

## If It's Not Neutral Or Loving, Let It Go

### Introduction

My teacher, Charles, has a few key instructions. One of the first instructions that I heard was: "If it's not neutral or loving, let it go." 'It' refers to a thought or a feeling that we're having. This article gives detailed insight into this core instruction from Charles.

### Inspiration For This Article

At the last Thursday meeting three people expressed how much they're so very tired of their negative/restrictive ways of thinking and living. The existence of these negative and restrictive thoughts and actions may have originated from other lifetimes, may have originated in utero, may be the effects of the behavior of other people and definitely are present because of their daily negative thought patterns toward themselves and toward others. The origin of the negative thoughts and feelings is not as important as Charles' instruction of: if it's not neutral or loving, let it go.

### We Are Already Perfect

The Dalai Lama, when he first came to America, said that he was shocked at how much negative self talk that Americans were saying to themselves. In the culture that he grew up in, children are taught that they're already perfect at the core of their being; at the core of who they really are.

At times all people have tendencies and behaviors that don't reflect this perfection. These negative behaviors and thoughts are not who they are. The negative thought patterns are something that people do. This is a crucial distinction between who we really are and what we do. We're already perfect as who we really are and each of us has negative thoughts and negative behaviors.

The Judeo-Christian religion has the same view that we're already perfect inside. In Genesis 1:27: "So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them." God created us in his own image. We're not broken down, messed up people. We're perfect beings who act and think, at times, in broken down and messed up ways.

## The Mind Monster

The thoughts in our mind can be beautiful, loving and kind. The thoughts in our mind can also be harsh, hateful, angry, fearful, full of guilt, judgemental, jealous, envious and blaming. This article addresses this second way that the mind thinks – the angry, guilty, judgemental, fearful and blaming thoughts that the mind produces. I call this negative and harsh way that the mind thinks ‘the mind monster.’ (This is a term that I use in a light way).

The mind monster gets stronger when we let it loose: when we allow the negative thoughts toward ourselves and toward others to keep going. The mind monster wants to keep on getting stronger and stronger. When we let the negative thoughts keep going on, it’s like having the mind monster working out and getting stronger at the gym.

*The mind monster wants to keep on living and growing and getting bigger and stronger.* This last sentence explains why we can’t just drop a thought that’s driving us crazy or driving us into hell. The more that we’ve allowed the mind monster to get stronger, the more control that the mind monster has with what we think and in what we feel, and the stronger the mind monster becomes.<sup>1</sup>

*The mind monster gets stronger with every charged negative thought and charged negative feeling that we have.*<sup>2</sup> Every charged negative thought and feeling is like the mind monster doing another repetition at the gym with weights to get stronger. When we really ‘get’ that every charged negative thought and feeling makes the mind monster stronger, we’ll become more vigilant to monitor our thoughts and to not want to ‘go negative.’ Negative thoughts and feelings are going to keep coming up. The question is: What are we going to do when negative thoughts and feelings come up? Are we going to condemn the mind monster and fight it?

If we add more hate to what our mind is thinking (like I hate that I’m having these thoughts *again*), then we’ve just given the mind monster some more weights to work out with and to get stronger. This is why I said that I use the term ‘mind monster’ in a light way; like a cartoon monster and not like a real life monster. The term ‘mind monster’ let’s us identify that our thoughts have been hijacked by the mind monster.<sup>3</sup> Do we want to let the mind monster keep going? The longer the mind monster keeps going and the more we hate and fight the mind monster, the stronger it gets.

## The First Three Actions To Defuse The Mind Monster (More Actions Will Follow)

Charles has not talked of the mind monster. His saying is so simple and clear: “If it (a thought or a feeling) is not neutral or loving, let it go.”

### The First Action To Defuse The Mind Monster

First we need to be aware that the mind monster is active; that our thoughts and feelings are not neutral or loving. The mind monster, for many people, has been so active that it doesn't make us jump (like when we touch a hot burner on a stove) when it's thoughts keep going. We're so used to the mind monster talking that it may take us minutes to wake up to the fact that we've been listening to the negative thoughts and have been having negative feelings for many minutes. At that time, don't beat ourselves up. That beating up adds more fuel for the mind monster to keep going. When we wake up to the mind monster talking we don't want it to keep going and getting stronger. At times, just in identifying the mind monster, the mind monster can vanish. At these times, it's simple. We don't want the mind monster to exercise and we'll take away the weights (the ongoing negative thoughts and feelings).

Often the charged negative thoughts and feelings are so strong that it's not this simple for the mind monster to stop being active. This is the time when we need to actively do something more to stop the ongoing turmoil of the mind monster.

### The Second Action To Defuse The Mind Monster Is To Relax

People who have read previous articles know what I'm going to say for us to relax. Begin with deeper and slower abdominal breathing. You can reference previous articles to find out why I recommend abdominal breathing.<sup>4</sup> Abdominal breathing brings us into the calming, relaxing and grounding part of our nervous system. This is the type of breathing that helps us to relax, and we definitely need to relax when the mind monster is on the rampage.

### The Third Action To Defuse The Mind Monster Is To Scan For Tension And To Release Tension In Our Body

Our muscles become tighter when we experience charged negative thoughts and feelings. By decreasing muscle tension, we also decrease the density of our body. This has the effect to 'lighten up' our body and our mind. We can stretch, move or massage the tight muscles to help them to relax.

### **More About The Mind Monster**

The mind monster is like a big bully that is hurting inside and wants to hurt other people. When the bully hurts other people, the bully feels stronger and wants to keep hurting others more and more. This bullying behavior comes because the bully has been hurt.

Our mind monster is like the bully that feels hurt and lashes out at ourselves (self-criticism and self-loathing), lashes out at others (blaming, judging, hating, fearing) or lashes out because of doubt and confusion.

### **Leaning Into and Leaning Away From The Mind Monster**

I lean into, I come closer to, the mind monster. It doesn't matter to me if the mind monster is there because of past lives, or because of what other people did or said, or because of my own self initiated negative thoughts .... the bottom line is that the mind monster is active and I'd prefer to not be hijacked by the mind monster. I'd prefer to live as who I really am. I'd prefer to live in this moment as an image of God and not as a being who's having an active mind monster running the present moment.

Leaning into means to come closer to what we're feeling and thinking; to feel it more. Leaning into is coming closer to the mind monster. Leaning away is to go toward something else and to, thereby, go away from we're currently thinking and feeling.

Abdominal breathing, writing (journaling), letting go of tension in our body, stretching<sup>5</sup> and drinking water are all ways to lean in. Leaning away from the mind monster is using a mantra or saying affirmations. Meditation and exercise can be either leaning into or leaning away.

### **What Charles Recommends To Let It (The Charged Negative Thoughts and Feelings)**

#### **Go**

Charles recommends abdominal breathing. He also recommends writing, drinking water (to help the emotions flow), to walk or to stretch to help get rid of the tightness and constriction that the mind monster's influence has on our body. He also recommends people to release emotionally by crying or screaming or by pounding on a pillow (without hurting ourselves).<sup>6</sup>

## My Way To Let It Go

I'm a 'leaning into' guy. I also lean away at times, though I'm very primarily a leaning into guy. I get closer to, and more relaxed with, the mind monster. I ask myself: 'Is my breathing tightened? Is my body tense in places?' I then breathe into my belly and let go of the different places of tension in my body. I encourage any release through sound or crying to happen. For me, this release almost always happens with no story or thoughts going on. I can also stretch, move or massage the tight muscles as an aid to help energy flow more through my body. When the mind monster is very active our body becomes more stiff and more tight. I also can add in sitting meditation as a way to lean into, and to eventually relax more into, what is going on inside of me. I also write as a way to gain more insight.

When this isn't working well enough, I begin to lean away and add in a mantra to give my mind something else to focus on. I'd prefer to keep leaning in and to not lean away with a mantra, but there are times when the mind monster is so strong that leaning away helps. As the mind monster calms, I can let go of the mantra and lean even more into the negative thoughts and feelings; not to listen to them, but to gently be with the bullying mind monster. As the mind monster quiets, who I really am emerges more and more.

This is the way that I'm currently aiding the letting go of what isn't neutral or loving. The reader will find what aids them in letting go of what's not neutral or loving. Each person is unique and not one way fits for everyone. Also not one way fits for each time the mind monster shows up for us. Play with how to defuse the mind monster in that moment. Listen to your inner guidance in how to come back to your essential nature as a being living in the image of God.

## Concluding Remarks

This article began by saying that the inspiration for the article was that three people in the last Thursday meeting strongly expressed how tired they are that negative thoughts and feelings have such a big and active role in their lives. Each person has been generating a lot of negative thoughts and feelings toward themselves and toward others *for decades*. (This is common among people. I'm not singling them out as being extraordinarily negative toward themselves and toward others).

They each (as so many people do) let the mind monster actively exercise and get stronger multiple times every day by letting the mind monster go on and on. They continue to listen to their negative thoughts and respond to these thoughts with attention that strengthens the mind monster.

On the good side of things, each of them daily are generating less negative thoughts since beginning their work in the group, and they have a strong desire to continue to lessen the amount of time that negative thoughts and negative feelings are present.

Charles' saying: 'if it's not neutral or loving, let it go' is a practice that they can use more and more. As they don't feed and don't fight the mind monster, the mind monster loses strength. As they release the already held negative thoughts and feelings that are in their body and in their mind, the mind monster loses even more strength.

The mind monster has been built over time. It takes time and effective action for the mind monster to become a mild (formerly wild) mind monster.<sup>7</sup> The mind monster may never go away and that's okay. How strongly the mind monster is an active force in our life is what is important. How much we live as our True Nature, as an image of God, is important.

If we truly want the mind monster to become smaller and smaller in its effect, we need to be vigilant to when it appears and to defuse its strength when it appears. We can defuse its strength by leaning into or leaning away or a combination of leaning into and leaning away from the mind monster.

We also will greatly benefit by releasing any negative thoughts and feelings that we have about anything. There are so many unsaid negative thoughts and feelings that are inside; lying dormant from our current awareness and also giving strength to the mind monster.

An example of a dormant negative thought is any negative judgement that we hold toward anyone or toward ourselves. If there is *anything* in our past that we're not neutral or loving toward, the mind monster gets strengthened from these held negative thoughts and feelings. If there is *anything* in our lives that is not forgiven, the mind monster also gets strength from this. In forgiving it doesn't mean that we condone what has happened. Forgiving means having an inner peace with whatever has happened in our lives; an acceptance that it happened and feeling at least neutral that it happened.

These three people (as do many, many other people) have a lot of work to do to defuse the mind monster in their current thoughts and in what they harbor inside themselves toward themselves and toward others. I like that they're fed up with their mind monster, though their impatience and wanting the mind monster 'to die' adds more energy to the mind monster. Becoming more kind toward themselves, and gently coming closer to the negative thoughts and feelings when they're present will help them live more as who they really are.

The mind monster is not used to love. A bully, when they come to love, no longer bullies; and has remorse for all of its bullying. The mind monster will give us peace when we take away our participation with it and take away our reaction to it.

May these three people and all beings be free and happy.

Footnotes:

- 1 Eckhart Tolle talks about the mind monster as the 'pain body.'
- 2 In reference to every charged negative thought and charged negative feeling, it's the charge that's important. We can not like a brand of hummus or not like to wear a certain shade of green. There can be no charge to not liking the hummus or not liking to wear a certain shade of green. This is okay. The mind monster is not active. We can have preferences without the mind monster being involved. The mind monster only becomes active when we have a charge; when our thoughts and emotions are charged (like when we're having judgemental thoughts toward ourselves or toward others, when we're angry, fearful, jealousy, envious, in great doubt, in great confusion or are blaming others).
- 3 [Click here](#) to read a previous article that discusses more about the mind being hijacked and being taken over by our highly charged negative thoughts and feelings. This previous article goes into detail about the psychological term of amygdala hijack; when our thinking has been taken over by the fear center of the brain.
- 4 Different articles have been written about the importance of breathing into our belly. These articles, with the specific pages referring to abdominal breathing, are [Processing](#) (pg. 4), [Being Triggered](#) (pg. 5) and [Moving Forward When We're In Reaction](#) (pg. 4).
- 5 Stretching and letting go of muscle tension can be viewed as leaning away, though by stretching and letting go of muscle tension, we're leaning into something that the mind monster has caused. Reducing muscle tension produces a letting go of the electrical charge that the mind monster has created in the form of tension in our body. (There is more about electrical charge in the next footnote).

- 6 The negative thoughts and emotions can be released through expressing them, but not by expressing them toward another person. There are times when we're expressing the negative thoughts and emotions by crying or screaming in a way that can re-cycle, and not release, the negative charge. *The more the story (the thoughts) is strong during the expression (crying or screaming), the more chance of re-cycling the negative thoughts and emotions. The more that there is no story (even though a story began the crying or screaming), the more opportunity for the negative thoughts and emotions to release.* Negative thoughts and emotions are inside our body. They're like electrical charges that can be discharged. The more that the charge is discharged, the less strong the mind monster becomes. As this discharge happens repeatedly, the mind monster becomes more and more defused.
- 7 There is a saying: "The path to hell is paved with good intentions." If we have an active and strong mind monster, then all of our good intentions have not been enough to be free of the mind monster. This is why we need effective ways, not just good intentioned ways, for our mind monster to become a barely active presence in our lives.