

ALBA WHITEBOARD

Day Retreat - 18 February 2023

The Wisdom of Being in Doing'

Led by Nick Carroll

Thank you friends for joining the retreat.

Please use the space below to share your reflections. The board will be cleared a week after the retreat. You may wish to put your name or leave it anonymous.

"The Wisdom of Being in Doing" - the title is so appropriate in context to the Dhamma practice. We have to accept the available material and start working with it. Incorporating the Dhamma principles into the moments of mundane life experiences. In Indian context there goes a folk saying - "till there is the flow of breath there's no escape from doing". Thus if the wisdom of being is discovered or related to while in doing mode - it's like working out an intelligent balance between the Guiding Ideals & the Practicalities.

Have done a couple of retreats with you and really appreciate the effortless, minimal & patient approach and the way you guide us into the spaciousness of silent, reflective contemplation.

"Just being present, sitting with the uneasy feeling - when one accepts and sits with the unease then something happens - the feeling loses its overwhelming influence" ,

"Sitting with the feeling is to experience the effect of a feeling on the body in terms of physical sensations" - are some of the home take aways.

Thank you Nick, Randula, Mark, Martin, Andrew and Hello to Vivian Miles & Madeline.

Thank you Sangha.

The paper Nick mentioned in today's q&a session:

[Self and No-Self in Psychotherapy](#)

Thank you so much xx

Thank you for leading us so beautifully in the puja and meditations today, Nick. Your insights into investigating our day-to-day experiences were clear and illuminating. I liked the phrase 'right now it's just like this' ; I've been practising with 'being with what is' for quite some time now and as a consequence I find my life (despite difficulties) much easier to accept with equanimity.

With thanks and metta

Madeline

Thank you both for your feedback and thank you Madeline for sharing the link to Jack Engler's excellent paper.

I didn't know it was available online and was going to look through my collection of various physical papers to re-read it!

Engler's and Fulton's paper is worth reading for it not only has a helpful theoretical description of No-Self (sometimes referred to as Not-Self), but it also gives a very good summary and description of the Internal Family

Systems model (IFS) that I spoke about, and how compatible it is with Buddhist psychology and teachings.

I can suggest another read, one by Thanissaro Bikkhu, a well known and respected Buddhist teacher and writer, on the same theme of Anatta. "Selves and Not-Self: The Buddhist Teaching on Anatta" by Thanissaro Bikkhu. It's a series of talks he gave in France which can be found on the Access to Insight website.

[Selves & Not-self: The Buddhist Teaching on Anatta - Access to Insight](#)

You'll find it's a denser read than Engler's and Fulton's paper!

All good wishes

Nick

Thank you Nick for such an enjoyable & valuable day. Thank you for your teaching & your wisdom.

With Good Wishes,
Alison Ashwell Wood

Dear Nick, dear friends,

I wish I could claim responsibility for posting the information about the paper Nick mentioned during his talk, but it was posted, I think, by one of the co-hosts in the hall.

I am really interested in the teaching on not self, and have also found Joseph Goldstein's talks on this subject very illuminating. They can be found on the Dharma Seed app. To help us always be aware of our selves as being comprised of a continuous stream of actions, he suggests thinking in the present continuous tense, omitting the 'I' from the sentence: there is walking,

there is seeing etc. A grammatical construct I also find helpful in fostering awareness of not self comes from the Irish language. In Irish when we want to say 'I feel sad', for example, it is grammatically constructed as 'tá brón orm', literally translated as 'there is sadness on me.' This helps to reinforce the understanding that 'I am not sad' but that sadness is an emotion that comes, and is impermanent.

I hope that might be of some help.

With metta and blessings,

Madeline

Thank you Alison.

And thank you Madeline. Yes, Joseph Goldstein is an excellent Dhamma teacher. He communicates beautifully and clearly. Well worth reading. Taking the 'I' out of sentences helps objectify the process of experience, helping us to take it a less personally - just a process.

I forgot to mention the other book I referred to by Bessel van der Kolk on how the body holds our experiences.

The Body Keeps the Score: Brain, Mind, and Body in the Healing of Trauma
by [Bessel van der Kolk M.D.](#)

In this context it is good to reflect on the truth of Buddha's words in one's own experience:

" I declare that it is in this fathom long body with its perception and mind, that there is the world, the arising of the world, the cessation of the world and the path leading to the cessation of the world".

That most profound and wonderful statement is a declaration of the Four Noble Truths, the eightfold Noble path and the end of suffering.

Nick

Dear All,

Madeline, it was me who posted the link to Jack Engler (no big deal), and I'm yet to read it.

Thank you Nick, for the fantastic talk in the afternoon (I was only able to access that one), it truly resonated on so many levels.

I have been curious about therapy/trauma especially talking or somatic therapies, and their relationship to buddhist meditation/practice/sitting in silence.

This talk threw light upon many of my questions, and I will take them away for contemplation.

In our breakout room there was talk about 'why bother with things of the past we may not even consciously remember, when there's enough to deal with in the here and now' (crudely put).

We explored the idea of past hurts and trauma held in the body has an impact on our daily lives and shows up in all sorts of ways: reactivity, illness, emotions beyond what seems reasonable in a given situation.

I felt Gabor Mate's work fits beautifully here: Canadian- Hungarian doctor who dealt with many areas of illness (mainly mental illness and addiction) and published many wonderful books, including When the Body Says No. Explains this phenomenon really well, I think.

<https://drgabormate.com/book/when-the-body-says-no/>

Madeline, your reminder of avoiding the use of the 1st person whenever possible was a valuable one for me, and fascinating re the Irish expression: 'there is sadness on me'. So beautiful and useful!

Eszter

Eszter, Thank you for posting the link to Engler's & Fulton's paper and the link to Gabor Mate's excellent book *When the Body Says No*. I find his YouTube talks are also very easy to listen to and learn from.

Thank you also for sharing the feedback from your breakout group. Sounds like it was a good group. I've also had some back channel feedback one of which included " I loved my break out group and it was so good that we did not have to chose someone to give feedback, It made it so much more relaxed for me."

A statement attributed to the Buddha comes to mind. On the lines of:

'If you want to know the past, look at the present. If you want to know the future, look to the present.' Simply beautiful and to the point!

Nick
