

It's getting *different* all the time: Differentiating the ideology of "improvement" and refinement from innate-natural-perfection.

From early on in life we are told "practice makes perfect" and this nonsense is the foundational reason for writing this article. The main focus here is looking at someone doing something and believing it is perfect or aiming at perfection. It is also the ideology of improving towards this goal, based in the idea that something refined is better than something that is primitive/coarse. I was once asked by a very self-righteous idealist what sounded "better": "the man on the street drumming a tin-can or a professional orchestra". This question, with its obvious bias towards the latter being "better", immediately clarifies the judgemental nature behind every aspect of this person's beliefs. It also illustrates the ideology of superior-inferior complex which is truly the basis upon which we judge everything, from the nature of what is deemed as "healing", to music and indeed everything else.

When we see an infant bashing a box and making a noise we consider the sound to be primitive, coarse and unrefined, whereas when we see the delicate hands of a pianist or violinist performing after 40 years of experience, we consider this to be "better". In another art form such as healing, the nature of a beginner who instinctively touches is considered to be an unrefined touch by those who "know better", having done this kind of work for many years. Experience and refinement are somehow seen as "good" whereas primitive, coarse or foundational expression are seen as "bad". But this is utter nonsense, in reality it is simply another transformation of energy. Anyone who says that they have "got there" as a result of experience, or that it is through "practise" that they have "achieved" is either deluding themselves or is simply not in touch with the nature of nature. One does not gain clarity through doing something for long periods of time, but rather it is in an instantaneous moment that there is a realization of "without-time", something that cannot be practised.

Often so-called "masters" will talk with certainty about the "road" they walked down and the path that is "open" to all students who humbly wish to trail behind, but in fact it's not them who are doing any of it and it's sheer arrogance to believe such a thing! Such is the nature of "self". The "masters" will gain followers who believe, as they do, that doing what they have done has led them to clarity, they but actually this is not the case. Interestingly it is often in moments of insight that had nothing to do with the up-and-coming "master's" process, where actually "self" vanished for a moment that allowed for a realization of something else. It is very much like Alexander Fleming's discovery of penicillin, he discovered it "by-accident" it wasn't due to his years of biological study but just through putting 2 and 2 together. You don't need to be a "master" in order to do this, no amount of work done will yield this because it was not sought for, it was only found when it wasn't looked for. It is believed when the state of timeless insight passes that it was all due to what happened before, the stuff they "did" that had got them there. Even though the insight passes like a flash, which may change everything, still the "self" is back with all its ideology; they then tell their students what they did and exhort them to follow it, which of course doesn't "work". There is no choice in nature, no-one chooses and as a result the whole notion of teaching someone a path to enlightenment that they can choose or not is akin to the blind leading the blind.

This is the way with many of the practitioners of martial arts, healing arts, music and all kinds of apprenticeship-based skills all over the world. The difficulty is that the “students” follow the “master” who on the one hand says “don’t be dogmatic” while at the same time requiring a dogmatic respect of someone who really cannot “know”, all they can do is show a refined expression of a skill that has been done for a long time. The assumption is that the art has become “natural” for the person, but this is utterly untrue, when there is something natural it is innate from the beginning. Sometimes of course this can be covered over for years and is recovered later in life, but usually even then the connection to the skill which is easy to be interested in and to perform is something natural which can’t really be manufactured. Of course people will try but if it isn’t in you then it isn’t in you and this is the bottom line.

Something that is natural is natural, something that is performed is a performance and it is sometimes hard to differentiate the two but it is clear when one looks at the art in the context of a person’s life. If the art is the main focus and direction and there is “nothing else” for a person, this is a sure sign it is a performance as basically it shows that there is a narrow perspective. It’s like the master who teaches his students all day in the “righteousness of practising from the heart” and then goes home and ignores or forgets his parentage and family as they do not fit with his ideology and instead attempts to reform himself from a life and a self-image he doesn’t want by having communications which are only student-teacher or hierarchically-based. In this way intimacy can be avoided.

This is the case with many art forms, many musicians, doctors and “workaholics” of all kinds. The power-trip of being the one who “knows” or the one whose skills are “the best” or “better than X’s” is a big front covering a feeling of insecurity. There is depression or anxiety at its centre and a feeling of partial resentment turned into martyrdom at being “given this burden to carry”. Here there is never a possibility of living a full life for it requires natural acceptance of the fact that everyone is on the same “level” wherein there is no hierarchy involved. It is sheer arrogance and madness of the belief/feeling of being a separate “self” that suggests the healing “master” should be revered more than the drunk, and that the drunk is far from the clarity which the healer has. This is the way of belief that is the foundation of our society. It is the process of spiritual-capitalism and egoistic self-righteous judgment, it has nothing to do with nature and is generally an old-boys’ network of power struggles and an ideology of respect and structure that is not found in nature at all, only in human behaviour which is mad. It is true that the bucks and the sea-lions will fight for mating and so on and so forth but this is simply the expression of authentic charismatic power. It is totally impersonal, having no attempt to lead or to form a style or group and have others follow it, there is no attempt to make examples out of people to justify self-righteous ideology. It has no interest in anything or anyone, it is just energy happening without reason. This is very different from the very “self-based” and egoistic approach of teachers of most art forms today. It is very rare that one comes across a person who does what they do because they *are* it, there is no other real reason.

The notion of “experience” is based on time, it is a belief in time and in the idea that accumulation or “investment” of something helps, or conversely that “I have let go more than you” type of attitude which in itself breeds its own ridicule, making “letting

go” a kind of sport of attaining enlightenment, see Tony Parsons, (<http://www.theopensecret.com>):

A priest bows low at the altar of a church and emotionally exclaims “Oh Lord, in comparison to your glory I am nothing”, he bows again and rests piously on the bench.

Seeing this, another priest is utterly overcome, he comes to the altar and exclaims “Yes oh Lord, in your glorious presence I am just nothing”. The two sit in divine contemplation.

At the back of the church the cleaner hearing all this is moved to tears, she drops to her knees and exclaims “Oh Lord, I am Nothing, I am nothing.”

The priests look at each other and one whispers to the other “who the hell does she think she is saying she’s nothing!”

The one-upmanship of warped-masculine hierarchical control creates the ideology of “good and bad”, “right and wrong”, it is humourless and cannot see “self” within it, as such sees just the narrow.

Teachers always claim authority, for if they were to question it, all their beliefs would fall apart, particularly about their hierarchical position. In the nature of healing it is the beginner and the child who have something in common, in that if they have time and inclination they are often more intuitive and sensitive than the long-time practitioner with all his or her “efforts” at “finding” the truth. Shunryu Suzuki had it when he said “beginner’s mind”, not because this is something which one should attain, which is very often the nature of the Zen tradition, again based in masculine ideology and intent, but actually because this exists innately under all the pomp and circumstance and authoritative-neediness/madness of “self”. I have seen a mother of 4 children who begins to practise reflexology, sees her first client and can immediately relax them and heal more effortlessly than a “great” master of acupuncture living in East-Asia. The point is that it isn’t something that can be learned but is something that we have already...so what does it mean “to improve”?

Very often what people call “improvement” is based on the idea that there is somewhere to get to, and however hard people try to cover up this ideology if it is there it will surface, very often it is associated with “practise makes perfect”. The most well-known of the “great” Jazz musicians of our time never practised, sometimes they would stop playing for years at a time and then go back to their instrument and express again directly through it because it was so natural to them. They had no idea “how” to improvise, they just “played” and this word is key. When there is an air of playfulness and openness then there is something that occurs which is spontaneous and completely accurate and appropriate, not though years of practise but through the constantly available expression of nature, the open secret. (please see <http://www.theopensecret.com>)

The point is that when the gurus have all been vanquished, whether they are “masters” of medicine or of music or “masters” in any shape or form, then we get down to the real deal. Let’s cut the front and get to the roots of it, the real and practical expressions of these things. When someone expresses in their literature or verbally

their pious “achievements” and their lineage, holding them up as a “standard to be achieved and respected”, they have more at stake than the actual act of doing whatever they are doing. So for the healer expressing such a thing it is to do with their own power and control rather than the natural expression of healing. This is why very often there is a clique or cultish feel to these people’s expression as they need to convince at least a few others of their power and then it becomes about keeping hold of this, a 10% stake let’s call it. All of this shows they are either in a line of expression that doesn't suit them and they need to be doing something more expressive with the energy, or it means there is a process of “self” blocking the natural flow of expression which comes through. In either case the result is a passing on of the illusions and judgments that form the “self” state to patients and students alike and this produces the next generation of the same, it is endless.

Stepping out of this pattern occurs naturally when one looks at nature, the nature of infant children and the processes of healing and how things change without intervention. When there is a realization that there is no separation between “me” and “you” then the whole trap of being “better” or “worse” is recognised as being ridiculous and that also doing anything to “improve” is a total illusion as everything is already perfect and complete, and it is clear that the mere illusion of feeling separate is the origin of all dis-ease at root. This often accounts for why some teachers unwittingly perpetuate a dis-ease process.

Hence the nature of natural-skill is not a refinement but an uncovering, as it occurs after doing things over and over again, becoming more and more sensitive and open. It is actually a process of a person letting go and simply being what they were at the age of 3, it is not a getting “better” and it is not a chosen “letting go” because this is impossible, it is natural that this occurs. So the person who is trained for 40 years may have been stuck and often still is stuck on things that have associated with their past, they have kept the ideology of themselves as a young adult striving in the world and running away from difficulties by training in a “special skill”. Then after years of training and “attempting” there is a recognition of one’s ability. Then there is the situation of a young woman studenty who is suddenly able to do what the “master” can do from day one so she is said to be a “natural”, which is something the “master” never is. They are people who often try very hard to be something that they are not, while they may get close they are ultimately unable to touch the very thing they strive for because by nature they are something else.

What is natural actually comes easily, it is not something that requires a lot of practise, it is about a natural interest, not because “you want to be good” at something but an interest simply because it’s there, it’s not about anything else. There is no sense (non-sense) in trying to get somewhere. If a person can give a reason for doing something then you know there is a mind-set involved which is not instinctive. It is only when there is no reason for doing something that there is an instinctive sense involved, just like a child. We adults are all actually children in larger bodies, there is no difference.

So instead of believing that “I am getting better/getting somewhere” all the time or everything being about improvement, the other way is to simply what something is now and that's all, it’s only now. There is no past from which to see an “improvement” and no future goal to get to, there’s no “long road” to walk down

although there will be many who tell you that you ought to. Instead there are just the natural senses, the feeling in the body right at this moment, that is all there is and it belongs to no-one, it actually has no-one at its centre. So it's different every time, new every moment, and as such there's no requirement for anything other than this. If interest in healing goes on and on, so there will be a process of connection that goes on and on, as perfect the first time as the last. There is nothing other than nature that is doing it, not you, you don't need to concentrate, concentration comes to you, you don't need to "do" anything.

Without this there is a falseness, a forcedness and as a result ideologies of "student" and "teacher" spring up in order to "keep things in check", though this is essentially a cover-up operation for people who are not interested in healing and are more interested in power-play politics. There is nothing "wrong" with this but let's be honest about it. Not practising is not about believing you're "already the greatest", it's actually the letting go of the idea that there is anywhere to get to. There is a huge difference here, one is the total "self" belief, the other is a realization that there is no-self to believe in. Neither is it a situation of "everything is wonderful" because there are some sensory experiences, some dissonances of sound or movement or whatever relating to the "self" expressing itself in life which are absolutely a warping of nature, a form of violent or aggressive energy, but this is all it is. It isn't "nice" but is simply honestly what it is, an animal is just as likely to run away from the man beating the tin can than from the sound of an orchestra. One expression might be the sound of the depression of sufferance, the other is about the sufferance of "I can get better", both are actually unnatural and are equally a form of energy.

There is no good or bad, energy changes, it becomes different, if you do something over and over again it becomes faster and smoother and more efficient in energy, but there was nothing wrong with the coarseness of inefficiency or roughness, there is nothing wrong with any of it. Energy changes form, the "self" itself is a contraction of energy that changes. It cannot be helped by intended action, so the Zen-arts while they look like a potential to achieving "enlightenment" are actually a red-herring, it is still the belief that doing something can get-you-there when in fact you already are. The point made here is about judgment, the judgment being that something that you don't go towards is "bad" and something that you do is "good". Resonance is not good or bad, it happens, dissonance also happens. For the skill of healing resonance is required but resonance only happens when there is no intention to heal, hence only those who don't intend and are healers by nature allow for healing, otherwise it is always about something other than simply being, and this too is passed on.

The relaxation in the natural healer, of an uncompromising sense of all-right-ness, that they don't need to improve and be "better" for anyone, is passed onto the patient, the relief of not needing to be anything other than what they are is also passed on. This means if they are not naturally a healer, they will get the urge to stop, otherwise there will always be something missing, like a person looking constantly for the perfect instrument but who is in fact tone-deaf. But for the natural healer the relief of not needing to be anything else IS in itself the message of healing which is passed on, a freedom and openness that there is no need to "get better" as there was always innate perfection anyway, it just was never noticed. When there is a natural letting go of the belief in students, teachers and hierarchical structure as well as the desire for

power, then “respect” is replaced by truth, and “form” by spontaneity and natural order, and “self improvement” by realization that there is no “I” at all.

There is a house of cards that wants to fall and castles made of sand do melt into the sea....eventually.

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