	<i>White Robed Monks of St. Benedict</i>	<i>Volume 19 Issue 1</i>
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Peace be with you and yours.

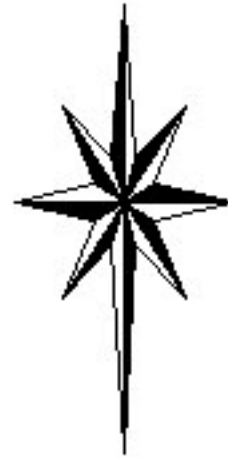
How do we bring light into a darkening world? First of all, we must be sure to kindle our own inner light. With an enlightened heart, we shed light to what and who surrounds us.

How do we enkindle our own light? We allow ourselves to become ever more aware of not only what we are doing, but also, how we are doing it. Much of what we do, we do unconsciously. Walking up a flight of stairs, for example, is by and large an unconscious act. Some of what we do, we do consciously. Balancing a check book might be a conscious act. Very little of what we do, are we aware.

When we are conscious, thought without presence, is usually involved. When we are unconscious, we are usually not thinking and are not present. Awareness, on the other hand, is without thought and is with presence.

What is the difference between not thinking and being without thought? To not think is actually to produce the thought of not to think (*I do not want to think about that!*). Being without thought is just that, being without thought, which, by the way, is our natural state of being. Being without thought we all experienced at one time, in our infancy when we were totally aware and without thought. We were actively present to and in our environment.

Wake up and smell the coffee! Was an old adage yet it speaks the truth. Most of us are asleep at the wheel as we drive through life. We are unaware of how what we do or not do impacts not only our own



Peace I leave with you;
my peace I give you.
(John 14:27)

May the Peace
of the Christmas Season
be with you and yours

selves, but also others around us. And that is only the WHAT. Many of us are equally unaware that HOW we do or not do impacts ourselves and others.

What do we do? We say, we think, we judge, we label. How do we do? We do impulsively, narcissistically, reactively. When we open the door of awareness, we realize that much of what is going on in our own life and around is simply the result of, for the lack of a better phrase, ego functioning. When we believe in our ego, our thought of who-how-when-where-why I am or am not, we entrap ourselves. We become prisoners of our own hubris and then wonder how we got into this predica-

Abbot's Notes

ment in the first place.

Some things we do spontaneously without really too much thought—like driving the car. Change the scene. Now drive with awareness—you may not be thinking, yet you are aware. When speaking with your loved one, speak with awareness and notice that your listening changes.

As individuals living our lives we may think (*oh stop that!*) we can do nothing to change the world scene. Just being aware, turning on the Light of Awareness, you are changing the world.

One of the metaphors for Christ is “Light of the World” (btw, Buddha is called “The Lamp”). That Light may be said to be the light of Awareness. The more aware we come, then the more patient, kind we are. We tend not to be jealous, nor do we put on airs. We are not snobbish, nor we are prone to anger. We do not brood over injuries. We rejoice with the truth. There is no limit to our forbearance, to our trust, our hope, our power to endure. (1 Cor 12:31-13:8a)

Just be aware.

Many blessings and

Peace and Joy!

+Robert OSB

We Are Our Own Creation

Are you aware that you created our own self? All that you are and all that you will ever be are your own doing? That is, from the very beginning you made it possible to be the who you are this moment. How so?

When we are born we come to the phenomenal realm with 23 chromosomes from our mommy and 23 from our daddy. We choose the 46 as well, which is the subject of another story. We might liken this set of 48 as our basic ROM chip. We, then, by our own manipulation, did all the best to survive (i.e., get what we wanted) by how we either reacted or responded to our environment, including our caregivers.

In essence, we have one basic drive upon our entry into the phenomenal realm: to survive. In order to succeed at this basic task, we learned that we needed a whole lot of help. We learned that if we did this, we would get more attention. If we did that, then less attention would be forthcoming. In order to survive, we learned how to manipulate our caregivers to give us what we basically wanted, did we not?

Time marching on, we grew sufficient neurons

in our brains to generate a montage of who we think we are. We began to grow an ego. As we grew our ego, we further learned that certain actions caused definite reactions from our caregivers and environment. We created who we would trust and who we could reject.

When we did not get what we wanted, we would throw a temper tantrum, through which we learned how to evoke more immediate attention or not. We held these events in our psycho-physical memory banks, which we would use later on to eke out revenge or otherwise get even or be grateful and appreciative.

We made ourselves in the image and likeness — or opposite—of our favorite care giver. Again, all we wanted to do is survive, about which we make evolving definitions as we grow.

We may have terrorized or rebelled during our teens—or kept *it* all in and became so very compliant, or we excelled at keeping our caregivers happy, being the person they wanted us to be—depending upon our sense of survival in the moment. All because we thought this is the who we ought to be.

In adult hood we furthered our quest to survive the best way we knew how.

Creation

We created relationships or not that imaged our creation of our caregiver's relations, if any. When we were true to who we actually are, we met life and its offers more with a spirit of equanimity than victim hood, being the products of our environment.

In any event, many of us were in and out of consciousness much of the time. We may have thought we were conscious only upon reflection, to realize that we were not. Some of us learn to re-awaken our awareness early on, others later on, and some of us never.

The first step in recovery is to realize, accept, and acknowledge that we each are ultimately responsible for our act of existence and how the roles we play-out in our existence. What to do?

Want to sense just how aware we as an individual might be? The degree to which we are REACTIVE is in direct proportion to our lack of awareness. We react to our own thoughts, feelings and emotions. We react to people, places, things and events.

And the option? RESPOND. The degree to which we accept ourselves, others, and events with a sense of equanimity, to the same degree we may say we are aware. **Just be aware.**

And what is AWARENESS?

What is awareness? There are many definitions. In general, it is our intuitive sense that we all share to some degree or another. As has been said, "the exquisite sharpness of tooth pain or the inimitable greenness of a fresh leaf" bespeaks of awareness.

Awareness simply *is*. It does not identify, is not aware of something, both being marks of consciousness. Actually, awareness is aware of nothing, being that it is *the common matrix of all experience*.

In this regard, awareness is eternal, without a beginning or an end. It is not even aware of itself. Startling as it might sound, awareness allows consciousness to be conscious!

Awareness is not consciousness. Consciousness affirms and denies, accepts or rejects, believes or disbelieves.

The Upanishads describes awareness as:

We cannot see That
which is the Seer of seeing.
We cannot hear That
which is the Hearer of hearing.
We cannot think of That
which is the Thinker of thought.
We cannot know That
which is the Knower of knowledge.

This is our Self, that is within all;

Everything else but This is perishable

How do we know if we are conscious or aware? Easily. Given a situation wherein a person is afraid or fearful and you ask that person, "Are you aware of your fear?" If the person responds, "Yes. I am aware of my fear and it does not go away!" That person is conscious, not aware.

When we are aware there we do not identify as there is no "I", no conscious ego. When we are aware of a thought or emotion, it just goes away.

Fear of God? Religions of "The Book" are based upon the Fear of God: Face your sin and repent! OR ELSE!!!! (bad things will happen to you) People who fear God are conscious of God. They are not aware of what, who, how, why God is and is not. When one is aware of God, there is no thought, no emotion. There is no Great Trinity (*i.e.*, me, myself, and I). There is Pure Presence.

Dualistic thinking collapses which catalyzes inner freedom and spontaneous action known as the play of the child-like sage within the illusionary world in general and the space/time continuum specifically. Thank you.

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Thank you.

(New e-mail address, too.)




Peace and Joy!

How to Detach from a Belief—Why?

How to detach from a belief and experience freedom and peace of mind? Use a centering meditation taught by Tarthang Tulku in his *Hidden Mind of Freedom*:

"Working with thoughts (beliefs) by opening them as they arise can bring many pleasant feelings, which—without attachment—also become our meditation. We can even go into the thoughts that judge other thoughts, and, embracing this judging mind, become united with it."

"By relying on the light of awareness you can see that the difficulties you face are manifestations of your own concepts. Going deeply into your thoughts, you will see how you create your experience, how you alone are the judge who determines heaven and hell, good and bad."

"Whatever experience arises, stay with it, expand it, and heat it up. If you remain within the intense

core of the experience, the meditator unites with thoughts and emotions, and everything dissolves. Then awareness grows powerful and one-pointed. As thoughts and emotions are increasingly included within this field of awareness, they become more useful. Instead of being a cause of frustration or confusion, they become agents of well-being. . . ."

And why?

A Native American grandfather was talking to his grandson about how he felt. He said, "I feel as if I have two wolves fighting in my heart. One wolf is the vengeful, angry, violent one. The other wolf is the loving, compassionate one." The grandson asked him, "Which wolf will win the fight in your heart?" The grandfather answered, "The one I feed. (Thank you Michael Butler)

May all beings be happy.
Amen.

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And thank you. May many blessings be to you and yours now and forevermore. Peace and joy!

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