequacy.
  - If we feel forced to let go, we are not letting go. letting go is effortless. we rejoin when we have finished holding ourselves in isolation to everything else, and that requires both a psychological and spiritual readiness.

- the most ruinous effect of self-doubt is how our focus becomes entombed within the pain of doubt. everything mirrors our limitation. if effort is aroused, it is halfhearted bc in our heart we believe it is futile.
  - the feeling that something is amiss is the product of our doubt, not reality, but few of us have learned how to be present in the midst of doubt, without believing its personal implications. doubt implies we are as inadequate as we feel and therefore have more to do. we then act out the emotion by grasping a technique to regain our balance.
  - every technique carries the shadow of self-doubt. a technique is applied when we feel the need to change in some way. if we felt completely, there would be nothing to fix and nothing to do. using the technique without seeing its shadow subtly reinforces the belief that we are a mistake in need of fixing. This belief is central to the perpetuation of unwise view, and may be the only belief holding us back from spiritual awakening.
- Language entrapping view
  - only by understanding how the word limits perspective will we become quiet enough to listen beyond the word's definition. when we see the limitation of language, we are already moving beyond it
  - B: the mind is molded, oh monks, by the way in which one repeatedly contemplates and reasons within oneself. our language is the articulation of the view we hold. much of what we assume to be true is culturally determined and does not rest on fact
  - the mind's responsibility is to manage the concepts it knows and to hold conflicting ideas at bay in order to firmly fix reality and our place within it. our inner narrative takes the agreed-upon view and applies it to the details of our life. it becomes our story and we are the storytellers. when the story is threatened, the wagons are circled and our defenses contract around our view. most experiences that threaten the view are denied, avoided, or dismissed, and those that reinforce it are incorporated. we end up strengthening the story with every perception
  - words and views are approximations or symbols of reality. we use them as ho'l markers toward the v'l dimension. eventually the words and views that direct our practice must come to an end. the b uses the simile of someone who carries a raft across dry land once she has used it to cross over a body of water. he suggest we release the raft once its usefulness is fulfilled.
  - we consider ourselves someone and that someone now needs to go someplace. it's not wrong to view the path this way; it's just limited and over time this partial perception locks us into the viewpoint of the language
  - our character develops over the course of time as long as our spiritual intention is wise. developing our character is not taken as a separate task; it will grow naturally upon following the inclination of our heart...when we perceive the interconnectedness of all life from wise view, our actions arise from nonharm and becomes governed by love.
  - how someone awakens seems to have more to do with our ability to let go of a view than the cultivated practices we undertake. we are held back from

awakening by believing in the map our mind has created regarding what we must do to awaken, and b can be misunderstood as a very laborious map.

- [BIG]we discover than ending the view ends the journey, and not the hard work we do. this leads to one irrefutable fact: we awaken out of a view.
- [frustrated?]there is no going to our going, and we are not a work in progress. it is only the mind that moves with thought, and thought is not moving at all.
- the intention and view behind the words make them wise or unwise, not necessarily what is said.
- A good communication exercise is to watch the moment when presence is broken during verbal interaction. we will be speaking consciously, relaxed and connected, and a topic will arise where the sos takes a position. suddenly the words we are using no longer match our consciousness, and in that moment the body feels a shift in energy. it is as if the interconnectedness has been severed, and we are left isolated and alone in our speech. when our intention is to maintain presence, we become increasingly sensitive to those areas where that connection is ruptured.
- [big ]most of us need both timing and trust for self-exposure. When the heart is relaxed, communication is effortless and usually relevant.
- The B is asking us to broaden our perspective by looking beyond our own needs and including the other person in order to determine timing, benefit, and tone...it takes us away from our opinion and of what the other needs to hear. our language begins to come from something more than the I response or the summation of all experiences present at one time; it comes from the whole.
- [HUGE] The whole is the ground from which the content of the present moment arises. We can access this ground by inquiring, 'what fundamentally holds all states of mind, is the basis of perception, and needs to cultivation'
- [BIIIIIIIG] Action from emptiness
  - intro
    - Do you have the patience to wait till your mind settles and the water is clear/ can you remain unmoving till the right action arises by itself? - tao te ching
    - [BIG] There is no preparation for Now, and Now does not need any groundwork. it requires only the courage to enter the present moment on its terms.
    - [big]since we value something proportional to the difficulty we have in acquiring it, if something is easily obtained we believe it is not worth having. since spirituality must be the noblest undertaking of all, we force it to be the most difficult challenge imaginable, when actually it is extraordinarily simple...when we drop the destination, we fall into the moment without direction, and the conditions within the Now are revealed. We are immediately confronted by the conditioned tendencies that have unconsciously driven our life.
    - 1 [fighting these tendencies only strengthens the assumptions embedded within them. the self adheres to struggle bc resistance solidified these tendencies and simultaneously gives the self a sense of purpose, which is to overcome the resistance. the self is hardened habit, and it only knows what it has always done, which is to willfully move through obstacles. wise intention sees struggle as counterproductive to its deepest longing, and ends that tactic of the self through surrender.

- 2 what could be simpler than surrendering? we surrender all forms of resistance and protest to the conditions here and now. wise action is the continual surrendering of our separation through all activities, of body, speech, and mind, and is more of a release than an action. as long as we think we are in control of our spiritual practice, surrender is the least disruptive behavior we can undertake because our actions, if not our mind, will be in accordance with wise view.
- 2 i remember an occasion several years ago when i was forced to surrender my idea of fairness. i was visiting bodhi Gaya, India (giving oranges to the poor). the people at the other end of the line saw what i was doing and circled back on top of me. they clawed and ripped the bags out of my hands, some making off with an armful of oranges while others received none. i remember recoiling at the starving and savage faces of the hungry, and feeling utterly helpless. there was no appropriate action i could take to rebalance the situation, and i was startled into clarity. The world was the way it was, and my righteousness added nothing. I walked away in awe, not in disgust.
- 3 arguing with what is, is pointless. thought-based actions are often in protest to what is, and once we have assumed that this protest is true, we will have the accompanying emotions of that assumption and will act in accordance with those emotions. surrender is the acknowledgment of the futility of further argument and allows an appreciation of the most dismal situations. it is not resignation or feeling overwhelmed by the opposition; it is a simple and total realignment of the heart to reality.
- 4...when we perceive the unreality of thought, the view and so constructed from these thoughts ends. surrender is the collapsing of alternatives into reality.
- 5 ...to surrender, pause; drop all resistance, and allow the mind to be held within awareness rather than thought. do not move by reframing, correcting, or altering whatever the mind is doing in this moment
- Three expressions of embodied action
  - the mind is not divided against itself, nor is the body separated from the integrated action; rather it is a completely creative movement of the body and mind in unison
  - before we begin, gently ask if our actions are fully embodied, or irresolute and half hearted. do they carry self doubt and confusion about where we rightfully belong or what we should be doing? if we free the body from the doubting mind, we can confirm our place on the earth by feeling the earth beneath our feet, proving that we are authentically aligned with the only place we can be, here and now. as we proceed, let us direct our attention toward these 3 things
  - Non goal oriented action
    - one way to offset this goal oriented tendency is to allow awareness within each activity. instead of being consumed by the destination, make the traveling the purpose of the activity. as we move toward a goal, deliberately look at the surroundings, hear the sounds, and allow life in.

- The mind joins the body when the goal is not more important than the activity.
- this is the way embodied action feels. the action is not ours but passes through the connected whole of life, allowing the whole to use the action rather than the action to be a product of 'me'
- action with integrity
  - as an intermediate step to embodied action, ask whether wise view is informing our action. is the action derived from a warm and connected heart, is it based in nonharm, and is it aligned with our deepest heartfelt intentions? Healing comes from honestly looking at our conditioned patterns without self-deprecating commentary. let us be piercing in our integrity but kind to what we see.
  - The immediate effect of integrity is a light, harmonious mind and heart.
- Actions countering old patterns
  - The body is an antenna for dissension, and tuning in to the body reveals areas of struggle, fear, and general disharmony that could easily be missed by observing the mind alone.
  - 1 the doubting mind stands in opposition to this knowing. self-doubt inhibits moving out of old conditioning because it questions where we stand and our actions from that place. we feel apologetic and uncertain. when we are lost in habitual patterns of bvr, we are not fully conscious of what we are doing, and we may be acting from our doubt and yet be unaware of it. we risks making it conscious, and the pain of the doubt remains hidden. once we make our life conscious, we feel the pain, but the pattern can be so strong that for a while we may succumb to its message
  - 2 self-doubt will inevitably arise when we have the intention to change and step out of old patterns. the mind meets that opening with our historic pain and says, 'do you really think you are capable of this?'
  - as a stormy wind cannot move a mountain of rock so one who contemplates the reality of the body, and, by doing so, develops faith and energy, is unmoved by forces of fear.
  - this is not a matter of acting from our beliefs or willful effort. willpower cannot sustain itself bc it is based upon selection and aversion. embodied action is the opening of a new perspective beyond the limitation of mind-based action and is not a selective process.
- When we allow the body to take over our actions, we are no longer driven by our pain and our actions become a creative force within the moment. since the goal is no secondarily important to the vitality of the moment, our actions become integrated into Now in a way that thought-driven action could never accomplish.
- Living our Truth

- without incorporating the insight into action, the insight can quickly become entrapped in old assumptions, unable to surface, and remain constricted until we are willing to question the assumptions that contain it
- [When we act in a new way, the body cells begin a reorganization process that no longer supports the old beliefs. in the beginning the new actions and the old bodily feelings are in conflict. we don't feel we should be acting this way; it is out of character and not true to our beliefs. that is the point - it is out of character from the old emotional imprints, but if we endure through this apparent conflict something new will arise. the body does it all; it does not require mental interference or a new belief system
- They know the issue backward and forward, but the implications of acting on it cause too much turmoil. They think, 'better leave it for next time.' it is not just their minds that have closed down; it is their entire organism, the cells of their physical and emotional bodies, and from this point forward there will be a dead stop until the pattern is challenge.
- [homework]To get ourselves moving toward wisdom, we might begin by writing two or three action statements that would defy the old conditioning
- 1 it is helpful to have an overview of how extensively the roots of this problem pervade our life. the pattern can be studied as a cultural anthropologist would study a foreign culture, taking notes, focusing in every detail of its occurrence, and simultaneously releasing all judgment.
- 2 [Once the facts are seen, and we have tired sufficiently of the old pattern, a new action will emerge. this is the most difficult step. in the beginning it feels as if every cell is screaming against a new action. memories, emotions, thoughts, and the dark beliefs held within those habituated tendencies are all being stirred. the new action is not yet established, so the mind attempts to regain its power through the familiar patterns by creating doubt, uncertainty, and fear.
- [HUGE]3 we allow the body to find a new action by first establishing a new, confident physical posture, squaring the shoulders and holding our gaze steady, grounding the doubt that arises. The body is in command here; it holds, but is not enslaved to the mind, and usually after many false starts the mind begrudgingly assumes this new confidence in the body. this process is not undertaken to create a better self or a new belief about what we can do, but to learn the move without relying on the mind and its emotional feedback.
- Wise action and emptiness
  - however many holy words you read, however many you speak, what good will they do if you do not act upon them?
  - Nothing truly authentic can ever be known
- Awakening through livelihood, stress, and time
  - intro
    - the physical movement from stillness is the same, spontaneous, heart governed, and connected

- as the self surrenders ever more deeply into reality, unusual and mysterious circumstances come into play
- we are most alive when we are most interested, and there is no greater fascination than the unexpected play of the universe. a wonderful intention to express in the morning before we rise is, 'may my consciousness be open, and may the mystery reveal itself throughout the day,' and then resolve not to allow the worries of the day to take precedence over the mystery
- wise livelihood
  - interest in work
    - i would suggest a different tack by defining wise livelihood as pursuing our interest toward a deepening interconnectedness while meeting our financial obligation
    - the point is to allow our interests, not our idealism, lead our work. interest is where we are closest to life, where the distance between our heart and a natural abiding with life is narrowed and where we are most attuned to our aliveness. it does not necessarily mean you have to be a social servant
    - interest in secondary intentions like money, status, and ambition may temporarily capture our attention, but they are ultimately limited because they do not fulfill our deepest need for interconnection.
    - if we are uninterested in what blocks our primary intention at work and in our life, our spiritual practice will not bear fruit
    - 1 as the primary intention rises to the surface of our work, nothing is discounted. if our job is boring, we become interested in the boredom itself and expose its hold on us. we might ask 'what is this boredom and how is it determining my relationship to work? if someone at work is difficult, we refuse to blame our situation on outside forces. instead we use radical accountability and look at the unconscious pain in our mind that leads to projecting the blame outward. if our mind wanders during business meetings, we might inquire 'what is the emotion driving the need to escape? each q activates our interest and creativity and aligns us firmly within our primary intention
    - 2 to spiritually renew our work, we ask what initially interested us in this form of employment, and we attempt to dust off that latent interest and reengage with the original enthusiasm
      - helping people
      - making money
      - no boss
      - less taxes
      - make money
      - making 10k/month
      - being number 1

- doing something that i'm great at
  - leading people
  - teaching people
- [] Sustained interest is found within the primary intention: within wonder, myster, unity, or interconnectedness
- conflicting values
  - To advance, we sometimes have to withdraw. The pain of personal failure often accompanies withdrawal, but failure has nothing to do with the spiritual journey.
  - [HUGE]Our principle job on this planet is to reconnect through all circumstances
  - 1 [stress] most of us know how to work effectively on the job, but few know how to make the job work effectively for us. we feel enslaved by the pressures of work, as if stress was something we had to endure. pressure is self-imposed, projected outward and blamed on the environment as stress,yet we are doing it to ourselves by ignoring our internal drive, which is creating the pressure. if we look into that pain, we will see psychological issues such as wanting to be liked, respected, or be perfect. looking deeper, and we see the origin of the wanting is a feeling of self-inadequacy.
  - 2 if we use stress as a reverse cue and allow its onset to return us to the origin of the pain, we can actually learn about ourselves from the stress, and our job starsts working for us. the feeling of stress can take us back to the pain of being ourselves. as mentioned in earlier chapters, we then have the opportunity to move through what the sos is and come to a deeper understanding of our true nature. the crucial issue with stress is exploring the pain rather projecting out and reacting from the pain.
- [huge]compartmentalizing time
  - 1 but the real leakage occurs mentally; during our off time, our minds drifts to the work remaining on our desk, at work our mind wanders back to the family, and our sleep is continually disturbed by the worries from all the other intervals. this carry-over can form itself into an attitude of oppression that affects all parts of our life.
  - 2 exploring our relationship within each time period, we learn that the sos carries aversion or attraction into each interval. we mentally struggle to shorten or prolong each segment, when for the most part the length of each time period is predetermined. this results in stress. what if we changed focus and made all time 'our time' our time to be at work, our time to be at home, our time to comute, etc? time would start working for us, and the intervals would no longer be in conflict with one another, and nothing would keep us from connecting with ourselves.



- instead of pushing against time, we live it. by refusing to make time an external force or object, it is no longer an obstacle; the partitions are gone, and we rejoin time. when time comes back together as a whole, it heals, and we heal within it.
- [big]time and incompleteness
  - []when there is total abiding within the moment, nothing happens to us bc the moment is without the boundaries that define us in the first place. it all comes back together
  - this simple emotion (incompleteness) seems to indicate that some action is needed to add or take something away, but the real confusion occurs bc this feeling is merging with our story of self-inadequacy. since we believe the inadequacy is true, we live out the assumption that something more is needed
  - what if we did not move with the logic of that view, and instead simply stopped doing anything at all about our state of mind?we would discover there is nothing wrong with anything, including the prevailing feeling of incompleteness, bc the feeling there is something wrong is just a feeling and requires no further action. time would end on its own bc it would have no further use.
- Freeing awareness from self-control
  - intro
    - when we look out of our eyes, life is seeing itself in form, and when we look at what is looking, we see the awareness that preexisted the arising of form.
    - [huuuuuuge conflict help] soon the subjective experience evolved into the mistaken sense of selfidentity, and with the arising of the self, we began to miss what we have in common and focus instead upon what was unique and different about each member.
    - as the first moment of life on earth would indicate, we clearly have much more in common with all life than our individual appearances would indicate, although it is within our appearances that most of us take refuge
    - if we manifest in too familiar a manner, we will be categorized as avg and ordinary and if we manifest in too dissimilar a fashion, we will be strange or weird. we walk an appearance tightrope between acceptability and uniqueness.
    - [HUGE; feel intimidated/angry/small/inadequate?] Despite the constant struggle to highlight our individual qualities, few of us have any real sense of what we are protecting..seeing our empty nature is one thing, realizing and abiding within it is another.
  - doing less and being more

- the belief that i am 'in here' and the world is 'out there' is a subjective truth, an adaptation of consciousness over many millennia; it is not an objective fact.
- [Reaction indicates an area where the sos feels vulnerable and is defending against a perceived threat. mindfulness informs us there is nothing to fear and begins to see through this mistaken identity. it reveals that we have assumed a personal 'me' from the impersonal processes of mind, and we learn through repeated contact that the mind is not 'me' or 'mine.' as mindfulness seeks out these areas of hiding, the mind becomes less contracted and more open and inclusive. less thought is brought to each observation, and a quiet attention begins to predominate the interior landscape.
- the presence of the watcher indicates that awareness is now looking at the mind rather than through the mind
- [the watcher now understands the empty nature of an emotion and discerns that it has more options when it does not react. over time, the watcher becomes attentive within the first instant of a reactive response, and immediately releases the need to control the situation. it now feels safe without its historic defenses, and gently accedes to relinquishing its dominance to mindfulness.
- connect with everything but believe nothing
- [handling emotions]It is much easier to see the transparency of connected states of mind than disconnected states. the next time you are angry, watch how the anger blocks the perception of its own emptiness...at some pt many of us will begrudgingly acknowledge the anger and try to offset it with a different quality, like loving-kindness. a problem can result when our practice is to offset a state of mind rather than explore its nature
- by observing thought objectively without a thinker, we begin to see through the subjective experience of 'me' thinking. if there is no leaning into the observed experience of hearing our thoughts, which immediately forms a new sense of identity, then THERE IS JUST THE KNOWING THAT THOUGHTS ARE ARISING. THOUGHTS TRY TO FORM AROUND SOMEONE OR SOMETHING BUT ULTIMATELY FAIL BC, WITHIN THE STILLNESS OF MIND, THERE IS NOTHING LEFT TO FORM AROUND.
- [tough to be present?] we can begin to see how this effort is misplaced when we observe the sense of self arising within the struggle to maintain mindfulness. the harder we try, the more forgetful we become, and this is bc, and mentioned before, the sos forms around effort. the sos arises from the very effort to sustain mindfulness.

- [] when this is realized, we stop trying to be mindful and relax into the awareness that existed before thought.
- mindfulness, inseparable from the 8fold path
  - surrendering our will is what turns mindfulness into wise mindfulness, view into wise view, effort into wise effort
  - ultimately we are not trying to remember to be aware but attempting to see through the thought that believes something was forgotten
  - [] the sos stopps existing outside the mind when it has released the need to do something about the mind. when the tension is dropped, wholeness is.
- Selfless forgeries
  - intro
    - a consistent theme in this book is uncovering the mind's attempt to assume spiritual authority over the heart
    - spiritual work is much simpler than the mind makes it. we make it into a serious and complex project when really it is a stroll in the park and as close as the walk itself. we are just ambling leisurely, surrounded by fresh air and sunlight, and seeing what there is to see. life is waiting for us to tire of mentally pushing our salvation forward so it can offer what we do desperately seek in the immediacy of Now.
    - we interfere by avoiding what needs to be seen, by pursuing our false assumptions despite evidence to the contrary, and by making the spiritual journey into a mental project
    - the baton passes from the mind to the heart once we are sincere enough to admit our old ways are no longer working, control is slipping through our fingers, and we have no fallback strategies.
    - the qualities of the heart are discovered within selflessness (love compassion, patience, generosity, caring, kindness, etc.) and these attributes appear naturally as the mind releases control and stops trying to force their appearance.
    - the mind tries to claim dominion over the heart by developing these qualities, congratulating itself on how well it is doing, and deciding how it is going to get more
    - We despair bc our past methods are flawed. despair often accompanies the loss of personal influence and frequently arises just prior to seeing the need to let go of our conditioned past. despair can indicate the use of an antiquated system that needs immediate revision. if we can listen to despair without its personal and mistaken implications of incompetence, we can see it as authentic spiritual insight and correct our course
    - many of us have had a number of experiences of awakening only to have our conditioned consciousness reemerge over time. the possibility of awakening becoming a living reality eventually succumbs to our normal and usual reality of separation.
    - awakening springs forth in the absence of mental control
    - [BIIIG] awakening is not something we gain or maintain, but simply is when the mind releases its authority and falls into the heart....once the limitation of our mental prowess is known directly, once the absolute

fact is understood completely, ingested, internalized, with nothing else to rely upon, then and only then will awakening stabilize, love be known in its totality, kindness prevail, and separation end.

- Forgeries of the mind
  - the heart is awareness, and the mind is the conceptual way we form the world around that awareness. the mind conceives the world in terms of self and other and then has thoughts and emotions that seem to validate that configuration.
  - the mind blocks the heart through the words of separation.
  - We ask ourselves, 'am i kind, loving, generous enough? No, the mind says. we reply, 'if i am not, then i still have more to do...all of this objectifying, distancing, and tasking creates an enormous amount of confusion and conflict.
- helping as a forgery of serving
  - When you change the diapers of your child, is that work?
  - when we remove the obstacles to interaction, the heart responds.
  - [it is our mind and not our heart that perceives inequality in another
  - we think how fortunate we are to be doing what we are doing bc there is such delight in the work. we are being fed even as we feed.
- niceness as a forgery of kindness
  - niceness casts the shadow of its opposite, and resentment is inevitable. if a friend calls and asks for an inconvenient errand, we might do it, but we are neglecting to honor the part of our mind that resists fulfilling the favor and feels burdened by the request. resentment begins to fester and we may explode at the next innocent request from this friend or another. when we overextend ourselves from a sense of duty or idealism, we do not honor the competing state of mind that does not want to engage in this act of self-sacrifice
  - niceness usually has an underpinning of psychological pain, often expressing a particular motivation and prescribed intention. we want something from someone, so we are nice. it may be as innocent as wanting to be liked or as devious as trying to incur a debt from the person we are offering to help. in any case it is not an effortless bonding or a natural residing; it is mentally induced, which means it is inauthentic.
  - [big] both the resentment and the altruism must be allowed to coexist for kindness to be discovered. there is no access to the heart when one part of the mind is in tension with another.
  - an act of kindness is an action from interconnection and is not an effort
- Seriousness as a forgery of sincerity
  - the serious mind is willing to trudge through the difficulties of life, but is not earnest about ending itself.
  - [ Sincerity passes over nothing; it is the heart responding with love. since everything in essence is love, why would anything be passed over - and to get to what?
- The flowering of the heart
  - [The heart does not perceive life dualistically, and when this view of separation does arise, a question can form with it: 'is this the heart or the mind?'

- the list of mind impersonations goes on endlessly: compassion to pity, equanimity to indifference, patience to waiting, devotion to commitment, contentment to stress reduction, fulfillment to possessiveness, steadfastness to stubbornness.
- The Steady Mind
  - intro
    - tell me what you pay attention to and i will tell you who you are - gasset
    - Character dev really takes care of itself when we relax into the whole of the 8fold path
    - without stability the mind drifts from thought to thought, much like a person moving from rung to rung on parallel bars with their feet suspended above the ground...the mind is grasping one idea, and releasing another. this movement from one idea to the next gives the appearance of life in transition; in fact nothing is moving at all.
    - but regardless of how emptiness is named, it simply means that life lived through thought is not what it seems to be, and we need to be informed about that fact. b: in the world...substance is seen in what is insubstantial.
    - [] clearly sensing the dazzling dark changes everything. prior to this, life seemed to come through 'me'; it was all happening to 'me' and 'i' was the focal point and originator of experience. now the sense of i is seen as being an emanation of something far larger. everything we have taken life to be, including the mind and the body, are being birthed moment to moment by that something else.
  - samadhi and the interested mind
    - samadhi forms the foundation for observation
    - the clearest expression of seeing is observation from stillness bc there are no distracting thoughts to contend with the quieter we become, the clearer the seeing and the deeper the penetration. this unfettered awareness is a very empty mind capable of piercing through appearances and sensing the dazzling dark...there is both a conventional and unconventional approach to S.
    - faith-minded is distinguished by a relaxed attitude to the presentations of the mind. the faith-mind is undefended and confident within the complete array of mental phenomena, and is no longer afraid of what the mind contains. the faith-minded understands that thinking does not characterize life, and remains independent and stable as thought moves through the mind.
    - a harmonious and still mind sees oneness. an ethical life frees the mind from paranoia and from looking furtively over its shoulders in fear of being discovered.
    - once we see how hopelessly lost we are in thinking, and we perceive how contracted we have become from this thinking, S takes care of itself.
    - having just returned from years of b'ist practice and sensing her potential, i misguidedly tried to persuade her to sit a meditation retreat. she did, but had a very difficult time following her breath. this surprised me bc i knew her to be a person with a stable and harmonious mind. she said she had no interest in her breath and wondered what the

point was. i tried to explain the b's teaching regarding S as an essential factor for accessing oneness of mind, and she said, 'i already have that with everyone i meet who is in pain.' i realized in that moment what my thai teacher, buddadassa had been trying to teach me for years, that a stable attention could also be developed naturally without prolonged seclusion or isolation from others

- 1 as the mind loses its inhibition to stillness, the time floats free of measurement, and life is no longer organized around the theme of 'me.' time does not stretch and become something different; it simply discontinues, and we stop moving through it. the sos is formed from time and acquisitio - time to desire and fear, time to complete or eliminate. questions such as 'how far am i from my goal, how much further do i have to go, when will this be over?' are linear relationships to time and space, and drop away within the expanse of Now.
- 2 these measurements presume that the sos is at the center of all the sense data, that experiences are coming into 'me' like spokes moving toward the hub of a wheel. but what happens to the circumstances when the center of a circle is removed? the circumference is defined by the center and is eliminated in its absence, and in its place a vast, measureless space opens. similarly, when the center of me is quiet, the sense data no longer come into 'someone'; this collapses the perimeter that formed around me, and the infinite is accessed.
- the reason a life is turbulent is bc it is full of reactios to thoughts, so it is challenging to be in the middle of this reactivity and try to discern the nature of those same thoughts.
- we likely have deeply entrenched emotional patterns that do not release their hold merely bc the thinking mind has been seen for what it is....it is as if the thinking mind and emotional thoughts have 2 different criteria for release, each with their own logic and reason for being
- Each of us carries emotional residue and scarring from our life. these patterns have arranged themselves within a justified personal story, full of defense mechanisms and lightning-fast reactions. in the blink of an eye, thoughts feed off the existing story, defenses respond and form an emotional reaction, which induces further thinking and heightens the emotional intensity.
- The deeper their psychic burial and the drama of their inception, the more tenacious their appearance
- Freeing the emotional body takes a different level of intention than freeing the mind from thought. it requires the willingness to feel the pain of our life.
- unlike thought, the emotional body is an area of awakening that is better understood through the whole array of life's activities rather than in solitude.
- we can use practices like S to energetically raise us above the level of personal pain without ever actually addressing it.
- one emotion that needs special attention is fear. fear is the emotional body's trump card, and the mind is very willing to play that card when it

imagines itself threatened...we can be abiding within the present moment, accepting life as it comes, and suddenly be struck by fear.

- the job is fear is to take us out of the moment bc Now is perceived as unsafe, and to move us into the future where safety can be obtained
- Fear is never more prominent than when the sos enters the Now bc Now begins to melt all separation, and this can create an existential crisis.
- [] Realizing that fear is not the truth and is only a projected reality composed of a strong narrative reaction to the present moment can help us navigate fear.
- we simply do nothing to or with fear. doing nothing shows us the emptiness of fear and brings it into the Now, where it cannot sustain itself and dissolves.
- The resolution of paradox
  - intro
    - blessed is the one who existed before coming into being - jesus
    - Nobody understands physics - Richard Feynman
    - in dharma we enter the world of paradox, the world of unfathomable mystery
    - The arising and passing away of sensation can occur with such rapidity that it causes the meditator to question the solidity of any object
    - it appears that consciousness models these ill-defined and muddled shapes into stable and predictable objects. the disordered world of the small seems to be held in check through thought, and our concepts establish the certainty of reality so life can be lived with some reliability (NOT!)
    - [] Miracles can be performed by minds that are no longer fixed within the collective consciousness and do not believe in the staid nature of reality.
  - Abiding with paradox
    - the universe of me is only half the paradox; selflessness is the other half and the intention of this book has been to rebalance the scales and bring the two together
    - [wowzers] The lay b'ist sits where the opposites meet and abides at the intersection of the conflicting universes. the zero point holds all opposites. since nothing is separate from freedom, not even a moment of forgetting is problematic. we do not seek refuge from our life, we do not consider our life to be limiting, and we do not create problems out of our life. Our life is freedom.
    - Stepping out of self-deception actually means leaving the sos alone
    - ultimately truth is not a set way of perceiving reality, but a release of all point of view.
    - perhaps the most difficult transition is to abide within zero and leave the world and ourselves alone.
    - [H U G E] the final understanding is that there is nothing wrong with anything bc it all holds the same essence. nothing comes from anywhere or goes anywhere; it is just a momentary configuration, an appearance, of only one thing, and nothing needs to be fixed, changed, or altered to improve that one thing. when there is no longer

the slightest urge to offset what is, everything is free to return to zero. Zero is the only 'non' place this can occur.

- Mature Awakening

- intro

- []The more we surrender our separation, the quicker we complete the work of dissolving our fear
    - []Lay B'ism is a direct path that challenges us to meet each moment on its own terms and surrender to 'this spot' on earth that is our life, and take refuge only here by severing all connection with time.
    - when there is freedom from the desire to live up to a spiritual and psychological ideal, the mind and heart can merge into a single essence.
    - maturity is the willingness to stand on 'this spot' without justification or excuses, and surrender to Now.
    - [] Our first responsibility is to develop a character that will personify interconnection.
    - Awareness has its own inherent intelligence that cannot be unleashed as long as we rely on the mind's intellect
    - a mature sense of responsibility is without excessive control or stiff obligation, and by breathing the heart through the qualities of our character we can become open-ended and not trapped within a system of rigidity, allowing us to open through love rather than self-control. opening our character does not deny our responsibility to the world; in fact most of us would include the quality of responsibility within the definition of maturity. we embody our incarnation and are accountable to our life by living with the confines of the world, while remaining untroubled by those restrictions.
    - a stable mind stays focused through a barrage of competing thoughts, and a stable character is settled and does not depend upon the recognition and approval of others

- From one to zero

- [h u g e] There is no greater joy than watching our pain and suffering diminish and finally extinguish under the light of awareness
    - Buddhism in its final summation is about abiding in the Now
    - Everything is included within Now bc Now is the birth of every manifestation.
    - 1 [AAAAHHHHH] 1 Most of think that taking the practice into our daily activities means we create space around the interactions in our life for the solitude and relaxation necessary to make our life work, but what it really means is to move our intention for freedom into each activity so there is no separation between the activity and awareness. We live within the activity, not for the doing of it.
    - 2 Most of us live with the feeling there is something wrong with the experience at hand, and we fill our life with mental and physical activity in an attempt to correct the perceived difficulty. but it is impossible for there to be anything wrong with experience since everything is arising from the absolute completeness of Now. To abide in Now is to live acknowledging the complete and miraculous mystery continually before our eyes.



- 3 The question is never 'how do i make my life work' or when will i attain enlightenment?' bc all 'i' questions are born from a ltd view of reality. just relax into what is asking the question and enjoy the scenery of this astounding life in its many manifestations. The task at hand is to step out of self-deception, otherwise the self willl never know it is living the very reality it seeks.