**The Mind -- healthy**

Education

Learning

Expanding the mind

[Zazen](#ZAZEN)

[Prayer](#PRAYER)

* Creating new routines, new routes
* Building new contexts and systems
* Discovering new approaches, frames, tools
* Exploring new interfaces
* Receiving feedback, exposure to standards and argument and reasoned thought
* Exposure to options and environments and types and roles and tasks

Levels of consciousness.

How does the consciousness of God work?

Can A.I. bring us any closer to understanding God? The levels of God?

What is the role of the self in morality? And does moral import shade or hue depending on one’s proximity to the judgement?

Can you make a moral decision about something that doesn’t affect you directly?

Rhetoric is shadow puppetry of the tongue.

Many people made the rules up.

Herestics made by people whith experience.

A lot of ignorance really comes from just ignoring things that are right in front of our faces or just on the other side of the embroidery work.

Simplicity from Complexity.

**Mind**

Saliency Network -- making connections

Executive Network -- making decisions

Default Mode -- rest and recovery

**Meditation**:

1. repeated word— sense or non-sense.
2. Repeated topical word to coalese imagination and intellect around a particular theme or set of interrelated themes.

03/31/2021

Not Polyanna blind to the harshness and duplicity of the world, but accepting the dual nature of existence--- the good, the bad, the known, the unknown, the feared, the embraced. Practicing the one, practicing the many.

Finally sat for a few minutes and the energy current returned immediately. What are the energy currents?

**Madness**

Unprecedented vocation and artistic explosion

or

delusional isolation and weed and mid-life crisis fantasy.

The razor thin difference between delusion and inspiration: the way other people interpret it (Madness in civizilation.

Lunacy.

The insight of the Jester.

The character of reason coming from a clown.

Pan’s sly cunning.

Bug’s bunny.

Mickey Mouse.

Sonic the Hedge Hog

Mario

Link

Questing forth our avatars before us.

I do not have a grand vision but I have an ascending one. One that grows through my daughter’s conception of this world. Her coneption is ultimately more important than my own. I do not feel the need to fill her with some ultimate sense of understanind. But questions. How to ask the questions. Where? When? How to feel balanced. To explore balance you must be balanced. To improve at balance you must have a baseline sense of balance to build from. I am thinking of highwire walking here. Exploring those great heights. This internal, external art. The processes of the mind exhibiting perfect control over the body. Poise, subtlety- the audience remains ignorant of the intense training, the full stomach sickening risk involved, the dizzying heights, the actual degree of confidence or doubt, the actual degree of difficulty or ease. The actual art is completely obscured and only the impossible impression is left. The walker is doing the impossible, what for the layman walking off the street would be impossible. The walker has run down on path of possibility so far that the mass of men cannot follow, do not possess the discipline or the passion or the vision or the time or the necessity, and it is true the artists dedication has been intense. Essentially irrational. Mad? To unnecessarily expose oneself to an increased chance of death— this is madness no? To be out of one’s head.

Something about calculated risks being man at their most sane, most moral, most idealistic, most passionate, most curious, most moved, most engaged, most hungry, most needy, most empty, most, broken, most alienated, catalyzed the perpetual instinct to root down, root down and grow out and out and up and up.

Light from the sun through a pan of glass, water spotted, dust in the screen, latches undone, and light cutting through darkness onto the table, white light cast on the brown table and a glass of water in the light on the table. Half full or half empty, who can really say. Fully full of something I suppose—air and water and light.

Something of the flat clear contrasting light of *Night Hawks* that we saw that once in person at the root of Route 66. And so I have always connected the two texts. The fabled road of gone America and the lonely night watchers laconically resisting the cyclical coming of the sun.

Gears and contingencies. Pullies. Levers. Power and desire. Privilege and vision. Assistance and resistance. Empathy. Greed. Hate. Need.

ATMAN

11/22/2020

Had characterized my weed smoking as that which was separating me from my girls. But then this morning when I smoked in the morning and stretched, and then wrote and put some good effort in and then did my best to be positive, constructive, engaged, open with betsy as she struggles with the absolute worst bout of depression that she has ever experienced. It is an intensification of what she has been fighting through all year and from before. In the past I have blamed by weed smoking for putting me in a mindset that keeps me from being the best partner for her. While I still think this is true, I feel more affirmed that what betsy is working through has little to do with me. Or what it has to do with me is done and what it might have still to do with me is ahead. We need to work through this. We need to talk. She does not have a vision for the future. She is allowing it to be bogged down in uncertainty and has not gotten desperate enough to start activitely attempting to sort through some of the certainty in search of clarity, in search of priorities and perspectives. In search of next steps and overarching visions. And I am not even talking about eternally grounded visions, but even just a temporal vision attached to your affirmed and articulated values.

I want to have the wherewithal to have as much time as possible with my family which at the same time being able to work at a job that will expand my abilities and natural talents rather than suppressing them, distorting them, leveraging only certain qualities, squeezing me into a deformed shape of myself. Which taints and erodes my ability to achieve my first goal of being with my family and having the emotional wherewithal to appreciate it and enjoy it and fell confident that we have reasonably ordered things. We have given a solid effort to order that which we can order.

I needed to write down and down into the nothing.

I tell my wife things white she is doing other things and she appears to both hear me and not to hear me.

03/27/2021

I took the key from beneath my mother’s pillow and I have been running about the forest with the Woodman and the Wildman ever since. Running along the course of this mid-life crisis that has played out over the course of this year. The political turmoil, the isolation and separation, the alienation that has sidled in, spread into the pried open meridians up and down my weakly riveted soul—absolution and partisan certainly, peppered with rage and distaste for the opposition—least of these, least of the brothers, least of the sons, broken now, settled, interned in the soil. Finally planted down and rooted. Ready to grow. Striped and collapsed upon the fire ripened forest floor. Seeking relief among the arts and only finding burden. Learning the course art of being comfortable with discomfort.

This year is successful if I learn new skills and am able to enter a completely new industry.

This year is successful if I develop my writing from an inchoate longing to a substantial body of work, begun projects, acres of cut cloth to guide me into the next iteration of my existence.

Over coming the drag of aging, health, catastrophe, political corrosiveness, cynicism, puppet shows, the clippety-cloppety fever pitch pace of time.

I want to be generous and open and warm-hearted and kind and loving and to heal this wound, this insecurity, this pain I feel responsible for having inflicted upon my mother, my father, my family as I resolutely attempt to find my footing in this post-modern age. Make money, but remain emotionally available to the people I love. Finding my flow amongst the million tendrils of resistance. Overcoming the heart-stabbing sobs of the two-year-old left out of a round of checkers. Daddy hard at work on his correspondence course—ignoring the wild shattered toddler heart lamentations that would strip his flesh from his old rack of bones.

I affirm my ever be by doing, by engaging, by battling back against absurdity and despair.

The emptiness fills.

The fullness empties.

And how to deliver the mind and the body to a good place, a hungry place, a necessary place, a humble place, an accepting place, a place of perspective, a Plymouth rock, a north shore, a granite slab to perch my being upon, a collection of recollections to sustain my point-of-view but keep it keen, circumspect, agile, open to the new.

I have collected myself before. North Shore 2002, Beijing 2009, Chicago 2020

I would like to say that my journey has delivered me up to an abidingly efficient and unfolding economic trajectory… but instead I have been delivered up to life. I have been delivered up to this rambling hustle of disordered commitments and inchoate longings and desires.

04/04/2021

Why is planning with betsy hard?

Listen to my tongue:

* No smoking, no beer, no sugar carbs
* Better dental hygiene
* Lower stress (breathing)
* Better hydration

This year overcame

* Knee, hip, ankle
* Back, neck, shoulder
* Leg sores (circulation)
* Achilles heel
* Costochondritis— chest tightness, parallels with heart-attack

Follow your weakness down, follow your weakness down.

04/09/2021

And we have crossed the desert and arrived at the source.

The truth has to be nurtured. This is valuable. You’re going to have to work at it.

05/11/2021

Afternoon. Much sun. Playing the guitar. Should be doing my taxes. Now journaling. Taking time to note how nice it was to play guitar in the afternoon in the sun and how uncosnflicted I felt and how my fingers had surprised me and I had played something new and had been able to mash in some kind of *Yo La Tengo*  into my evolving style. I did an extended jam- still in E. Really just trying to get those intervals down in E before transposing them around too much. With a capo I would have a broad array of keys available to me, more than enough for my fold purposes. And with a little more awareness and anchoring of the fret board I should have access to whole bunch of learned and intuited arrangements. Once you really start following the intervals and anticipating the finger a little bit, or at least finger in such as way not to run out of fingers and to give yourself options to move forward or back in a song. Fingering is so much more important than note. At least for me at this point. My technique for getting an on key note is there, it’s a guitar for heaven’s sake, how betsy works her magic with the violin I will never know. At any rate, I was pkayed some of the best, most enjoyable guitar of my life after smoking after having sworn off smoking until after Hans’s visit. I really, really, really need to. I know this. Atman is here to make it happen. Stripping us away. This is how to disappear completely.

Am left with the question:

#1 Can I really quit. Can I really just cold turkey really cut back on the amount that I am smoking after the protracted process that it has been to actually follow through on my professed desires to do so? What if tomorrow I start getting up, getting out for a heart-waking shakeout and then follow that up with my stretching. This way I could shower or I could not depending on my modd, my aroma. Not having to worry about my pot odorous morning stench would be a time saving efficiency for sure. Not to mention giving me a clear-headed foundation for the day. I have a theory that it is infinitely easier to go the whole day without smoking if I don’t some in the morning than to only smoke in the morning. Meaning that if I smoke in the morning I am almost definitely going to smoke at least one or more times over the course of the rest of the day. I’ll have that come day blah feeling and want to get up again. Ultimately, the smoking puts me in some pretty unproductive, unraveling loops, but I think I have figured out some systems to catch up to them and collect the resulting streams into some semblance of systematic reflection. I am beginning to crave the possibilities of fiction and revision for both personal and publishable communications.

5/12/2021

And then just through that door all of those liabilities that have made your life contingent,

They are your strengths, they are your special powers and there is a quest that calls their talents forth. Get going!

09/15/2021

Praise be Atman. Praise be earth. Praise be the hurricane living in me and the mirth that rolls me up upon her shores. I measure the symmetry. I fall asleep creaking the fantasy haze. This was a night. This was a night. I was a night barber. Night gardener. Purple haze. Purple memory garden haze and the whole of it. The humanity of it. The humanity of madness. The pain of it. The unrailing. The derailing. The losing of the self into the hurriance of it. The shame of it. The shit of it. The ever thereness of it. The quitting . The revivial. The taking of the train. The momentary lapse. The addiction. The quiver in the arrow. The bow. The pain. The shark. The jolt of lightening. Anger and heartache. Where difference from friend hardship melody. Posse and pistols. Cawing of crows. Sandals pounding through your memory gown. I was a kingdom lover. I was exposed life a senator. I was a child. I was mild and intelligent and sucked under by the memory of the kind. The memory of the king is my sweetest barber lion calling memory cupcake sould in the time of the harboy people and I talked to him at CHirtams what di he say I don’t know I heard what you had said to me and I let go I went home I left go and wen thome and I was lost to the process I wam so sorry aI didn’t think that it could be donw but then I sterad to do it I just started to wrte and not worry about what comae aout and I stoppred workry ing about everj it I was writing the wridanjnaa kkra;gijoe’JIOWEMFKME’FKMOAGANKASFAK

EOJSDFMKLSDFDMKAMKAFDSKJASF

I SIMPLY JUST STARED TO TALK TO MYSELF IN THE WILDERNESS AND FIND AT3Q4W TMKAFL;MAFSD.FMKLAMKLFMPE’KRLEMKELRMFKLDM THAT BOTTOMED OUT SPACE

We in this time of nothingness. We in this time of nothingness.

This silence.

This memory revivial.

This kindowm coming,

This holy earth

This Jot of grace

I came to you,

I lost myself in this,

She is of the earth and I am of the earth

Memiory cupcake and holiday mirth,

Haunted by okld cowrokers

Drunk at the company partery

Touched dSeen inn the memiry dream.

And then to write something out. To write something straight and focused and honest and true and something that maybe alluded to other things and something that maybe alluded to bigger things and other people. And people could feel like they could inhabit that world. And that is what good painters do. And that is what artisits do and there is a strange line to walk and there is a strange line to move along and this is not about any of that. Not about your dead freidn or your sudden heart attack. Or your north wisdom warning of the ruggedness of life and you running out4 t4o see m e that tend of my life. What is that block in you. When you play the guitar when you sit down to comp[ose something. When you try tto follow a recursion through in your mind. When you would try and come up with a chess strategy and you kept faaling off to different sides of it. Couldn’t keep it all in your head. What is this block. Where is the clarity. How can you hold it all together and hold it inside of you. This is perhaps madness, but to some extent perhaps you need this. You need to explore this. You need to kfind your way in the night thought this because this is where you want tot exist. This is where you want tot live and be and grow and stretch and joke and jive and grow and greet. And nothing is going to bring us home to you like the broken part of this. The energy ssucking part of this. Where are the words. You wanted the words and you wanted them to come wuikcly. Maybe this was not the way that you should wrte. Maybe this was not the way that you were destined to write, but I think it is a legitimate way. I think it could be a legitamte way. To find that frequency. To find that telling frequency twhere you can just relay the words and you can find a rhtym and you can find a voice and you can get into he voice and write it down like it was a transcription from the radio. And this is part of the story with boy that runs, maybe he hears voices and they dictate stories to him and he writes them down and then it turns into poetry and other stories that he shares with his little sistera snd his little sisters are kind of like his daughters or at least he is srort of like an uncle to them. He sits by the window and writes in his tight little hand in his lined notebook. He writes down words and the words come easily and they pile up and the words are where he hides and he is afraid that he is hiding in the words and the words came out so crazily and he had presumed that if he could only get over the hump thenhe could do really productive work, but he didn’t know how to get over the hump. Solitude seemed like it could be a key. Solitude and silence and stretching. All of these things needed to be explored and they seemed necessary to explored. He had to explore them. They would be his life. But he had to be disciplined about it. Maybe that is why he needed the muse. Maybe that is why he needed the muse. Perhaps this is why he needed the Muse and needed to think through it. And needed to settle. If he could not settle and if his sanity remained so tenuous and if he couldn’t keep it all together and he couldn’t contribute to culture and he couldn’t delight in all of these fruits of labor and fruits of love and striving stabs at extending language and understanding. Our imperfectness as people and that being okay the messiness being okay. And that is okay and we went out wandering and we were beating drums and calling to the streets and I have a memory of heart beats. I have a memory of heart attacks. I have nothing in me that can bring you back to me I am laone. I am beating a drum. I am calling to the streets memory harlem and the shooting of the good man and this was the turncoat honesty that you left me with. Your memory heartbreak is the stone cold memory game and I was the heathen in the heart break. I can’t help you out. You came out to help me. Thank you. Thank you for coming out to help me. I laid down in the road and you had nothing to say to me. I lost. I am lost. I lost and I am lost and we fell asleep and were victims of our uselessness. I went another way and I got stuck. I got stuck going another way and ll of the ideas kept coming out and piling up and I was trying to find new ways of thinking about things.

The tension of being in a focused and knowledge acquisitional mindset, but then also being loose and open and flexible and open and seeking new ideas. Sneaking up on new ideas. Allowing new ideas to sneek up on you.

***ZEN***

禅

Dr. Suzuki

“Power” Robert Greene

“Golden Age of Zen” John Wu

02/08/2022

Its okay to be a rank hobbiest. You need to start somewhere. You get interested in something and then you brrow down into it. Seek it out. Lose yourself in the process. The becoming. The being. The economic necessity. The pillar of strength and reason for the family. Rational. Appetites under wraps. Committed.

Not being able to remember a name and then drifting into a zen emptiness epiphany. Not time sensitive. The knowledge is there. IF it is time sensitive then by all mean ask someone, or google it, but if it is not and you have a moment, just relaxed. Look into the blank in your memory, let swirl the associated memoires and associations. The texts and the references, the articles and the notes,

Breath in the nothing. The floating cypher. The appetite less appetite. Thankful. Counting blessings. Recognizing challengins. Acknowledging them, offering them up to the integration-- sleep, habit, support, time, resources, wherewithal.

4 years since China. Since 3 year old Esme sleeping through dinners-- hot pot and dishes, the gracious recipient of gifts from friendly people we met. Small things, but gracious. People in other countries seem like better hosts. Selfish me. Fraught wherewithal me. Ungrounded. Unmoored in the long term. Playing roullete in the chamber of my years.

My daughter walking around me and pulling me out of the zone, as I seek concentration and she cried because she wants Bonnie her doll to climb on me and I have the solfeggio frequencies bringing me down and her piercing complaints and the intensity of my need to break away, and my snake hearted grounding, my unadulterated ambition-- not just for me, but for my family, my daughter, this desire, this need that shall justify all of this casual cruelty and embarrassing spectacle of turning one’s self inside out.

Pressure equation. Obsidian stone. Rembrandt mirror. Looking. Recording. How do you get it to come out right. How do you market it. How do you refract that light, experience in a nourishing way. Creative engagement with life, with memory, with image creation, preservation, craft-- and all of those bafflingly numerous levels of craft and technique.

Watercolor impressions, applied in layers.

Organization built over time.

The visceral feeling of developing

**ZAZEN**

03/15/2021

Zen and the great arts:

* tea ceremony: “the hot water of tea”
* painting
* writing

What we need is fire, flow, rhythm, gaiety, preparedness.

These are games. The kind of roles we play.

Life is in turn prickly and gooey.

Death and being transferred. Loss of control.

Understanding Zen is not about understanding Zen.

Leave words, ideas behind.

Acknowledge the limitations of words, thinking.

Not a doctrine. Not a philosophy (intellectual net to catch the fish of reality)

It’s more like water. The universe is fluid--- always changing. Stand on water and drown.

To swim you relax, you learn how to breath in the water.

There is one great energy and we have given it many names. God the father all mighty. Dao. Buddha. Atman.

Things that sound pious stink of Zen. *Talhata*. That. Suchness. Da, da, da. The 10,000 things, one suchness.

That thou art. Supposing darkness won out, wouldn’t that be terrible.

Drift like cloud, flow like water.

Sex, money, vocation, body—let’s be completely here.

Stop thinking, still mind. Stop thinking, pay attention, listen.

The walking itself is the thing.

Zazen—

* stop thinking
* think about something that has no meaning
* Om
* Moo
* Mantra
* Satori—walk on air, ordering experience two inches off the ground.

Human organism is a subtle combination of hardness and softness.

Private Buddha—off into the transcendental world. The transcendental world is the everyday world.

Buddha comes back. He comes back because the worlds were the same.

We move in strang democracies, a million masks of god.

He’s looking at Shiva in you. Bodhisatva does not go into catatonic slumber

Abstractions come out of order, not chaos.

Too strong of a current for the wire.

The doors of reality open to reveal an ordinary old man, doddering at his desk, lost among the labrynths of his stack papers.

Magic in the simplest things

Marvelous power

Drawing water, carrying wood. Primal man.

Home where you are in the light.

Zen liberates from culture.

**03/16/2021**

Hundreds of moths lost in candles.

Cannot give up thinking about self, living spontaneously.

Zen—living spontaneously: reaction to the burden of self-consciousness.

Tang Dynasty (700 ad – 1000 ad)

Joke => laughter

Zen study

=> awakening satori, enlightened; something that happens suddenly; a joke is an a-ha moment.

=> designed not to impart information, but to get rid of a false problem

=》 breathing (counting breaths) nondual objectless meditation => focus on object

* Zazan sitting meditation (sometimes with esoteric mantras)
* Kinhin => walking meditation
* Kensho => seeing one’s true nature
* Taoist Physical Practices: Sun wukong
* Calligraphy: Guanxin, Muqi fachang
* Chanting Sutras
* Qigong—energy concentration
* Rinzai school
* State of blockage—don’t know how to react to it in a normal automatic way.
* “Rite for releasing the hungry ghost”
* Steel on flint- chopping sound
* The teacher is infinitely clever and will never cease surprising you. You react and if it hits it hits.
* Give up to be spontaneous…
* Soto – training school … seeking fundamental honestyw

***Prayer***

Prayer is an act of empathy and a practice of openness,

An empathtic act of taking your pain and the pain of others

And offering it up to God.

Meditation is prayer. Walking is prayer. Crying is prayer.

Learning to pray. Learning to give things up. Learning to release things. Let things go. Give them up to God.

Prayer is an empathetic act.

Taking pain and giving it up to God.

Prayer is an empathetic act.

Taking pain and giving it up to God.

Prayer without ceasing.

My prayer has always been love.

Everything I feel returns to you somehow.

I don’t know where to begin.

What is that verse that says God can understand you even if you can’t articulate what is on your heart.

We can’t talk about how we pray because I don’t trust that you’ll trust me. This religious cage has a trap door in it, I feel forewarned away. Politics is a pitchfork in the hay. Static in the tubes broadcasts at the close of day.

I don’t know where to begin. Can we just be? You and me. And what’s that song that they sing for the dead?

Hold on tight. Hold hands. Get through it. Draw near. Draw close.

Work. Family. Health.

Intention. What is the intention?

Prayer is this very specific Catholic thing, that I do and I am just like do into Jesus that I don’t have time for anyone else anymore.

How do you connect with God? How do you renew your spirit? How do you sustain your spirit?

Prayer: without the prayer the words are naught the person is naught

We can grow—yes, we can, we are growing and we will have negative emotions when our differences alienate us from one another, but there is a deeper love, a deeper wisdom, a deeper commitment that can assuage this chest tightening emotion, this brain browning out gust—distant, dislocated, tight and caught in our old thoughts—corrosive loops, a centrifuge of short-comings sped up and smashed into one another in the quiet, reflective moments of your life.

**STRESS**

Emotional Stress can be invigorating.

Physical Stress can be invigorating.

What’s the difference?

The important of GOOD, SOLID, HEALTHY emotional bowel movements

Learning to keep track of your emotional blood sugar

SUBSTANCE

Alcohol and THC help me with inspiration, but not follow through—caffeine helps me plow through and do, but clouds my head over time. Rigid habits—necessary, but

04/02/2021

And then the loops through coffee and weed and alcohol and sleep, sometimes early on the couch, nose straight up at the ceiling, book or magazine splayed on his chest.

He opens his eyes. You going to bed she says as she changes from on pair of black pants into another. He blinks— yes. And then he gets up and brushes his teeth— mentally measuring his eye bags— takes note of their hue, their shade. He’s tired. He’s been asleep. Should drink some water. He drinks a mason jar full of water and urinates and then goes to bed.

She’s stretching on the back roller watching a bake off. Did he say goodnight or did he just walk through. I probably waved he thinks. I waved and she was just watching her show and didn’t see me wave he rationalizes. A wave can be really intimate—especially if you catch someone’s eye with it. But she’s wrapped up in the pastry drama and her own self-defeating loops starting at her 40+ years and ending at her hating feeling 70.

I am drunk and stoned and 42 and have been out of a job for two months now— my days are an intentional haze and my evening are a blurring and chemical curtain drawn around the day.

The writing can be uneven—

I think that is the point of a first draft— you let the good energetic writing and the salient ideas and connection design the narrative structure. I don’t know how to tell a story exactly— so I gather my material and get to know it and sort it and distill it and allow the material to suggest some sort of form or flow or structure. This is basically McPhee— which I need to read again— I find the idea exhilarating—completely liberating.

The secret to smoking pot is not smoking pot.

Not drinking alcohol is so good for me. As is not drinking coffee. Not smoking everyday will truly be an accomplishment. Controlling my habits. Committed to my vocation. Accepting the pressure from my family, dovetailing it into flow. Nourishing the people around me. Air—breathing; Water—consuming; Earth—nourishing; fire—activity. Balance.

Anchor:

* Travel
* Training
* Books
* Profession
* Shoes
* Clothes
* Family
* Friends
* Projects
* Curating life—décor
* The wind—in the leaves, the wind chimes
* The weather
* Grocery shopping, cooking
* Music
* Talent
* Cooking
* Stretching has changed my life. It has connected my body to my intellect—my body to my mind.

4/1/2021

Without caffeine in your system you can sit for much longer periods of time without getting jittery.