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SUBJECT: mp75 no running away

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mp 75 no running away 9-4-14

I really like this section from Jon Kabat Zinn's book Wherever You Go, There You Are.

"Have you ever noticed that there is no running away from anything? That sooner or later the things that you don't want to deal with and try to escape from, or paper over and pretend aren't there, catch up with you- especially if they have to do with old patterns and fears? The romantic notion is that if its no good over here, you have only to go over there and things will be different. If this job is no good change jobs. If this wife is no good, change wives.... The underlying thinking is that the reason for your troubles is outside of you - in the location, change the circumstances and everything will fall into place; you can start over, and have a new beginning."

"The trouble with this way of seeing is that it continently ignores the fact that you carry your head and your heart and what some would call yourself, try as your might. What reason, other than pure wishful thinking, would you have to suspect that things would be different or better somewhere else anyway? Sooner or later the same problems would arise if in fact they stem in large part from your patterns of seeing, thinking, and behaving. Too often, our lives cease working because we cease working at life, because we are unwilling to take responsibility for things as they are and to work with our difficulties. We don't understand that it is actually possible to attain clarity, understanding and transformation right in the middle of what is here and now, however problematic it may be."

The quotes section takes the subject of the title of the book head on. A change in external circumstances will not lead to real change as long as I don't address issues problems that have to do with my own habit energies. I cannot tell how many times I have heard about how much better things will be for this person or that when they get out. They will go to a new city or new wife or new country and everything will be fine. I know that was the way it was for me. I kept looking for other people or jobs or relationships to save me from myself. Until my dysfunctional behavior ended putting me here in prison, i never really questioned the wisdom of this externalization of my problems.

I was asked what projects I was working on to keep me sane. I have some fun activities (meditation, 12 step, band), but my real project is myself. I need to strengthen my healthy behavior patterns and weaken my unhealthy behavior patterns. I need to practice no running away to drinking or porn, but being present with the reality of my day today. Not dreaming of tomorrow, but facing the reality of today. I make progress only with today's problems, not the fantasies of an unlive future day.

Prisoners dream of what we will do in the future, when they get out. But we do little with day they have been given today. We can only face the moment that is now. We can only practice new behaviors now. We can only be free now. There is no freedom in the fantasies of the future. In fact those fantasies are as prison like as the razor wire around our prison walls. They give us the illusion of escape, but keep us tied to our old chained selves.

For all of us,
within and without these prison walls
help us seek

"clarity, understanding and transformation right in the middle of what is here and now."

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