

To live is to feel

by Piya Tan

We tend to think too much. We think about religion, about work, about money, about people, about sex. We think about ourselves. We think about others. Thinking invariably leads to ugly stress.

I say “invariably” because whatever we think about never turns out to be really true. Of course, you might rebut, I remember I was right that time about that thing about that person. Well, you were “right,” because what you thought later fitted with what you had thought earlier. So you thought you were right.

We like to THINK we are right: My idea is right; my opinion is right; my suggestion is the best; I am right; I am the best. The bottom line is that thinking is often about “I, me or mine.”

For most people, there is always an “I” behind the thinking. The Buddha teaches us to remove the “I, me, mine” behind the thinking. Try this:

Instead of thinking, “I am right,” say “Why is this idea so important to me?”
Instead of saying, “He hurt MY feelings,” seek “What is this really about?”
Instead of claiming, “All this is MINE,” ask “So what? Really!”

What’s so bad about thinking? It involves words. Thinking is to put what we see, hear, smell, taste, touch and feel into words.

But words about seeing is not seeing. We cannot summarize the sunset into words.
Words about music is not music. Nor are thoughts about music.
Words about a flower’s fragrance totally loses its fragrance.
Words about the taste of food never fills the belly.
Words about how we feel is not really how we feel.
Words about how we think often hide the real thing.

Words escape the mouth but imprison the mind. The word is not the thing.

A first rule of Buddhist meditation is to still the body and speech. We are told by the meditation teacher to first sit comfortably still and keep silent. A calm body and a closed mouth conduce to a still mind. We have begun to meditate. Just, that is.

Even if we were to hold our body still in a temperature-regulated aerated fibre-glass body-glove and to tape our mouths, we still cannot really silence the mind.

Why is it so difficult to silence the mind? Well, this is what I have been trying to write about all this while. We think too much!

But you are writing this! you rebut; these are WORDS! You are right, these are words, but they are words with FEELINGS. They are not perfect (no word is), I

admit, but let us see them as a finger pointing to the moon. You can really see this moon only if you truly feel.

To FEEL is to experience life directly.

What you see is what you get.

What you hear is what you get.

What you smell is what you get.

What you taste is what you get.

What you feel is what you get.

What you mind is what you get.

To feel is to LIVE the present moment of the visual forms, the sounds, the smells, the tastes, the touches, the feelings and the thoughts, and simply see them for what they are.

To feel is to LOVE the present moment, to see the other person as he or she is, to accept it unconditionally, to take a situation for what it really IS. And not to paste the past onto it, nor shove it into the future.

Live in the past, you are dead. Dream into the future, you are not born. Be present!

For all you really ever have is the present. Let go of the thoughts (they are always about the past or the future). Feel the moment. Know it for what it is... You will know what to do next.

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