

Flowing with the Flow

What does it mean to 'flow with flow'? Does it imply passivity? If not, how can we tell when we are flowing with the flow? Do we have any responsibility for actions taken by our body-minds?

First, here is a description from Jean Klein:

Let us first make clear what is meant by 'going with the flow of life'. When you are identified with a person, an idea, a body which you believe you are, then there is object/object relation. In this relation you can never see how the ocean of life solicits you. You cannot be adequate to the coming and going of the waves. Your action and non-action is inevitable reaction because you live in images, in the mind. You act or don't act according to certain motives, certain morality, certain ideologies or spiritual ideas. You don't really accept life, but rather submit to it. Then there is fatalism. Fatalism only exists on the level of living as an individual, a personal entity.

Really going with the flow of life is 'passive-active', passive in that the ego, the personality is completely absent, there is no intention, will, goal or motive. But active in that in the absence of the ego you live in your presence, your awareness and all your energies and talents are liberated. You are alert, adequate to every situation, always vigilant, ready for anything. It is a state without choice, where action appears out of the situation and non-action also appears as action. In awareness there is no thought of action or not, you simply function in the moment itself.

[Jean Klein, *I Am*, ch19]

But it does not mean standing on the bank watching the river flow by. We see and feel that we are the river. If there is an observer and observed, there is duality. We are not separate from what happens – we are the happening. As Jean Klein explains, it is the inherent sense of being a separate entity located somewhere in the body-mind – a separate observer or a separate doer– that prevents us feeling this:

It is inherent that the human condition try to locate itself somewhere, in a bodily sensation or a thought. But there are moments in life when we ask: do I have any existence beyond this relation to objects or can I possibly know myself in any other way? If we let things flow freely, we will discover ourselves *to be* observation. Knowing oneself is not limited by a subject/object relationship, by an observer/observed pattern, it is a state of joy, of peace, bliss, constant security.

[Jean Klein, *I Am*, ch17]

So if everyone lived that way, flowing with the flow, how would anything happen? How would food be grown, how would houses get built, how would music be composed? This is Jean Klein's answer:

Q: When we live in waiting, in openness, what is the stimulation for action to occur? How could any action at all come about? In other words, how can the arrow shoot itself and find its target without a shooter?

First we must see that we cannot will ourselves to be open because openness is our very nature. Any tiny residue of willing, of wanting to be open takes us away from what we are. Willing never goes beyond willing. So the only way to be free from this circle is to glimpse the truth that openness is the egoless state, that it is here and now.

This openness is free from all centre and periphery; it is without a controller, an observer, one who chooses or decides. All functioning takes place spontaneously. In observation free from an

observer, the observed appears and disappears without memory interfering. To take your example of archery, this means that the target and the position and state of the body and arrow are all witnessed without goal or intention. At a certain moment the right elements come together and the arrow is spontaneously released, but there is no one who lets it go. When there is no shooter it is the non-state of the man of Tao whose perfect relaxation in the midst of action lets in the flow of Tao.

[Jean Klein, *I Am*, ch19]

Francis explains how the flow includes not just what's happening in the world around us, but also what's happening in our inner life of thoughts and feelings. Flowing with the flow may involve action, but that action is impersonal and spontaneous:

FL: When we don't know what we are, we are flowing with the flow. It's effortless. You are flowing with the Tao. When we know what we are, when we believe to be this human being, we are trying to swim against the flow. No matter what we do, the flow wins. Sooner or later we are tired and we start moving with the flow. We stop fighting.

But the flow I talk about is not limited to the flow of the external events. It also comprises the flow of our own thoughts and feelings. So it's not an absolute passivity, inaction, or lack of response to external events. No. If someone next to you all of a sudden has a deep pain in their chest and then falls on the ground, you're not going to think that flowing with the flow is just to sit on your chair and look.

It's not to identify with a person. It's a complete welcoming of the totality and knowing that the universe is not your enemy. But at the same time that at every moment there is an impersonal path to follow. That's the flow. And to get used to it. It's the work of a lifetime. It's a school. We are never perfect. Nobody's perfect. The greatest violinist is sometimes not perfectly in tune on one note. ...

Dualism implies conflict, inherently. Non-duality says that whatever happens is the movement of One. Even the one who is swimming against the flow is part of the flow. Like sometimes there is a vortex in the river that seems to move upstream. But it's the flow.

[Francis Lucille 16/3/2023 [How to flow with the flow](#)]

If we have had a glimpse but keep falling into ignorance, how can this situation ever change if we just flow with flow without trying to effect some kind of change? Francis explains that change depends on understanding. Trying to create change is swimming against the flow:

That which is primary, is the understanding. The rest eventually will follow. If we want feelings to change independently from the understanding, we are always in the same boat, navigating in the opposite direction. Because we are trying to change the feelings, we are trying to change the phenomenal aspect of our life. Whereas in fact there is no hope in this direction. That which needs to be explored is a new direction, the awareness direction, the understanding direction.

Don't minimize your understanding by comparing it to your feelings and your desires to be different, to change. Change will occur, but you cannot bring it about through will, because you are moving towards an unknown direction. So you have to let the flow carry you, because you don't know the direction in which you have to swim. So it's better to let the flow carry you. The river knows the ocean, and the river will take you to the ocean. You don't know the ocean. You know only the river. But if you try to swim against the flow, you are in fact swimming in the opposite direction to the ocean. Even if at times, because of the meandering of the river, from a

geographical vantage point you are swimming towards the ocean, but in fact you are swimming against the flow, you see what I mean? So that doesn't take you closer.

Trust your understanding. Understand that your understanding is experiential. It is not intellectual. It is experiential.

The phenomenal world is whatever it is. We are not dissatisfied about the phenomenal world. What we have to understand is that the happiness we seek cannot be contained in or delivered by the phenomenal world. But the phenomenal world is appearing in this reality. It is no different from it. So then it takes a different colour, when it is seen in a different light.

If I feel I am a fragment lost in a hostile world, then life is a tragedy. But if I know I am the totality in which this body and the rest of the world appear, it is different. It is an adventure, no longer a tragedy.

[Francis Lucille 6/3/2022 [*Let the flow of the river carry you to the ocean of the Self*](#)]

Flowing with the flow doesn't mean that there's no responsibility for what happens. But the responsibility is not attached to an individual. It belongs to the universe. There is no separate doer. Here is Francis's explanation:

Q: If there's no doer, there's no one to be responsible. Then how do we engage each other in the world, in behaviour?

FL: We have to make a distinction with guilt and responsibility. Guilt refers to a self-image, to a me, who has done something, allegedly done something in the past. So the 'me' has done something in the past, but there is no such separate 'me' who has done anything in the past. So whatever has happened in the past is an act of God. So in other words, guilt is itself the original sin. To believe to be a sinner is the original sin. God is the only sinner. To claim to be a sinner other than God is to take oneself to be too important. It's a lack of humility.

Now, responsibility doesn't refer to the past. It refers to a current situation. It has nothing to do with what you have done as a person in the past. In other words, in the now, in the situation, we are not solely responsible for our past deed. We are responsible for the current situation, whatever the current situation requires.

If you see someone who has been run over by a car, and the car has disappeared, and you say, 'oh, I'm not responsible, it is the driver of the car who is responsible', it's a weird notion of responsibility. Because whatever has happened is always a universal deed. And by calling 911 on your cell phone, and going to that person, and doing whatever you can do to assist, to talk to her, whatever, you are using this body-mind as a tool of the universe, as a tool of love, as an instrument of love, and of intelligence, and of beauty. That's all.

So responsibility flows naturally from the context by listening to our feeling. And if we are free from a self-image, then this responsibility will blossom. The body-mind is then just a tool of the Absolute in a given situation. And also, the opposite can happen.

I gave you an example where apparently people could argue that you have no business taking steps or acting. And you will act. And there are other instances where people believe that you should act in a certain way, according to conventions, according to things. They would like to put you in a box. And when you look at the situation, you see that if you were to follow what they want, you wouldn't be really helpful to them, because you would also keep them in the box.

They want to keep you in a box, because they are in a box. If you allow them to box you in, you become an accomplice of their remaining in the box.

So there are situations where you will act in a way which is apparently unconventional, perhaps even apparently unloving, but on purpose, because you want this person to be free from their limited notion to be a person with needs and desires, justifying their personal weaknesses and asking you to approve of those. Whereas you want them to grow up. You want them to be free. You want them to be independent. You want them to be materially, but most importantly, psychologically independent.

So responsibility takes many shapes. And what you do when you act responsibly cannot be put in a book of recipes. It can only be found out in context. And the key element here is to think, to feel, and to act from an impersonal vantage point.

Q: How does that relate to the metaphor of the waves and the ocean? Is it just consciousness responding to itself always?

FL: Yes. In other words, it's this knowledge that the external situation is created by consciousness. In the absence of a self-image, we allow for consciousness to also create the inner situation, the subjective situation that is going to dictate a certain type of action or non-action. Whatever comes then is what I call cooperation or harmonious flowing with the flow of the universe.

Whereas if what is inside this little box is seen as different from that which is the situation outside here, this separation will lead to decisions, actions, et cetera, that are not going to be harmonious, that are not going to flow with the Tao. They are not going to be in line with truth, intelligence, love, and beauty.

It relates to this absence of separation. It's the same at all levels. when we see that clearly. If we come from this universal, non-separate point of view, or at least if we make a good faith attempt, it's enough to come from this point of view, to act from this perspective. A good faith attempt, that's all that is needed. It may be a little inexperienced in the beginning. It may be a little tentative. But it doesn't matter. In spite of its apparent defect, such an action is, in fact, perfection in motion.

Q: I guess instead of responsibility maybe it's responsiveness, like being responsive rather than thinking there's an I who's responsible.

FL: Yes, first, our body-mind, our brain-mind is not separate from the rest of the universe. So just as when an event happens in the world, it's a cosmic event, when an event happens in the mind, it's also a cosmic event in all cases. So that has to be clear, that our thoughts are themselves waves, like the waves outside when there is wind, when there is an accident, an earthquake, somebody insulting us, these are external waves, our thoughts are also waves of the same ocean.

Now that being understood, we have to understand what ignorance is. Ignorance is a decision made by consciousness to believe to be a wave among the other waves, and to be able as a wave to move in this ocean as it pleases. Now, the waves in the ocean succeed each other because they are not separate. You cannot separate one wave from the other because that's a movement of the ocean as a whole.

[Francis Lucille, 11/5/2015, [Flowing with the Tao](#)]

Contemplation

A mind filled with thoughts concerning the already known is not receptive to the current of life that flows from the all-possible.

[Jean Klein, I Am]