



Where Skillfulness and Clarity Meet, by J. Krishnamurti

We have become very skillful in dealing with our daily life; skillful, in the sense of being clever in applying a great deal of knowledge which we have acquired through education and experience. We act skillfully either in a factory or in a business and so on. That skill becomes, through repetitive action, routine. Skill, when it is highly developed - as it should be - leads to self-importance and self-aggrandizement. Skill has brought us to our present state, not only technologically, but in our relationships, in the way we deal with each other - not clearly, not with compassion, but with skill. Is there an action, in our daily life, which is skillful yet which does not perpetuate the self, the me, which does not give importance to one's self-centered existence? [] To answer that one has to inquire into what clarity is; when there is clarity there is action which is skillful and which does not perpetuate the self.

Clarity exists only when there is freedom to observe. One is only capable of observing, looking, watching, when there is complete and total freedom; otherwise there is always distortion in the observation. Is it possible to be free of all distorting factors in one's outlook? []

One may describe what compassion is in the most eloquent and poetic manner, but in whatever words it is expressed, those words are not the thing. Without compassion there is no clarity; without clarity there is no selfless skill - they are inter-related. Can one have this extraordinary sense of compassion in one's daily life, not as a theory, not as an ideal, not something to be achieved, to be practiced and so on, but to have it totally, completely, at the root of one's being? []

We've strengthened in our consciousness, through great development of skill, the structure and the nature of the self. The self is violence, the self is greed, envy and so on. They are the very essence of self. As long as there is the center as the me, every action must be distorted. Acting from a center you're giving a direction, and that direction is distortion. You may develop a great skill in this way but it is always unbalanced, inharmonious. Now, can consciousness with its movement undergo a radical transformation, a transformation not brought about by will. Will is desire, desire for something and when there is desire there is a motive, which is again a distorting factor in observation.

--J. Krishnamurti, from "The Wholeness of Life"

