
Health for Life Monthly

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Life always gives us exactly the teacher we need at every moment. This includes every mosquito, every misfortune, every red light, every traffic jam, every obnoxious supervisor (or employee), every illness, every loss, every moment of joy or depression, every addiction, every piece of garbage, every breath. Every moment is the Guru.

~ Charlotte Joko Beck

I remember so clearly a February sesshin in San Diego with Joko Beck and Ezra Bayda as my teachers. A consistent rain fell throughout the three day spell which seemed to empower my ability to be in the moment since rain dampened my yearning to run through the hills. It was in this canopy of space and time where I first experienced a kinesthetic sense of timelessness and felt the patience of a mountain as it slowly makes its way to the ocean. It's bewildering when we are able to slow the speed of our lives down to the cadence of a breathe and a heartbeat and play witness to our experience through this lens. Each of us is so elegantly complicated though we may strive for simplicity. I know this is true for me.

There were some poignant themes running through my life at the time that spoke of life and death and their blurred transformations of one into the other. I had a genuine curiosity that revolved around how we create the circumstances of our lives. Much of what I harvested from this focus was that our habits of mind and body create the experience of our days. It's simple really but when you marry this to the volitional and aspiring elements of our personalities magnificent things can arise. Spending time with such great teachers inspired my greatness as well. One of my favorite definitions of guru is Gee-You-Are-You which spotlights the miracle that we are.

So much of our experience is created from habits of mind and addiction to ways of being in the world. So much of our potential is bottlenecked into a place where we've become habituated and attached to things in our life being a certain way. It's a terrifying and beautiful insight and one that has troubled me since it first visited me. It seems that this concept of old age falls prey to the way of being in the world that is predictable, secure, and dull which really is more of a state of perception than anything to do with age.

One reason I aspire to the teachings of Joko Beck is because she practices a form of empowered Buddhism that makes its way into every living moment. She had studied under a teacher who was an amazing mediation master but struggled with personal relationships and addiction. From this she vowed to practice the precepts and insights of buddhism in her every day life and not make it some separate, zendo-bound practice. As a dear friend of mine said to me recently: don't make separate piles out of your life, make one pile only.

I urge all of us to notice the habits that we stand and fall by and create a compelled sense of investigation into these in how they effect and cause the circumstances of our lives. The seeds of our future are planted in our current days. What would you like to harvest?

