

Listening without interpretation: hearing without judgment

In a situation where healing is occurring, the basis of it is a transition from the disparity of dualism to the realization of underlying permanent Oneness on whatever level. This can occur through any of the senses: touch, where one person and another are One through the energetic-kinesthetic sense, sight where there is a realization that “I” have no face or head from which to look at “you” and vice-versa, which is the prime work of Douglas Harding (see <http://www.headless.org>) and also hearing, listening to the sound of something that seems exterior to “me” and realizing that it’s all within “me”.

This is ultimately the end of the line when it comes to the hierarchical positions which often clutter up the game of student-teacher and patient-practitioner roles. Often due to a mal-fitting of the nature of a person who involves themselves in medicine, with a patient who tries to control and manipulate the healing process, there is a set-up of separation and dissonance which is literally the environment that the person walks into. This is a subtle “field” or energy or charge of “a person’s” nature which can either be open and uniting or separatist and dualistic. The quality of a healing environment has this charge too. This is obvious to those who are sensitive and less to those who are less so, but overall the subtle energetic field of the human is affected by this. I am sure you know of places that immediately feel calm or healing, or places that seem imbued with tension, regiment and hierarchy. The nature of the people involved and the state of disease/dualism or openness/non-dual is obvious in the environment created around a person. This message is passed on and so it is very clear to see lineages of dualistic thinking where one teacher passes on a dualist message to a student, or practitioner to patient, the message of hierarchy and domination is passed on and on until someone has had enough.

The only way that there can be true hearing is when there is no-one really hearing, or no-one seeing, or no-one touching, it's the same every time. Therefore in the practice of listening to patients or during teaching or listening to students the nature is not about a sense that there is separation from “me” but that there is a clarity that “I” and “you”, the student and teacher or the practitioner and patient are fundamentally One. During meetings with Tony Parsons (<http://www.theopensecret.com>) and other similar expressions, of which there are few, there are often situations where people will become very frustrated with the conversation. Questions arise and are expressed and Tony often responds in quite a predictable manner, for the mind only works in a very limited way. However there is a frustration that compels the audience into continual questioning and analysis. When present at such meetings it is at times clear that the questions are not coming from individuals but from a kind of collective frustration and irritation that really represent aspects of a whole. Tony’s response, while dissatisfying for “me”, is also very satisfying for the realization that “I” isn’t really a reality anyway.

What occurs gradually during the process of “listening” is simply a ripening process of non-judgment occurring with the non-dual sense. As time goes on the edges around things start to fade and absolute “me” and “you” begin to blur. This is when we come into a true situation of listening or hearing without judgment and it is really only from this

situation that anything can be understood deeply. Before this what goes on is interpretation. Interpretation is simply the cocoon that exists before listening really comes in. Interpretation is seeing “me” and “you” as separate and so reading what “I” have to say through “your” ears is filtered and re-interpreted. In many ways interpretation has a great deal to do with language and linguistic use and also the quality of different personalities or social norms. Listening is actually beyond language and is in resonance with the nature of what is being listened to. Listening is innate, interpretation is dualistic and learned.

What this means is that in order to listen, interpretation has to die away. This is very different from the teacher who tries to get a student to “listen in the *right* way” or “listen in “my” way” which is simply a superficial power game playing out. Here in fact, listening means no teacher or student exist and that is an unconditional quality, no matter what is uttered by what seems to be two people interacting. Tony often describes it as “emptiness having a conversation with emptiness” or one could put it as two waves talking to each other. Seen from this perspective the student-teacher mentality of “the one who has traveled a long road” versus “the one who is young, impetuous and doesn’t know” completely disintegrates. This is not to say that the qualities of the personality go away if there is a sudden morphing into exact copies of each other, instead the “fingers of the same hand” are known to be connected at the palm, so to speak. From the “palm’s” view, all fingers are equal. This is why animals and infants do not get angry, they may fight or become charged with energy and explode for a moment but they don't actually get angry because anger is an emotional disturbance that requires a very active “me” to be involved and to be pushed against. When there is no such issue present then there is no requirement for defensiveness which is what happens in many teacher-student interactions, the teacher assuming an air of authority that he has to verify through literature, ideas and “education” and the student assuming the position of the one that gets it “wrong” or can’t reach the “heights”. The implication being that the student just needs to keep striving/following until eventually there will be a “breakthrough” which the teacher will know to be “true”, conversely there will be a continuing situation of defensiveness and being dominated, which the teacher will call “resistance”. This is often a response of the student in order to prevent the dis-ease of the teacher being passed on, it’s like an immune response, however the teacher will often blame the student for “misconduct” or “ignorance”, such is the way of dualism.

There are expressions in Zen that describe the situation of “burning the Buddha”. These are often about a total rejection of ideology in order to express or see the true nature of the “self” behind the deity, whatever this may be, which obscures one’s senses from reality. Very often it is when there is letting go of obstacles of interpretation and enforced ideology of another person, that we instinctively come to a clarity that seems so deeply intimate yet at the same time is realized to be impersonal and universal. When listening comes, it is not a choice or about a “refining” process or worthiness, all of these arrows of illusion fall away when it is realized naturally that there is nothing to “do”. Interpreting someone else’s ideas requires so much doing, so much effort in fact. However, listening is innate, non-judgmental and perfect by nature.

In therapeutic situations practitioners will often tend to listen to a patient's story. As they do so they will commonly interpret everything that is said through a filter that is "his/her own" which as a result imbues all of the idealism and morality of their own story of "me" into the patient's. This simply ends up in a confused message of entangled ideas for the patient and usually a self-justification for the practitioner. Rather than healing occurring what expresses is passing on a dis-ease process, the notion that you and I are either different or similar but we are definitely separate. When there is a true sense of listening occurring then the patient's story is known to be held within *unconditional* love. There is no judgment of its content, simply an immediately felt acceptance of its expression. Response to this comes not from a reactive "self" but from whence the listening comes - from a situation of Oneness. The patient immediately knows the response to be truth, they knew in fact that this was true all along and healing occurs essentially with the relief that they are deeply known and deeply understood.

This does not occur until the process is naturally ripe within the practitioner's expression otherwise all that is passed on is more of the same dualism and judgment which unfortunately is all too common. For example the work of Hugh Milne in craniosacral therapy one of the truer expressions of our time that are imbued with a true listening in healing and a non-interventional nature. Ultimately the less the practitioner's nature is imprinted on the patient the better, this is also why medicine is the domain of the yin quality within the male and female bodily expression.

From the Tao Te Ching:

Chapter 17

The Natural-human attends to matters without contention, they "exist" only

The leader is he who tries to be like a parent-teacher whom the people look up to and praise.

The dictator is he whom the people fear

The manipulator is he whom the people treat with contempt.

If there is not fundamental trust the people's authentic Nature, any so-called "leader" will be met with mistrust.

The Natural-human allows the time to pass, her/his words emanate from truth

When bounty is had or task is accomplished the people all say "We just live Naturally".

David Nassim

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