



Noticing the Gaps, by Eckhart Tolle

In the first moment of seeing something or hearing a sound -- and more so if it is unfamiliar -- before the mind names or interprets what you see or hear there is usually a gap of alert attention in which the perception occurs. That is the inner space. Its duration differs from person to person. It is easy to miss because in many people those spaces are extremely short, perhaps only a second or less.

This is what happens: a new sight or sound arises, and in the first moment of perception, there is a brief cessation in the habitual stream of thinking. Consciousness is diverted away from thought because it is required for sense perception. A very unusual sight or sound may leave you "speechless" -- even inside, that is to say, bring about a longer gap.

The frequency and duration of those spaces determine your ability to enjoy life, to feel an inner connectedness with other human beings as well as nature. It also determines the degree to which you are free of ego because ego implies complete unawareness of the dimension of space.

When you become conscious of these brief spaces as they happen naturally, they will lengthen, and as they do, you will experience with increasing frequency the joy of perceiving with little or no interference of thinking. []

Inner space also arises whenever you let go of the need to emphasize your form-identity. That need is of the ego. It is not a true need. []

Here are some ways in which people unconsciously try to emphasize their form-identity. If you are alert enough, you may be able to detect some of these unconscious patterns within yourself: demanding recognition for something you did and getting angry or upset if you don't get it; trying to get attention by talking about your problems, the story of your illness, or making a scene, giving your opinion when nobody has asked for it and it makes no difference to the situation; being more concerned with how the other person sees you than with the other person, which is to say using other people for egoic reflection or as ego enhancers [] taking things personally, feeling offended; making yourself right and others wrong through futile mental complaining; wanting to be seen, or appear important.

Once you have detected such a pattern within yourself, I suggest that you conduct an experiment, Find out what it feels like and what happens if you let go of that pattern. Just drop it and see what happens.

De-emphasizing who you are on the level of form is another way of generating consciousness. Discover the enormous power that flows through you into the world when you stop emphasizing your form identity.

-- Eckhart Tolle, from "A New Earth"

Published at www.awakin.org on Jan 11, 2010