

Differentiating “selfishness” from natural-authenticity.

We constantly hear judgmental pronouncements that someone is being “selfish”. But what does this actually mean below the mere surface expression? What does it mean to be “selfish”, and from whence does the concept derive? Is anyone, in fact, to blame?

To look into this we have to fundamentally break down the term, firstly by looking at a dictionary definition of the word “selfish”:

selfish

- 1. concerned with your own interests, needs, and wishes while ignoring those of others*
- 2. showing that personal needs and wishes are thought to be more important than those of other people*

Basically therefore the message of selfishness is actually the notion and action of separateness, of being or feeling separate from someone else. As often spoken about in these articles, the nature of “being selfish” is a situation of living through the embodied sense that I am separate from you, or even more than this, that there is something that actual is an “I” or a “you” at all. The “selfish” state is in fact the state of dis-ease, it isn’t possible to blame anyone for this and so adjudging someone to be “selfish” is merely the confirmation of separateness in both the judge and the judged.

Instead of “selfish” being a situation of a “me” versus a “you” one might instead consider this expression to mean that the afflicted human is in a state of constant tension, torment and discomfort. If everything is about constantly protecting the “me” from threat, then life is lived in a state of underlying angst and so the nature of selfishness is akin to and manifests as many forms of illness, including many of the top “killer” dis-eases of the twenty-first century.

In fact the whole expression of the human-condition is utterly selfish, it is “me” separated from the whole world, from earth and from the natural ecological systems of nature. The very process of the seeker or “self” seeking what it needs is about seeking a home or a place of safety in order that the torment of “me” can pass.

So what occurs if there is no selfishness, what occurs when there is no dis-ease? This the situation is rare at the moment in the world population but is in fact the natural-human state. The natural-human state is one of being truly united to each other. Richard Dawkins puts forward the notion of the “selfish gene” but this economics-based, mechanistic, Newtonian and completely narrow focus of nature is a deep anthropomorphism. If nature is viewed through the eyes of the human from within the state of selfishness, then everything becomes about the idea of “survival” and the notion of “survival” is commonly attached to the idea of selfishness. Nature has no notion of “survival”, it just expresses spontaneously and when it does so it is noticed that life isn’t about one-upmanship but rather about expanding and collapsing energetics, things coming into existence and opening out, and things collapsing down and letting go. There is no cause at the base of this, it is like heat rising, reaching a peak and then letting go. We even draw parallels with a self-less act being something that negates the instinctual senses in fact, something that is again a total judgmental

approach. An example of this is with lions and gazelles in the African plains: as the lion energy expands to envelop the gazelle, the gazelle collapses and is engulfed or it might expand beyond the lion energy and find space to open outwards. There isn't a situation of a notion of "I must survive to keep my genes alive" or even an instinct that is gene-based even though it may appear so to the narrowly-focused Richard Dawkins or any human caught within a particular box of thinking.

The nature of nature is like a magnetic field, no more and no less, it is deeply impersonal and deeply intimate but has no goal or process. For humans this means that living together as groups and communing as tribes is foundational to our nature, without this we are lost as "individuals", selfishness in a sense is the dis-ease of the separatism or individualization which occurs based on the perspective of "me". This hallucination cuts us off from each other and forms the basis of the industrial "civilization". There is no person pulling the strings in nature, no "me" at the base, it's just life happening for no reason at all. Like a fireworks display, the firework has no cause in mind, no attitude, it just explodes and if it engulfs another firework or simply expresses on its own so be it, it isn't fussed. Humans are like this too, this isn't mechanical, it's natural, and this is deeply impersonal and yet deeply intimate.

There was an experiment done in the 1970's where two chimps were put in a cage, each had 2 pulling ropes, one of which would supply him and his buddy with a banana, the other rope which would just give the puller a banana. The experiment was an attempt to see if the chimps would be "selfish" or would in fact want to care for each other in an altruistic manner. Chimps can easily understand the nature of the 2-rope system but were never given instruction on what the result *should* be. The researchers found conclusive evidence from this experiment, there was no absolute pattern. The chimps did things randomly, they didn't gift each other, neither did they focus on themselves, because for them fundamentally there is no "self" anyway! Nature doesn't work the way we think it does, it doesn't have a way or absolute expression which we can pinpoint from the perspective of our narrow human ideological view and deduce that this is how it functions.

The nature of nature is about authenticity and authenticity comes about when there is just the momentary instinctual response, it isn't dependent upon anything. In response to a point expressed by Tony Parsons (<http://www.theopensecret.com>) in a recent meeting an irate listener argued that *"if a baby was lying there bleeding surely you would do something about it, but if you're saying that there is no-self and "nothing matters" then does that mean you just focus on "me" and be "selfish"?"*. Tony's response was very clear, he made the point that nature isn't dependent on something, in a given situation there is an instinct to do something but that instinct is not dependent on a "me" doing it. This means that in some situations the baby would be cared for, in others it wouldn't and both are appropriate expressions of nature. Although it is not always the case that a response happens, when one is talking about instinctual response it is ALWAYS the case that this might be called "Righteous/Natural" (not "right" versus "wrong") action, or action that has no-self at the base of it.

Therefore one of the most selfish expressions is in fact that of altruism or any kind of ideology that suggest an impeding of instinctual spontaneous response. In essence this is exactly the same as totalitarianism, they are just different forms of seeking of the

“self” and so based in the narrowness of “me”. If one looks more and more closely at these things, those who are involved in altruistic or totalitarian ideas or any kind of belief/ideology are very much “in it for themselves”, simply because at root the “self” as a separate person is still at the heart of the project propelling it onwards, there is still a reason for doing something rather than no-reason at all. Selfishness comes in many forms many of which include those people who do “good” and equally those who are judged as doing “bad”. Beyond good and evil is the background; that which is simply natural spontaneous expression, there is no reason, no right or wrong, only instinct, and as a result in a situation without ideology there is freedom from the known.

However, when something has a “me” at the base of it then this is selfish and so a state of dis-ease. When it is authentic or is not underpinned by “me” or any ideology, then it is simply nature expressing itself. Up to the age of about three, everything a child does is mainly “Righteous” even if the parents or society as a whole don’t think so. After this point a very strong self emerges and there is an exponential selfish approach which by the age of about eight is fully expressing itself as powerful tantrums which often continue into middle-age and beyond!

When we consider what it means to be “selfish” this isn’t a springboard to launch into a situation of judgment, indeed this is a reflection of selfishness. Instead let’s really look at what selfishness is, aren’t we in fact all selfish for we all actually have the disease of myself. Fundamentally it is absolutely impossible for “me” to “do” something about “myself”. We are and always have been in the hands of nature and the process of ripening and letting go of the “self” is something that happens *despite* not because of “me”. The process of connecting to authenticity is not external it already *is*, and as such was never lost so it can be never found. The nature of the infant child lives on within, and while there is the outer shell of the selfish-adult on the exterior on the inside the child expression remains, forever young as Peter Pan himself and the nature of nature is just as uncompromising as Pan. Selfishness is a state of constant compromise to the dis-ease process but underlying this is that which is far stronger - the wave of nature, the selfish-adult is a mere water-droplet that for a moment believes itself to be separate from the wave before it once again returns home to the sea.

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17/ 5/ 2012