

CREATING NEW POSSIBILITIES WITH BEGINNER´S MIND

“We intuit a threshold, a line beyond which we will reveal to ourselves, and there is an unspoken fear that we might not like what we find, but there is also a sense that we may be forced to unearth inner resources previously neglected.” (David Whyte)

You have probably found yourself many times in your life in what we call win-lose situation. By that we mean situations in which we speak with one or several others about something that is important to each of us and where we argue from our individual preconceived assumptions and opinions. In essence, we are bouncing back and forth thoughts rather than *thinking together*. We are not building something new together, but our opposing pre-existing opinions collide so that in the end someone triumphs over the other/s.

We would like to invite you to take a minute to recall one of your own win-lose instants.

In our experience we enter these win-lose conversations with the assumption that we are more knowledgeable than the other person/s and with the intention to convince them of the right answer. This leads to not being curious about the other’s divergent views, and to not deeply listening and wanting to understand. Although we are in the presence of other people, we isolate ourselves by operating from a closed mind. We *are* our own assumptions and opinions, rather than holding them lightly.

In order to think together about issues that matter and for which there is no one right answer, we need to utilize everyone’s intelligence, creativity, intuition, experience, knowledge to come up with new possibilities and ways to move forward. This context asks every person in the room to operate with a beginner’s mind, because “In the beginner’s mind there are many possibilities; in the expert’s mind there are few.”(1) The difficulty in doing this is that even though we all do have tons of experience and knowledge, in *thinking together* we must approach each such question with a fresh and open mind, like doing it for the first time. It is not about setting aside everything one knows, but not to cling to beliefs and assumptions too tightly, so as to be open to new emerging patterns within the thinking processes and more specifically new ways of thinking and behaving if old thoughts and behaviors are no longer helpful.

To converse with a beginner’s mind requires us to notice our habitual patterns of thinking, feeling, protecting and behaving on a moment-to-moment basis. This awareness enables us to develop more flexible, productive and appropriate responses to what is actually needed in those important moments of *thinking together*. A good start to practice this could be to ask yourself for instance: “what are my typical assumptions about others”, or “when do I have the need to protect myself”, or “when do I become my own opinion?”

(l) Shunryu Suzuki, Zen Mind, Beginner´s Mind, 1970

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