

Welcoming Thoughts and Feelings

A liberating glimpse doesn't put an end to ignorance. Although we recognise that we are and have always been pure consciousness, somehow there are times when we seem to forget this. So what, if anything, should we do about this forgetting? This is Francis's advice:

Q (from email): Since we already are, and have always been, and will always be what we are, is it worthwhile to study how this is forgotten and leads to a sense of lack and seeking?

FL: If I have forgotten that I am universal consciousness, then how do I know that I have forgotten? It's very simple, because I suffer, because I experience a sense of lack, psychological suffering and seeking. Then it is worthwhile to study or whatever. It is worthwhile to try to get out of the mud. Because if I don't do anything, I stay in the mud. The guy who is lost in the forest and says, 'I don't know which way I have to walk to get out of the woods, so since I don't know which way I have to walk, I stay there' – he's going to starve and die in the woods. The guy who is smarter, looks at the stars, finds the North Star and keeps walking always in the same direction. Perhaps the edge of the woods was 100 yards away, and he's going to walk 10 miles. But at the end of the day, he'd be out of the woods. So it's the same here, if you don't do anything, if you are in the mud, you stay in the mud.

So the first determination to make, because I'm trying to answer the worthwhile thing, is am I in the mud or not? And the answer is, am I experiencing a sense of lack? If yes, I have to follow my desire to get out of the woods, to get out of the mud. It's a game, it's a game like the Boy Scouts, it's a treasure hunt. I have to hunt the treasure. I have no choice, otherwise I stay there and I stay with my sense of lack. My sense of lack is a good thing, it is the incentive for me to go back home, not to stay in the woods.

However, there is another aspect to this question, because the question is, is it worthwhile to study how this was forgotten? How did I forget what I was, what I am? And that is not important, it is the wrong question. How did I forget in the past? That's not a good question. The good question is, how am I forgetting now, right now? What is the problem right now? Not ten years ago or in my childhood, how did it come about that I believe to be a separate entity? That's irrelevant. ...

So yes, it is worthwhile to investigate how I am forgetting the universal consciousness which I am right now.

Q (ctd): Are those mechanisms of forgetfulness what are called vasanas, and the yoga of everyday life and its grace of reminding?

FL: Yes, this mechanism of forgetfulness can be called vasanas. But there are two kinds of vasanas, or of mechanisms of forgetfulness. There are vasanas that are active, and there are vasanas that are dead. Vasanas are still active as long as I still believe to be a separate consciousness. Once I have seen in a direct apperception beyond the mind, my true nature, all the vasanas are deactivated, so to speak. All of a sudden, they lose their efficiency. They retain some residual seeming efficiency, but they cannot take us for a very long ride any more. ... The yoga of everyday life is events in everyday life that bring to light the residual vasanas, so that they can be revealed and dissolved.

Q (ctd): Is the consistent knowing of this truth what you call stabilisation?

FL: I would say stabilisation is when the residual vasanas have been sufficiently extinguished, so that you can enjoy peace and happiness most of the time. The consistent knowing of the truth is not something intellectual. It is the lasting experience of peace and happiness. The knowing of the truth is not something that we can hold in the mind. That would be a concept. The experience, the knowing of the truth, is the experience of peace and happiness. It's like an ocean of peace behind the events, behind the perceptions.

[Francis Lucille, 2015 Spring Retreat, Week 1 Day 1]

The deepest roots of the sense of separation are an existential fear and a sense of lack. The Direct Path teaching says we need to face these feelings and welcome them. But what does that really mean? Here is Francis's explanation:

FL: We have to understand what it means to face the fear. It doesn't mean to try to understand it, because at its very core it is irrational. An attitude in which I try to understand the fear to get rid of the fear – because that's the purpose – is not an attitude of welcoming. The question is, how can I welcome the fear? And the way to welcome the fear is twofold. Number one, don't try, through any fashion or form, to eliminate it, to suppress it, to repress it, to change it. Number two, don't do what it tells you to do. The fear is going to tell you, it's too hot here, do something else, go to the fridge, have some ice cream, or call a friend, or it's boring, or it's not a good place to be. Get the hell out of here. Don't do as it is telling you to do.

But on the other hand, don't try to be smarter than the fear, because that's not welcoming. If you try to be smarter than the fear, it's because you want to control the fear. ... The fear is going to tell you 'I'm going to kill you'. And you have to be willing. It is the esoteric meaning of Abraham's sacrifice. The body is your son. You are Abraham. God is telling you, give me your son; the fear is telling you, I'm going to kill your son. You have to accept it, out of love for the truth, to go through the gates of death.

[Francis Lucille, 2016 Thanksgiving Retreat Week 2, day 6]

For some, these feelings have been suppressed since early childhood especially those brought up in a culture where it is seen as unacceptable to express feelings. The British 'stiff upper lip' is just one example. That repression can sometimes be hidden so well, it can be misconstrued as the spiritual quality of detachment. This is how Francis explains the distinction:

Q: Francis, can you talk or explain what will be the difference between somebody blocking his or her emotions, and being detached from emotions?

FL: Let's take an analogy, let's say you burnt yourself. Some people, they resist the pain, in other words, they create in the body a network of contractions in order not to feel the pain. But there is another option, which is to accept the pain fully. In fact, it's my experience that in this case, when you fully accept the pain without focusing on it, but if it comes, it comes, and you accept it fully, it doesn't last for as long. Because the pain has a function. The function is like a 911 call, and then the fire brigade and the police converge to the area where the problem is. So when you don't resist the pain, you allow for the flow of blood and the local reaction, etc. Of course, I'm not a doctor, so I may be wrong on that.

But the difference is the one I've just mentioned, between welcoming or repressing. So you can welcome and be detached, you see? In other words, you allow for the sensation to appear, you allow for the sensation to unfold, you allow for the sensation to leave. Whereas in the other case, you don't allow the sensation to appear, you actively try to repress it, to suppress it.

Q: It seems, sometimes working with people, that you can perceive that. They may say they're fine, they may say that they're bored, but they're fine, they don't feel pain.

FL: There are people who repress their sensation to a very large extent, their emotions, their sensations, their sensitivity.

Q: Especially after a trauma or something. Is there a way to help?

FL: Well, the yoga we do normally should do the trick, to awaken areas of the body that are kind of forgotten, when in pathological cases, you can even touch the area, and make the person feel. So it starts with the skin, with a tactile sense, on the surface of the body. There are areas that are not very sensitive, in the back, for instance. There are people who are not in touch with their body at all. And if you're not in touch with your body, you're not really in touch with your emotions. ...

I think artistic activities are a good means to develop this sensitivity of the body, because all the senses are connected to each other. So if you develop the tactile sense, you develop also the sense of hearing, and conversely, the sense of sight.

[Francis Lucille, 2016 Thanksgiving Retreat Week 1, day 1]

Billy Doyle, who was a student of Jean Klein for many years, gives this clear description of how the non-dual yoga works to heal the body of these residues of ignorance:

This approach is based on the traditional art of listening. We don't really know the real body. Through accumulated tensions and living in the head, in a world of concepts and ideas, the body too has become an idea, rather than something living, something felt.

The subtle energy of the body is paralysed in neuro-muscular tensions. Only in listening without anticipation or choice can this original energy feeling begin to manifest.

In this listening, and allowing the body sensation to unfold, we are no longer an accomplice to reactions. First we will feel this energy in particular parts of the body, later we come to the whole body as one mass of sensation, the global sensation.

It is the energy feeling that is the real healing factor in the body. Instead of the old pattern of heaviness, resistance and density we discover a body that feels light, transparent and expanded in space. We feel ourselves without centre, without border, one with space. This feeling of openness, of expansion frees us from our ego-centred world and leaves us open to deeper dimensions. Otherwise the body is largely a defence mechanism to maintain our ego.

[Billy Doyle, [Listening: The Energy Body](#)]

All of us have a shadow which is an integral part of our conditioning. When we recognise our true nature, then very slowly, as our love of truth grows and grows, and through practice of the non-dual yoga, the shadow begins to be dissolved. And there comes a point where it never seems to surface. But we can never say 'never'. For all of us, and especially for those with a tendency to suppress feelings, part of the shadow still remains, highly suppressed because it's hard to even contemplate that we could fall back into ignorance. So there can always be extreme circumstances in which it has the potential to show itself again. And when it does, it requires a huge amount of courage to allow oneself to see it, rather than try to justify or cover up.

In a recent article for the Science and Nonduality website, Ellen Emmet gave a powerful description of how the non-dual teaching itself can hide the emergence of the shadow. Here is a short extract:

In its Jungian meaning, the shadow lives in this unseen territory. It is everything we would like not to know is true about ourselves. It is what our family, culture, education, and religions have encouraged us to split off and suppress. ...

Simply said, it is that which we unconsciously cast off, individually and as a collective, and relegate to the basement of our being and to the dark corners of our civilization. ...

As humans worthy of that name, we must engage with the inner and the hidden aspects of our experience. We must question our points of view and convictions and make way for those voices that creep up from the dark in our dreams at night or in daily projections.

We must reacquaint ourselves with a listening from down below, question our certitudes, dialogue with the images that visit us, welcome our shadows. ...

Unfortunately, there is a tyranny of light (what Jungian analyst and dancer, Marion Woodman, referred to as the 'addiction to perfection') that threatens to undermine some nondual circles.

In the hands of an unexamined ego, there is a danger of the nondual understanding becoming an ideology that can turn into a violence. Seemingly benign with its promises of effortless peace and happiness, it ruthlessly denies the emerging and unfolding of darker shades of experience by shining upon it a light that is simultaneously blinding and deadening. ...

Sadly, it is often so much easier and more convenient to retreat to the position of knowledge and certainty than to face the discomfort of one's unknown territories and shadow.

[Ellen Emmet, [*Shadow and Nonduality: A Cry of the Heart*](#)]

That article prompted me to ask Francis about the shadow and spiritual bypassing. The non-dual teaching tells us that there's no need to go into our past history and try to dig up the residues of ignorance. Life itself is enough to allow them to come to the surface, be seen clearly in the light of truth, and thereby dissolved. But how can we be protected from what Ellen describes? Here is Francis's answer:

JB: What protects us against our misusing the teaching to hide whatever comes up? For example, using the teaching 'the past doesn't exist, there's only the now' to avoid resolving a conflict?

FL: Honesty, integrity. It is to stay true to the teachings, that's simple, it's not complicated. ...

JB: So there's not really anything we can do to stop ourselves misusing the teaching – either consciousness has chosen ignorance or it hasn't?

FL: Yes we have to be very honest. We are truth-seekers, we are not just truth lovers. We have to seek the truth like a prosecutor should do, or someone in a jury. We have to seek the truth with honesty.

JB: I think it's integrity that's the key. And also you've mentioned the difference between non-duality and non-dualism ...

FL: When we say 'lack of integrity' there might be two different views of this. One is that someone knowingly uses the non-dualist theory, out of ignorance. And there can be another case in which there is an honest attempt to choose the non-dual path, as this person says 'OK let's not revisit the past, let's go to the now', but there can be perhaps a lack of clarity at this moment as to where in this moment these words are coming from. They may be coming from 'yes, I don't want to go there because I don't like it' so some defensiveness. And we are not always absolutely clear in what we say sometimes. So there are different levels of lack of

integrity. One is blatant lack of integrity. The other one is a slight forgetting that the truth is alive in every moment, and at every moment it cannot be replaced with the doctrine of the truth. Because the doctrine of the truth may be 'we don't go into the past' and that's true in general. But in that case it may have been said out of defensiveness, without being aware of why it was said out of defensiveness.

So there is always the fine print. And it ties to what you were going to say. The difference is between non-duality and non-dualism. Non-dualism is the theory about non-duality. That's the difference between being a Marxist and being a Communist. Communists hopefully put Marxism into practice in their life. Now I am not sure that when there are special lanes in Moscow that are reserved for the members of the Communist party, I'm not sure that at that moment they put the generous ideas of Karl Marx into practice. So there might be crooks that use the non-dualist theory for their own profit or whatever, not out of love, not out of joy of sharing, but out of some ulterior motives.

[Francis Lucille online satsang, 4/2/2023 *Spiritual Bypassing and the Shadow*]

Contemplation

Let ghosts sleep, don't wake them up. Celebrate and just get used to celebrating more and more.

[Francis Lucille: *The Perfume of Silence*]