

MOURNING THE SELF

This may be one of the stranger blogs I have ever written and I hesitate even to write it, but as I tell myself: 'In for a nickel, in for a dime.'

In recent days I have been monitoring myself and I seem to be not-so-much fun person as I remember; it seems I am too serious and perhaps somewhat depressed. This is unusual for me, so what gives?

First, I don't fully know if this is true and I could be just grasping at straws or wanting to come up with a solution just to have a solution. However, it occurred to me that in some way I may be in some weird kind of grieving. As strange as this thought is, perhaps part of me is lonely for my Self that vanished in the stroke or, if not the Self (itself), then the familiarity and cozy comfort of that constant companion (the Self) who has been with me all these years, BS and all. Most of that was wiped out as far as I can see. And, although I imagine a new version of a self has to be forming within me, apparently it's not in any hurry. And I'm hoping for a better, more true to reality, self, so I have to expect I will be different.

It's almost like a loss of innocence. I hesitate to say it, but this smacks of the "ignorance is bliss" syndrome and the "something-like-monotonous" forward plodding from day to day ever since the stroke has exacted its pound of flesh from me. Is it as simple-minded as that I am perhaps a little lonely for my old Self or for a self and time of ignorance that I now have only a dim memory of, but still feel a sense of loss of familiarity for? Maybe I miss "me." LOL.

As a dharma practitioner, the loss of Self is a good thing and welcome -- less fixation and attachment. And it's true that there is an increased clarity and depth that I was not aware of before, but which I now really appreciate. Yet, there is also a lack of "fun" and the appearance of a no-nonsense-ness that I don't like so much. It could be that I am just tired of all the medical tests and concern; I may yearn for a time when none of this chaos had reared its grim head, so to speak. Or, I do feel that I could have a very light cold that seems to have a grip on me, which can happen after a shock-event. Not sure.

I do appreciate the silence and emptiness of my state of mind since the stroke. My mind seems pristine, vast, and empty like a moonscape. On the other hand, I also seem to be more easily irritated than I remember and, while I understand why others go through this or that syndrome, the elaboration and endless chattering in everyone around me seems to stretch on and on into meaningless gestures. And I repeatedly find myself ready to move on with “whatever,” long before others seem to let go of a riff or a theme. I have the sense of enduring a situation longer than I would like, instead of just saying what needs to be said and moving on. It’s like folks are desperate for contact, yet I am not.

I know that this is my problem to solve, if only because it’s there. And I mean no disrespect, but much of what goes on around me seems so meaningless and the rest often tedious and repetitious. It could be a product of all the endless medicines, precautions, demands, and routines that were not there before. They are not a lot of fun. I feel I lack a certain compassion at this point that I used to have. Yet, at least I am aware of the lack. I have hesitated to post this blog and in the meantime I see that my sense of compassion is just fine, not diminished. I am however more easily irritated these days.

Or, it could be that life is not as much fun as I thought it was or used to be. LOL. The times I am happiest (and those when I do feel very much there and full) is when I am being put on the spot with a question or a real concern. At those moments there is no part of me hanging outside finding it all tiresome.

I’m sure I have to get used to this new take on life and everything that comes with it. I’m doing my best, but again, using the “innocence is bliss” theme, perhaps I miss the innocence. I do know that at the end of each day I am very tired. It may not just be physical exhaustion as much as I am tired of the ordeal of the day and ready to just give it all a rest, if not physically, then mentally. Sound familiar?

Suggestions or reflections are welcome.

“As Bodhicitta is so precious,

May those without it now create it,
May those who have it not destroy it,
And may it ever grow and flourish”

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