

Waking Up Is A Rocky Road

Waking Up

Recently some people that have been coming to group regularly have told me that they've been emotionally uncomfortable on and off through the day; sometimes for a short number of days in a row. They weren't complaining. They were reporting about being emotionally uncomfortable. They also have reported to me that, at times, they're feeling as good as they've ever felt in their life. Waking up is a rocky road.

We carry so many uncomfortable and unprocessed experiences. Through the years, while in group with Charles, I've watched myself and others as the burdens within are shed. We become lighter. There is often a dullness that creeps into people as they age. This dullness can be there from childhood.

One Man's Experience

In a sharing last week a man in his twenties said: 'I'm okay.' And a couple minutes later he said: 'I'm half dead.' He's a really nice guy and part of him thinks he's okay. If living half dead is okay, then these two statements work. He then was broken out of his half dead state to feel more than he's probably felt in years.

This temporary opening that he experienced may deepen or he may close up again. The group supports us during these times. We can benefit hugely from the support of coming to group. Each of us needs support as we wake up. There is no religion or spiritual group that advocates 'doing it on your own.'

Video Part One: You Cause Your Pain Yourself

I suggest watching a four and a half minute youtube video before reading further. This video summarizes the work that we've been doing in the group for the last six months: of staying with uncomfortable emotions. The Buddhist monk in the video says the same instructions as Charles and Pema have said, *and in four and a half minutes*. [Click here](#) to watch the video.

He's a bit of a character (as we also are). *I love this teaching because he lives what he says* (about how to work with uncomfortable emotions). It's good to remember that it's taken him many years to live this teaching.

The talk is titled about depression. Later he says that it doesn't matter if it's depression or fear or anxiety or worry or doubt or anger. What he says applies to all of these uncomfortable emotions. He says early in the video: 'There is nobody out there that is causing your pain. You cause your pain yourself.'

This first point is very important. It doesn't matter if your fear or anger or jealousy comes from something that happened between you and your mother, father, sister, friend, husband, wife, teacher, child or neighbor. Each of these people are probably not even there as you feel the pain that you're carrying from the incident. The incident initiated the pain, and *you carry the pain. In this moment you are causing your pain yourself.*

Video Part Two: It's A Painful Feeling. So What?

Three minutes into the video he says: 'So it's a painful feeling. So what?'

So what? Usually when we encounter a painful feeling inside, we want to immediately get away from it. Or we want the painful emotion to go away. Whether it be a physical pain or an emotional pain, our [amygdala](#) (the fear center of our brain) says: 'Get outta here! Stop feeling this!' Sex, drugs, alcohol, and the entertainment industry are booming because they are escapes from feeling uncomfortable.

His simple statement of 'so what?' can be said by him because for years he's stayed in the fire of uncomfortableness, and now it's not as much of a fire for him. *He knows it's only his thinking that is keeping the pain alive.*

For those of us who would still rather run than be with the pain, our amygdala is screaming to get the hell out of here and we're listening to our amygdala! We sure as hell want to be as far from this pain as we can be. (If you read the article [Being Triggered](#), you'll understand more about amygdala hijack).

His years of practice allow him to say: 'It's a painful feeling. So what.' Without years of experience we may say: 'It's a painful feeling. Fuck, fuck, fuck, fuck, fuck!'

Video Part Three: Allow The Space For It To Be There

He goes on to say: 'Allow the space for it (the painful feeling) to be there.'

We need support to allow the space for it to be there. Abdominal breathing, writing, seeking support from a friend, and walking (it's said that walking clears the head) are all very good supports for allowing space when our amygdala is screaming at us to get away, to energize the story, or to blame. If we meditate or exercise without using meditation or exercise as a spiritual bypass, then these could also support us.

Video Part Four: As You Stop Feeding That Painful Feeling

He goes on to say: 'As you stop feeding that painful feeling, the painful feeling will fade away by itself. But you feed that painful feeling with your thoughts.'

We've had triggers in our lives that are no longer triggers. We've had painful events in our life that we've come to peace with. This healing of past painful events can even have a very positive effect on our lives. Whereas before they held us back in victim or anger, they can propel us forward when they heal. As Paramahansa Yogananda said: 'Nobody wants sorrow or suffering. And yet, without sorrow and suffering we would not learn compassion.'

Video Part Five: It Works

Bhante Vimalaramsi concludes by saying: 'It takes practice to be able to do this. And the practice that I'm showing you it works.'

Conclusion

This way that he and Charles and Pema describes works for me and has worked for many others. We want to be free. And the primary person stopping us from being more free is ourselves. The primary way we stay trapped is by our thoughts, and thinking the same negative thoughts again and again and again. Group helps us to get back on track; to go toward Home, and to live more free.