

## **Nonduality: The Nondual Mind of a Child** by Robert M. Dittler, Ph.D.

What is the nondual mind of a child? What is the attitude/perspective of a child in adult form?

Perhaps “detached involvement” best describes the mind of a child. Nondual.

Nondual - it has no shape and no size. It actually has no explanation and certainly no definition. The ancients define nondual as “not this, not that.” A metaphor comes in handy to explain nonduality. We can describe the mind of an infant as nondual. The infant just absorbs all that it senses without difference or distinction. The infant has no belief systems to filter its sensations. The infant has no self or ego to judge the rightness or wrongness of a sensation. The infant has no thought about this or that or anything else. The infant, some may say, has no mind. How often we say in response to something we determine as negative: “Pay it no mind. Just let it go.”

How would we be without a mind? How would we get through a day without being attached to an ego? How could we envision a future? What is a nondual perspective?

First and foremost, we realize that there is a difference - a grave difference - between the way we hope things to be and the way we think things are. We have resolved our conflict with our perception of Ideal Reality - our hopes and dreams - with the way things actually are. We have also resolved our conflict with our perception of Real Reality - the way we think things are - with the way things actually are. We have recognized and let go of, yet we have, our beliefs: our hopes and dreams and our biases and prejudices. We perceive with clarity just the way things are, just as they are simply because they are what and how they are in the moment.

How? We have realized that we essentially are not our thoughts, feelings or emotions. Our thoughts, feelings, and emotions are metaphorically just background noise in our field of experience. Likewise, we have realized that what we perceive: besides our thoughts, feelings and emotions, but also people, places, things and events are also just our own creation. As Gertrude Stein once echoed: there is no there there (although she was probably referring to her house in Oakland). We accept unconditionally whatever is occurring now in the moment – just as it is, now.

We maintain an attitudinal stance that tends to be neither flexible nor inflexible, neither soft nor hard. We are inclined neither liberally or conservatively. At best, we may be described as fluid. We succeed because we take the shape of any container, yet retaining our integrity. We are much like water, in this regard. How do we maintain a fluid, rather than flexible or inflexible attitude? We have resolved our conditioned resistances. We appreciate the natural biases inherent in our belief systems through which we filter our perceptions of reality. We accept these conditioned resistance for what they are, our own creation. We let them go. We have become the center of the cyclone, being Peace amid the chaos of ever present change in its myriad of forms. We are detached. We are Nonduality.

Being detached from our perceptions: thoughts, feelings and emotions, peoples, places, things, and events, we are absolutely responsible for our own integrity as we change our shape in the moment. We have resolved our basic human resistance to change. We have recognized our desire to keep things as they are even while recognizing that everything is changing moment by moment.

We do not create guilt or take pride in what we do or do not do. Leaves fall from a branch. Rain drops. Ivy grows. The Universe expands. Hence, we engender no feelings of blame for what others do or not do. We hold no residual emotional image of our own self or of others. We let go moment-by-moment. Hence, we tend not to experience the past emotionally. Our own self image is no longer that of edited memories.

Being detached from our perceptions, we do not perceive reality from emotional or I-based conditioning. We have resolved the great trinity of Me, Myself, and I. Hence, we have learned that our subjective feelings are nothing more and nothing less than conditioned reactions that we have learned and, hence, can unlearn them let them go. We recognize them to be just what they are: products of our own imagination. As such, they are fantasy, existing only in our mind. We created them. We let them go.

Being detached from our perceptions, we are not bogged down by unnecessary pain and suffering: psychological, emotional, or otherwise. We are simply present. We engage thought when needed. We do not need to be constantly thinking, verbalizing, conceptualizing, or forming images. We, taking the shape of the moment, being fluid, maintain our own integrity. We are totally unconditioned and one with the universe, our immediate moment. In essence, we recognize when we are resisting our own resisting and let it go. Therefore, we experience no conflict. We can eschew a sense of calm composure, excitedly or more subdued, in the moment. Boredom, accordingly, is never an issue.

Being detached from our perceptions, we are not depressed being caught in our memories of the past. We are not anxious being caught in our imaginings about a future. Nor are we worried being caught in the illusive present wondering whether or not to be depressed or anxious. We have recognized the illusion of the alleged "continuity of events." We let it go. The moment, accordingly, does not necessarily evoke an emotional impact. Again, we have integrated the sacred trinity (Me, Myself, I) of the Human Condition. We let the trinity go. Only we in our awareness remain. We are not the center of the (narcissistic) Universe. We connect with others naturally, empathizing with others however they may be: liberal realist, liberal conservative, conservative idealist or conservative realist.

Being detached from our perceptions, we may become angry, yet our anger is not me-based. We do not take the moment personally or seriously. We recognize flattery and abuse as just as what they are and let them go. If angry, the anger is very short lived.

We have no need to keep a residual mental image of the event. We just let it go. Our basic temperament remains just as it is, yet we respond rather than react to our thoughts, feelings, emotions, perceptions or people, places, things or events.

Whether we respond or react in the moment, we do so by choice reflecting our absolutely objective grasp of the moment in the moment. We experience our emotions minimally and momentarily. We do not need to engage in the drama of the moment echoing the Human Condition. Likewise, we do not create romantic images of the past or even nostalgic feelings about the past. We know no benefit.

Being detached from our perceptions, being one, therefore, being in the moment and being the moment, we envision a future and empower others to bring that vision to Light. We adapt our style to meet the vision and the people around us. We recognize not only our own idiosyncrasies, personality, style and intellect, but also those of others just for what they are. We let our considerations about them go.

We realize that the best instruction is often the most subtle. Being detached from our perceptions, we have the freedom to grow along with others as all grow in awareness given the subtly of instruction of Life. All acknowledge that mistakes happen, good things happen and in absolute reality, nothing happens. Light is.

Ref: The Science of Enlightenment, Nitin Trasi, M.D.. New Delhi, India: D.K. Printworld (P) Ltd., 1999.  
Zen and The Brain: Toward an Understanding of Meditation and Consciousness, James H. Austin, M.D., Massachusetts, CT, USA: The MIT Press, 1999.